

## 595TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 1917,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. PREBENDARY H. E. FOX, M.A., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and confirmed.

The SECRETARY announced the Election of the Rev. E. T. Siddall-Jones as a Member of the Institute.

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing the Lecturer, said that he was one specially qualified to speak on the important subject which they had to consider. Born in Palestine, Mr. Finn had been familiar with Oriental languages almost from infancy, and had lisped Hebrew and Arabic. He had devoted the years of his maturity to the special study of the Pentateuch, and had just published a book on *The Unity of the Pentateuch* of most instructive character.

### *THE MOSAIC ORIGIN OF THE PENTATEUCH.*

By the Rev. A. H. FINN.

**I**N a work recently published\* my aim was chiefly negative, namely, to meet the modern allegations that the Pentateuch can be proved to be composite, and to show the unsoundness of the methods by which that conclusion has been reached.

Now it is my wish to take a positive and constructive line; to consider the evidences which tend to show that the Pentateuch is a single work of Mosaic origin.

For the purposes of this paper, then, I must ask permission to assume that the arguments of the former work are so far valid that it will not be necessary to meet or consider the alleged proofs of the modern critics. Laying these aside, it will be my endeavour to set forth the considerations which would guide us in forming an estimate of these five books when examined fairly and without presupposition.

These will fall into three divisions:—

- I. Indications that the work is a Unity.
- II. Indications that it is of great Antiquity.
- III. Indications that the author was Moses.

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\* *The Unity of the Pentateuch*, Marshall Bros.

## § 1. INDICATIONS OF UNITY.

(a) *Concession of Opponents.*

We may begin by noticing that even those who maintain that the Pentateuch is composite have to recognize in it a certain kind of unity. They hold, indeed, that there were originally several independent "sources," but the facts of the case and of the subsequent history compel them to postulate that these have been "combined"—interwoven, welded, or fused—into a compact whole, much as the materials of an edifice, originally separate, have been united by the skill of the builder. They admit that the whole bears the impress of a single mind, only they maintain that it was the mind of a "Redactor," not that of an author.

(b) *External Evidence.*

In the nature of the case there can be little external evidence, yet there is some.

(i) For centuries the custodians of the work, the Jews, have known it by a single name, "the Torah"—the Law. The other designation occasionally used,—“The Five Fifths of the Law” (חמשה חומשי תורה),—shows that they regarded each of the divisions as a necessary part of a single whole.

(ii) The testimonies of Josephus and Philo show clearly that they regarded the work as a five-fold unit; and the history of the Septuagint and the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch further show that, as far back as we can trace it, the work was looked on as unique and separate from all other Hebrew literature.

(iii) The ancient titles given to these books point in the same direction. As is well known, in Hebrew the books are distinguished by words taken from the opening verse; in Greek they have descriptive titles summarizing the subject of the volume. Whichever of these may be the more ancient usage, they point to a distinction from the other books of the Old Testament.

As regards the Hebrew, the only other books distinguished by the opening word are Proverbs and Lamentations. Now *Mishlay* (משלי), while being the first word in Proverbs, is also a title descriptive of the contents; and the opening phrase from which the designation of Lamentations is taken, is in itself an extended title, *Aychah* (איכה). The fact that there is an alternative title *Kinoth* (קִינּוֹת, Laments), is really a confirma-

tion of the idea of unity with a previous work, for Lamentations was often reckoned as part of the book of Jeremiah.

In the Greek version, these titles disappear, "and in their place we find descriptive names, suggested in almost every case by words in the version itself."\* Other books of the Old Testament have "descriptive names," but they describe the nature of the contents (*e.g.*, Psalms, *Ψαλμοὶ*; Chronicles, *Παραλειπομένων*), and do not summarize the subject as do Genesis or Exodus.

It is not unreasonable to say that both Hebrew and Greek titles do distinguish between the first five books and the rest of the Old Testament. No doubt this primarily suggests separation, but that separation implies that the five stand together in a common isolation.

### (c) *Style.*

Turning now to internal evidence, we have next to consider the question of style, which figures so largely in the arguments for the analysis of this work.

Speaking broadly, we may say that three distinctive styles have been insisted on:—

- I. Flowing and picturesque (JE).
- II. Prosaic and formal (P).
- III. Fervid and impassioned (D).

(i) When, however, we find that style I is mainly employed in vivid narratives whose interest might almost be termed romantic; that style II occurs chiefly in statements of legislation, statistics, genealogies, details of journeys and construction; and that style III is almost confined to what profess to be reports of discourses delivered at a time of exceptional emotion, the variations cease to be surprising or incongruous. They become almost a necessity of intelligent composition, such as a talented author would naturally employ. Such variations of style to suit different subjects might easily be paralleled from modern works and histories of whose unity there can be no question.

(ii) When, too, we find that the characteristics of style I repeatedly cross and interlace with those of style II—as is said to be the case in the account of the Flood, the narrative of

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\* Swete, "Introduction," p. 214.

Dinah, the accounts of the Plagues, of the passage of the Red Sea, of the mission of the Spies, and of Korah's Rebellion—and that traces of both style I and style II are said to be discoverable in the volume chiefly characterized by style III, it becomes much more probable that the variations are due to one and the same writer whose style is coloured by the nature of the thought he is expressing, than that they are due to the more or less arbitrary piecing together of fragments from different works.

(iii) It is, however, further urged that the passages distinguished by characteristics of style are also marked by peculiarities of diction or historic representation, and that these peculiarities confirm the analysis arrived at by considerations of style.

If all the passages in style I invariably showed one set of peculiarities, and all the passages in style II a different set, there would be great force in this argument, but it is not so. Instead, we find that passages in style I have embedded in them, here and there, peculiarities supposed to belong to style II, and *vice versa*. A division by style alone would not coincide with a division by peculiarities alone.

The fact that marked peculiarities, whether verbal or historic, are common to passages of varying style would tend to show that all these passages come from the same author, and that therefore variation of style is not a proof of difference of authorship.

Suppose a panel of wood (like that in the chapel of Trinity College, Oxford) in which dark and light patches combine to form the semblance of a picture. Suppose that someone asserts: "This appearance of a picture is not natural but artificial. Pieces of different woods, one kind dark and the other light, have been fitted together to produce this appearance. And, to prove that I am right, you will find that the parts differ in texture as well as in colour. The dark parts are rough, and the light parts are smooth."

Now if on examination the dark parts turned out to be all rough and the light parts all smooth, the presumption that these were really different kinds of wood would be greatly strengthened. But if it was found that the dark parts were smooth in places, and the light parts rough in places, that would show that differences of texture occur in the same wood, while the fact that rough and smooth wood alike are partly light in

colour and partly dark would show that difference of colour does not mean difference of origin. The presumption would then be that the panel was of one piece of wood, and the appearance of a picture natural, not artificial.

The fact, then, that peculiarities of diction or representation are common to passages which vary in style is in reality an indication that the whole work is of one piece, and that any appearance of design has not been artificially produced by combination.

(iv) Added to all this there are certain characteristics which link together the various parts. The tendency to repeat a statement in an enlarged or varied form, sometimes alleged as a special characteristic of P, is also found in passages attributed to JE: parenthetic digressions are found both in D and P (in Deut. ii, 20-23; x, 6-9; in P, Exod. vi, 14-17): the use of stated formulæ is nearly as frequent in Deuteronomy (*e.g.*, "the commandments which I command thee this day," "the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it") as in Leviticus: all the parts show a disregard of strict chronology (in JE, Gen. xxxviii, Judah and Tamar, and Exod. xviii, Jethro's visit; in P, Num. vii and ix, events in first month after the census of the second month; in D, Deut. i, 37, 38; ix, 22; x, 6, 7). These characteristics are marks of a peculiar turn of thought, and lie deeper than the surface variations on which the critics rely. They are fair evidence that the whole work proceeded from one mind.

#### (d) *Inter-relation of Parts.*

It has before now been pointed out\* how closely the parts varying in style are inter-related; how they dovetail into one another, and explain one another in a way that would hardly be possible if they were due to different authors. It would be superfluous for me to go over ground that has been already so well covered, but perhaps I may be allowed to recapitulate some points that have occurred to myself, and (so far as I know) have not been noticed elsewhere.

(i) The consistent use of *holeed* (הוֹלִיד) in the genealogies of the chosen line (Gen. v, 3-32; vi, 10; xi, 11-27), while *yalad* (יָלַד) is used for other lines (Gen. iv, 18; x, 8-26), shows

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\* See Orr, *Problem of O.T.*, 346-359.

a definite plan running through the whole series. In like manner the alternations of *chazak* (חזק) and *kabed* (כבד) show a similar unity of plan governing the account of the Plagues.

(ii) Gen. vi, 9, "These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations" (attributed to P) follows immediately after and explains "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 8, attributed to J). In like manner Gen. vii, 11 expands and explains v. 10.

(iii) The passage, Gen. vii, 17–viii, 5, alleged to be composite, displays a threefold use of triple climax, indicating the work of one mind.

(iv) The renewed commission of Moses in Egypt (Exod. vi, 2–vii, 13, P) is the necessary sequel to Moses' complaint of the failure of his mission to Pharaoh (v, 22, 23, J).

(v) Deuteronomy, admittedly founded on the JE laws and history, and showing a number of verbal coincidences, requires the P laws to explain the bare references to the different kinds of Sacrifices, and to the law of Leprosy. The Deuteronomy title "Feast of Booths" (חג הסוכות xvi, 13) is only explained by Lev. xxiii, 42–43. The Deuteronomy system of judicature (xvi, 18; xvii, 8–13) modifies the Wilderness system (Exod. xviii), to suit the circumstances of the Promised Land. In the same way, Deuteronomy, while insisting on the law of the Central Sanctuary laid down in Lev. xvii, 1–5, relaxes the laws of slaughtering for food and of tithes, and makes a further provision of Cities of Refuge to suit the changed condition.

(vi) Exod. xviii records Jethro's suggestion of appointing subordinate judges: Deut. i, 9–17 supplements this by recording how Moses acted on the suggestion. Num. xiii, 1, 2 records the Divine authorization of the Mission of the Spies: Deut. i, 22 supplements this by recording that the first suggestion came from the people themselves.

(vii) The laws of Exod. xxii, xxiii, of the latter half of Leviticus, and of Deuteronomy, show the same unsystematic mingling of subjects. The three closing "hortatory exhortations" (Exod. xxiii, 20–33; Lev. xxvi; Deut. xxviii) are alike in character, and display a consistent progression in that order. The intercessions in Exod. xxxii, 11–13, 31 f.; Num. xiv, 13–19; and Deut. ix, 26–29 are marked by the same magnanimity of character and the same turn of thought.

(viii) All the parts consistently represent Israel as a mighty nation at and after the Exodus.

(ix) All the parts show the distinction between *Ani* (אני) as the imperious and emphatic form of the personal pronoun, and the condescending or deprecatory form *Anokhi* (אנכי).

(x) All the parts preserve the distinction between JEHOVAH (יהוה), the personal Covenant Name, connoting the relation of God to man and especially the Chosen Family, and *Elohim* (אלהים), the God of creation and all nations.

In Genesis and Exodus *Elohim* is several times found with the definite article האלהים, indicating the only true God, particularly in the Egyptian history and at the Burning Bush. The same use is found three times in connection with Jethro\* and twice in connection with Balaam. In Deuteronomy it occurs four times where the teaching that God is the only true God is emphasized.

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(e) *Plan.*

Taking the Pentateuch as a whole, a single purpose, slowly but consistently developed, is observable.

The earliest chapters, Gen. i-vi, lay down briefly but broadly the foundations of the Creation, the Fall, and consequent rapid corruption of the human race. Then chapters vii-xi narrate the Deluge, the fresh start after it, and again a rapid multiplication and deterioration. The remainder of the book is occupied with the selection of a particular family and its history down to the sojourn in Egypt.

The other four books deal with the enfranchisement of that family, now become a great nation, and its education and discipline in the Wilderness. The earlier part of Exodus narrates the sufferings and miraculous deliverance from servitude of the People; the latter part, the great Theophany at Sinai, the ratification of the Covenant, and the erection of the Tabernacle to be the Dwelling of the Divine Presence in the midst of the People. Leviticus carries on the tale with the laws of sacrificial ceremonial, the inauguration of the priesthood and consecration of the Sanctuary; then laws as to various forms of defilement, culminating in the purificatory rites of the Day of Atonement; and lastly laws to ensure the right conduct of the People. Numbers begins with the preliminary census, and carries on

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\* In one verse, Exod. xviii, 11, Jethro uses the term for "the gods," where he acknowledges the supremacy of JEHOVAH.

the wanderings and vicissitudes of the People up to their arrival in Moab. Deuteronomy crowns the whole with the valedictory addresses of the aged Leader, impressing on the People the high honour of being so called and chosen, and the consequent need of responding worthily to their vocation.

It has been asserted that here there is not a real close.

“The first stage in the history of God’s dealings with His chosen people ends with their settlement in the Promised Land rather than with the death of Moses. The promise is made to Abraham, ‘To thy seed will I give this land’ (Gen. xii, 7) and frequently repeated to him and his descendants in the book of Genesis. The rest of the Pentateuch records the development of the nation, and its discipline preparatory to entering the Land. This record is incomplete without the book of Joshua, in which the fulfilment of the promises is recorded.”\*

If the end aimed at were only the installation of the Chosen People in the Promised Land, there would be weight in this argument. But the promise of Gen. xii, 7 is subsequent and subsidiary to the larger promise of v. 3, “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” In view of this greater end, the close of the nation’s time of trial and discipline becomes a marked era. The Pentateuch records the initial stages of a mighty scheme of redemption: the entry into the Promised Land commences a new phase in which the Chosen People are given the opportunity to rise to the height of their Divine mission to the world.

The selection and preparation of a Chosen People, not for their own sakes, but for the ultimate benefit of all mankind, is the true burden of the whole five books, and all the manifold details only subserve this one great purpose.

Is it possible to believe that this majestic unity of design was not deliberately planned, but only achieved by the labours of a Redactor piecing together incongruous and even inconsistent materials? Can we believe that a couple of narratives mainly based on folk-lore, a series of discourses composed in the name of a legislator long deceased, and the codification of an amorphous mass of priestly decisions and Temple usages,—all three originating independently and at long intervals of time,—

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\* Chapman, *Intro. to Pent.*, p. 6.



could possibly have been combined into so compact and coherent a whole ?

That would indeed be a stupendous miracle.

## § 2. INDICATIONS OF ANTIQUITY.

If, then, the Pentateuch be a unity, to what age can we assign it ? Can we attribute it to the literary activity said to have prevailed in the days of the early monarchy ? or to the dawning of the prophetic era ? or to the religious revival under Josiah ? or must we bring it all down to the period after the Exile ?

Here the admissions of opponents will not assist us. They do admit that parts of the Pentateuch (notably some of the poetry) are very ancient, and that Moses was "the ultimate founder of both the national and religious life of Israel."\* But they look upon the more ancient elements as mere fragments preserved in works of much later date, just as stray boulders may be found embedded in strata of more recent formation. We turn then to the evidence.

### (a) *External Evidence.*

(i) In the LXX version there are many indications that the translators have not understood (or misunderstood) the Hebrew words. For instance, in Gen. vi (where the context determines the sense) the word for "Ark" (תֵּבָה) is rendered *κιβωτὸν*, † a wooden chest, but in Exod. ii, 3 is simply represented by *θίβιν*, and the material of which it was composed (גֹּמֵא papyrus) is altogether omitted. So in Gen. xxii, 13 the word for "thicket" (סִבְכָּה) is represented by *φυτῶ σαβέκ*, which combines a not very accurate translation with a transliteration. The words for "ephah" and "shekel" are occasionally rendered by a Greek word, but more commonly are simply turned into Greek letters.

The word "Shittim,"—acacia,—is represented by a word which seems to mean "not liable to rot," except in a proper name, where it is transliterated.

The renderings *μονοκέρωσ* (one-horned, possibly = rhinoceros) for the wild ox, *Rem* (רֵמָה) and *καμηλοπαρδαλις* (giraffe) for *Zamer* (זָמֵר, a kind of deer, R.V. chamois) suggest

\* Driver, LOT, 152.

† This word is also used, Exod. xxv, 10, etc., for the "Ark" (אֲרוֹן) of the Covenant.

that animals known in Africa have been substituted where the meaning of the Hebrew was unknown. These and a good many more facts suggest that the writings were already ancient in the middle of the third century B.C., and that many words had become obsolete.

It is, however, true that similar mistranslations are found in other parts of the Old Testament, as in the titles of the Psalms, and therefore these facts alone would not suffice to prove that the Pentateuch was of any greater antiquity.

(ii) The existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch forbids us to place the work later than 420 B.C., and quite possibly may push it a century or two further back.

(iii) The evidence of the other books of the Old Testament would carry the Pentateuch back to a time before Jeremiah, before Hosea, before Solomon or David, even to the time of Joshua, for Josh. xviii, 1 testifies to the setting up of the Tent of Meeting at Shiloh, and Josh. xxii, 9-20 to the unlawfulness of any altar for sacrifice except that at Shiloh.

These evidences the critics disallow, sometimes attaching a different meaning to words or phrases (*e.g.*, insisting that *Torah* does not mean a written law, but "oral direction"; or that the Tent of Meeting in Joshua was not P's Tabernacle, but JE's "simple tent"); sometimes by contending that such passages are late interpolations.

It has to be remembered, however, that these interpretations and contentions are largely, if not entirely, dependent on the previous analysis. The critics have not begun by deciding against these passages on independent grounds, and therefore left them out of count. They first decided that certain parts of the Pentateuch were of late date, and then, on grounds furnished by their analysis, have explained away or excised the passages in later books which militated against their conclusions. But when the question at issue is whether any part of the Pentateuch is of late date, the evidence of the other books ought to be allowed its full weight.

#### (b) *Linguistic Peculiarities.*

The use in the Pentateuch of the form אָהוּ for both masculine and feminine of the pronoun is well known.

Both Dr. Driver and Mr. Chapman argue that, as Arabic, Aramaic, and Ethiopic have the distinction between *hu'* and *hi'* in sound, this must be "part of the common stock of the Semitic

languages," and therefore Hebrew also must have had it. At best this is only an *a priori* inference, and there is no proof that early Hebrew had the distinction. Why, for instance, might not the language spoken by Abraham have parted from the common stock before that distinction was introduced?

Mr. Chapman further states that "in old inscriptions, Phœnician, Moabite, and Aramaic, the pronoun is written **אֵל** for both genders, and it seems probable that the same letters were used in Hebrew."\* Again, this only amounts to probability without proof.

But in truth these arguments, whatever weight they may have, miss the real point at issue, which is, Why is this anomaly practically confined to the Pentateuch? Even if the pronoun was originally written **אֵל**, why has **ו** been inserted almost uniformly in these books, and **י** almost uniformly in all others? Are we to believe that scribes designedly made this difference in order to make the Pentateuch appear archaic?

Moreover the phenomenon does not stand alone. There is the other well-known instance of the masculine form *Na'ar* (**נַעַר**) being used for "maiden" with only one exception (Deut. xxii, 19, **נַעֲרָה**) in a chapter where the other form occurs thirteen times.

In addition to these, the R.V. renders Lev. xxii, 28 by "whether it be cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and her young," which is evidently the meaning, and the LXX has feminine pronouns (*αὐτῆς . . . αὐτῆς*). Now the Hebrew for the animals (**שׁוֹר . . . בָּשָׂב**) may be taken as generic (LXX, *μόσχου ἢ πρόβατον*), either male or female, but the pronouns (**אָתּוֹ וְאֵת בְּנוֹ**) are uncompromisingly masculine, and literally rendered would read "him and his son."

Again, in Exod. xxvi, 26 the word "side" has a masculine numeral attached, but in xxxvi, 31 (the parallel passage) the numeral is feminine. So in Deut. xxix, 20, *Torah* is masculine, and in 28 feminine; in chapter xxxi, 24 again feminine, but in v. 26 masculine once more.

Do not all these, taken together, indicate that, when these books were written, the distinction between the genders was not clearly established? and would not that point to a very early stage of the language? Yet most of these instances come from the parts which are alleged to be of late date.

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\* *Intro. to Pent.*, 226.

(c) *Foreign Words.*

Several words in this work are of Egyptian origin. Dr. Driver admits eight or nine,\* of which תבה, *Tebah*, for ark and שעטנז (*Sha'atenez*, mixture; Lev. xix, 19; Deut. xxii, 11) are only found in the Pentateuch, and three others seldom elsewhere.

In Exod. xvi, 16, 18 a certain measure is called 'Omer (עמר), and in v. 36 is explained as equal to one-tenth of an ephah. The word occurs nowhere else in this sense, but instead "the tenth part of an ephah," or 'Issaron (עשרון, tenth part) is used.

In a careful comparison of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Pentateuch, which has occupied me for a considerable time, my attention has been drawn to the Greek transliteration of Hebrew names and words. Now 'Omer begins with the guttural 'Ain (ע), which has no equivalent in the Greek alphabet, and is therefore in most cases disregarded (as, e.g., in Ἰακὼβ). In a few instances, however, it is represented by the Greek gamma (γ), and this word appears as γομόρ. But the remarkable fact is that the names in which γ appears are foreign names, such as Gaza, Gomorrah, Chedorlaomer, etc. Now in Arabic the name Gaza begins with the guttural Ghain (غ), only differing from 'Ain (ع) by a diacritical point, while in modern Greek γ is pronounced with a softer gh sound. It would seem, therefore, that the Hebrew, having no letter Ghain, has perforce represented it by the nearest equivalent, 'Ain, but that the Greek translators, aware of the true pronunciation of these foreign words, have indicated it by inserting the γ. This letter, then, in γομόρ (and the double vowelising with ο points in the same direction) would show that this is not a Hebrew word, and both Driver and Fuerst (in his Lexicon) compare it to the Arabic *ghumar* (غمر), a cup, "said to be used by Arabs when travelling in the desert."\*

Does not this at once explain the unique use of the word in Exod. xvi, and the need for explaining it in v. 36? In a desert incident a desert word is used.

There is some reason, also, for thinking that some of the names of "unclean" birds, in Lev. xi, Deut. xiv, are traceable to desert Arabic, but this has not yet been established.

\* LOT, 125.

† Driver, *Exodus*, 149.

The combination of Egyptian and desert Arabic words suits the time when the people were in the desert after a recent escape from Egypt, and no other period.

(d) *Desert Surroundings.*

The system of subordinate judges suggested by Jethro; the materials for the Tabernacle (especially the Shittim wood, and the skins of *Tachashim*); the provision of such things as Manna and Quails; the limitation of animal food to the peace-offerings and to animals taken in hunting; the permission to eat certain kinds of locusts; the obscure provision (Num. xviii, 27-30) that the heave offering is to be "as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor and as the fulness of the wine-press"; all these fit in with the conditions prevailing in the Wilderness. Some (at least) of them are so far from obvious that they can hardly be supposed to have been preserved by tradition, or inserted by later writers.

The worship of the Golden Calf points to a form of idolatry prevalent in Egypt; the sacrificing to "satyrs" in the open field (Lev. xvii, 5, 7) is exactly the form of superstition likely to be found in the desert; the worship of Baal-peor (Num. xxv, 3) is specifically Moabite; and the warnings and prohibitions of Deuteronomy are against forms of Canaanite idolatry. Is it possible that later traditions in independent sources should have preserved these, and only these, and that in the precise order required by the history?

Some of the evidence available, then, points to a remote antiquity for the whole Pentateuch, and much of it to that precise period when Israel was in the Wilderness.

### § 3. INDICATIONS OF MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP.

If the Pentateuch is the work of a single author and of great antiquity, going back to the Wilderness times, who was the author?

It is difficult to guess who but Moses could be suggested; but, without pressing this, or the consistent attribution to him in Scripture and tradition, there seem to be sufficient indications pointing to Moses as the true author.

We may begin by considering two characteristics which at first might suggest the possibility of another author.

*(a) Use of Third Person.*

Throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and the "framework" of Deuteronomy, Moses is consistently spoken of in the third person. Does this mean that the writer was someone else?

The constant iteration of "I" and "me" in so long a narrative would have been wearisome and irritating; as a mere matter of style the substitution of Moses' name would be desirable. Besides this, that iteration would have looked like egotism, and there are sufficient indications that Moses was of a humble disposition (*see* his reluctance to accept the commission at the Burning Bush, Exod. iii, 11; his double disclaimer of eloquence, Exod. iv, 10, vi, 12; his utterance in the wilderness of Sin, "What are we that ye murmur against us?" Exod. xvi, 11; his suppression of himself in answering Korah and his company, Num. xvi, 8-11; and his constant use of the more modest *Anokhi* in his own utterances).

Further, is there any reason for supposing that Moses did the actual work of writing with his own hand, except where it is definitely stated "Moses wrote"? Great men in the East seldom, if ever, write their own letters, however capable of so doing they may be, but dictate them to a scribe. Is it not probable that Moses would adopt the same course? That would not, of course, detract from the Mosaic authorship, for we do not hesitate to ascribe the Epistle to the Romans to St. Paul, though xvi, 22 says, "I Tertius, who write the epistle."

Would not, then, the use of Moses' name rather than the first person be more suitable if the actual work of writing was done by a scribe? Possibly, also, this would account for the addition of the epilogue, Deut. xxxiv.

There appear to be sufficient reasons for Moses preferring the third person in narrating the events of his own life.

*(b) Self-assertion.*

On Num. xii, 3, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," Dr. McNeile comments: "To those who have held that the Pentateuch was from Moses' own pen, this verse, with its appearance of self-righteousness, has always been a serious difficulty."\*

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\* *Numbers*, p. 66.

Is there not something of an anachronism in this estimate? In early ages, and indeed up to the Christian times, was meekness considered so great a virtue? Was it not rather looked upon as weakness of character? Dr. McNeile asserts that the word (עני) connotes "always pious humility towards God," but in Gen. xvi, 11, xxxi, 42, and Exod. iii, 7, 17, it is the word rendered "affliction," and in Deut. xxiv, 12 it is applied to the "poor" man whose pledge is not to be retained. Was the writer of Ps. lxx, 5 "self-righteous" when he asserted "I am poor (עני) and needy (אביון)"? Poverty and humiliation are suggested by the word rather than pious humility. At any rate, the general tendency of the Pentateuch can hardly be accused of showing a spirit of boastfulness; and that leads us on to the next consideration.

(c) *Record of Failings.*

The failings of Moses are frankly and unsparingly stated. He is represented as escaping from Egypt in fear (Exod. ii, 14); as neglecting the rite of circumcision (Exod. iv, 24-26); as distrusting the validity of his commission (Exod. v, 22-23); as breaking the tables of the Law in hot anger (Exod. xxxii, 19); as despairing of his power to manage the people (Num. xi, 11-15); as having married a "Cushite" wife (Num. xii, 1); as failing to sanctify the LORD at Meribah (Num. xx, 12).

Would any contemporary or any later writer have ventured so to disparage the character of the great Leader? Contrast the glorification of Moses to be found in the Talmud, or even the terms in which he is alluded to in the Psalms.

In like manner, who would have recorded without any extenuation the drunkenness of Noah, the deceit of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the incest of Judah, the conspiracy of the ten brethren against Joseph, Aaron's sin in making the Golden Calf, the presumption and fate of Aaron's sons, Miriam's leprosy, the repeated murmurings and backslidings of the people; or would have included the scathing denunciations in Deuteronomy of Israel as rebellious, stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart or the terrible warnings of Lev. xxvi and Deut. xxviii?

(d) *Matters only known to Moses.*

In many parts there are accounts of what took place when Moses alone of human beings was present. The happenings at the Burning Bush; the renewal of that commission in Egypt;

the account of what passed on Sinai, and during the two periods of forty days (including the whole "Book of the Covenant," and the instructions about the Tabernacle); a great part of the laws in Leviticus and Numbers; the colloquy in Num. xi; the intercession after the return of the Spies, Num. xiv; Moses' prayer to be allowed to enter the Promised Land, Deut. iii, 23-25; the further account of the stay in the Mount, Deut. ix, 9-29; and the final summons to ascend Nebo to his death; who but Moses could have known anything about any of these? Yet unless all of them (and they form a considerable part of the Pentateuch, affecting all the alleged "sources") were derived from Moses himself, they can only be imaginative fabrications.

Is that credible? Can we believe, for instance, that anyone who was merely inventing could have imagined the tender, self-sacrificing intercession in Exod. xxxii, 31, 32, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou has written"; or the wondrous proclamation (xxxiv, 6), "The LORD, the LORD, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth"? Do not utterances like these bear on the face of them the stamp of truth? Can we even suppose that accounts so minutely detailed could have been handed down by tradition?

(e) *Matters only suitable to Moses.*

There are intimate matters,—the meeting with Jethro's daughters, the incident "at the lodging-place," Jethro's rebuke of Moses,—little likely to be generally known or to be preserved by tradition. There are also little personal touches in Deuteronomy only appropriate in the mouth of Moses.

Then there is the evidence of the "Blessing of Moses," Deut. xxxiii.

In this, the most noticeable features are the omission of any mention of Simeon,—an omission so marked that a few of the Septuagint MSS.\* have inserted the name in v. 6,—and the lengthy eulogies of Levi and Joseph (with Ephraim given the predominance, v. 17).

The omission of Simeon may be due to the leading part taken by that tribe in the turning aside after Baal-peor (Num. xxiv,

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\* The three uncials A, M, N, and five cursives.



15). That would be suitable on the lips of Moses when the memory of the transgression was fresh, but how can it be accounted for on the part of any later writer ?

The special praise of Levi is natural on the part of one who was himself of Levite origin, particularly as the chief allusion is to the faithfulness of the tribe in the matter of the Golden Calf, when the descendants of Levi redeemed their character by consecrating the fierce temper of their ancestor to the service of the LORD. Would it have occurred to anyone but Moses to make this one of the most remarkable features of the Blessing ? The curious digression in Deut. x, 8, 9 (also only suitable if Moses was the speaker) confirms this view.

The blessing of Joseph corresponds in many respects to that in Gen. xlix, but differs in the emphasis laid on the "ten thousands of Ephraim." No doubt there is an allusion to Jacob's prediction that he should become greater than his brother (Gen. xlviii, 19), but is that sufficient reason for its insertion here ? Moses, however, would have had special reason for noticing Ephraim since it was the tribe of Joshua, his minister and faithful adherent, and already designated as his successor.

These considerations account reasonably for the facts when we look for an explanation, but is it likely they would have influenced anyone but Moses ?

Then there are the differences between this Blessing and that of Jacob.

In Genesis the denunciation of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are connected with incidents in Jacob's own life to which the patriarch would naturally recur : here Reuben is dismissed with a prayer for his continued existence, Simeon is passed over in silence, but Levi receives a glowing eulogium. In Genesis Judah is indeed the praised one : here he is rather interceded for. In Genesis Dan is likened to a serpent in the way : here he is called a lion's whelp, the designation reserved for Judah by Jacob. In Genesis Benjamin is likened to a ravaging wolf : here he is "the beloved of the LORD."

Now on any theory the Blessing of Moses was considerably later than that of Jacob. Who would have ventured to depart so widely from the sayings attributed to the father of the nation, and even (in the case of Levi) to change a curse into a blessing ? Surely that could only be done by one in such a position of authority as Moses held, and none after him.

*(f) Plan.*

The whole Pentateuch contains 187 chapters occupying 166½ pages in the Revised Version.

The period from Adam to the call of Abram is represented as extending to about 2000 years; that from the call of Abram to Moses' flight from Egypt, about four centuries; from Moses' flight to his death, 80 years. Yet the first period is dismissed in 11 chapters (7½ pages), the second in 40½ chapters (34 pages), while to the third are devoted no less than 135½ chapters (125 pages). This striking arrangement is worth setting out in tabular form:—

Period.	Years.	Chapters.	Pages.
From Adam to Abram... ..	2000	11	7½
From Abram to Moses' flight... ..	400	40½	34
From Moses' flight to his death ...	80	135½	125

The Patriarchal age, only one-fifth of the previous period, occupies nearly five times as much space; the Mosaic part, one-thirtieth of the two previous periods, occupies three times the space allotted to the two together. Three-quarters of the whole work deal with matters which came within the personal knowledge of Moses.

That is exactly what might be expected if Moses was the author. For the earliest ages he could only have had remote traditions, and accordingly that period is merely sketched in, excepting the three great subjects of the Creation, the Fall, and the Deluge. The patriarchal histories would probably be handed down in much fuller detail, even if some documentary records were not preserved. The events of his own life, especially of the forty years from his call to his death, would provide the amplest material of all.

Is it within the bounds of any reasonable probability that this proportion, so closely corresponding to what would obtain in a work of which Moses was the author, could have resulted from the combination of three sources, all of much later date?

The considerations here set forth are, I am fully aware, mere outlines of a subject deserving much fuller and more thorough treatment. Nor have I included some important considerations advanced by other writers. For instance, no use has been made of Mr. Craig Robinson's weighty argument for the antiquity of the Pentateuch from the absence of all mention of Jerusalem, of the title "the LORD of Hosts," and of the musical services of the Temple; nor of the argument from the Egyptian colouring so ably urged by Prof. Naville and other experts, with which I am not competent to deal; nor of the arguments from the Theology of the Pentateuch put forward by Prof. Orr and (as regards Genesis) by the Rev. F. Watson.

It is not for want of appreciation that I have refrained from dwelling on these, but simply because I was unwilling merely to borrow from the thoughts of others.

Yet incomplete as the treatment of the subject has been, I venture to submit that the arguments indicated are wider, deeper, more surely founded on evidence than those advanced for the disintegration of the Pentateuch.

It will be to me a matter of deepest thankfulness if I have been enabled to contribute a little to the vindication, against modern theories, of the age-long belief that the five volumes of the Torah constitute one single work, of real antiquity, and due to the authority of Moses himself.

#### LETTERS RECEIVED BY THE LECTURER.

The Lecturer read the following letters received by himself:—

From the Dean of Ely, Rev. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.: I am much obliged to you for sending me your paper, and asking me to criticise it. But "a few criticisms" would be quite useless; and it seems to me hardly worth while nowadays to discuss what is almost universally accepted by scholars. I cannot imagine any student, trained in literary and historic critical methods, questioning the composite origin of the Pentateuch, if he approaches the subject from an unprejudiced point of view, and apart from inherited prepossessions. While there is much room for variety of opinion as regards details, the main outlines of Pentateuchal criticism seem to me established by complex and cumulative evidence.

From the Rev. Professor A. NAIRNE, D.D. : I thank you very much for a very interesting gift. It is, I am afraid, unlikely that, after changing my mind once on (as I felt) the compulsion of abundant evidence, I shall change it back again lightly. But a bit of scholarship is always a pleasure, and of course I value every fresh presentation of the other view. Let me touch on the point where we agree. I object to the idea of the *Redactor* as much as you do. Whoever made the final book, and whenever it was completed, the last author was an author, not a redactor : he (or they) used material rather than made extracts. And accordingly I too doubt whether any precise analysis, showing junctions, can be generally made—not, *e.g.*, in the Flood narrative ; yet sometimes it seems difficult to deny this—*e.g.*, Ex. xix. *ad fin.* וַיִּאָמֶר and then fresh start. To me the characteristics of J.E.D.P. do not seem confused together, except just so far as this intelligent use of original material by a later author tends to blending.

But it is the history of Israel and the Jews, as presented by the Old Testament as a whole, that refuted my former opinion : you hardly touch on that.

From the Very Rev. MOSES GASTER, Ph. D., chief Rabbi of Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregations : I deeply regret that I cannot be present, for I should like to testify personally to the great value of your paper. I have read it with a steadily growing satisfaction : I have followed line by line the cumulative evidence which you are marshalling so skilfully in defence of the old traditional antiquity of the *Torah* and the Mosaic authorship.

The tide of the so-called Higher Criticism is ebbing fast. The spade has done its work : the discoveries in Babylon and Egypt have adduced an ever-growing number of evidences to the absolute accuracy even of the stray allusions in the Pentateuch. Nothing has as yet come to light which could call in question such accuracy : on the contrary, the reverse has been the case, and I need only allude among the latest discoveries to that of the Aramaic papyri in Egypt, which with one blow has destroyed the artificial structure of the Higher Criticism of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Rock of Scripture, for a time submerged under the waves of that turbid flood, is emerging higher and higher, and the ingenuity of scholars is happily no longer placed at the service of destructive

forces. Healthy constructive work is now being done, and the more the ancient documents are investigated without bias, and even without favour, the more all these peculiar vain imaginings recede into the distant past. It is refreshing to follow up the new line of investigation, and also to turn aside from the extraordinary conclusions at which the latest disciples of Higher Criticism are now arriving.

It would not be the place here to mention any of these latest adepts in the art of destruction. It is curious to me to see how people will turn away from plain simple facts in order to give them a most fantastic interpretation. Neither the facts nor the words of the Bible mean to them what they really represent. Quite different meanings are placed upon them. I am sometimes reminded of recent studies in folk-lore where simple facts are made to carry a meaning totally strange to them. But this is a passing phase. A real independent examination of the relation between the Greek and the Hebrew has yielded already results different from those anticipated and taken for granted by the Higher Critics.

A critical edition of the Hebrew Bible, a desideratum of the highest order, will place us in even a better position to meet some of the verbal quibbles of these critics; and still more a patient and laborious investigation of the text as it stands cannot fail in the long run to vindicate the antiquity of the *Torah*. I specially hold strong views about the Samaritan Pentateuch, which I believe to have been the text of the Northern Tribes, and therefore to represent a recension almost as old as the Judæan version, and akin to that popular Bible (a Hebrew Vulgate) which I consider to have been the basis of the Greek translation. It is far anterior to the date you mention; and in my forthcoming History of the Jews, at which I have been working for many years, I hope to throw some new light on that famous incident mentioned in Ezra. The philological arguments break down as soon as they are no longer examined from a preconceived point of view. And even under the levelling activity of the Massorites, one can distinguish various strata, not only of language, but also of dialects.

Moreover, the compilation of a book like the Law out of mere tatters and fragments would not only be a unique phenomenon in the literary history of the world, but would scarcely be accepted

by a people—and a religious people too—as a basis and fount of inspiration and of religious life and conduct.

Counting you among the workers in the field of our Sacred Law, let me congratulate you on the success which has hitherto attended your labours. May you go from strength to strength !

#### DISCUSSION.

Prof. H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD, M.A., B.Sc., in moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer, said : Any man purposing to criticise the Holy Scriptures should possess the qualifications of (1) a reverent spirit ; (2) detachment from bias ; and (3) adequate scholarship. I do not find these three attributes together in any of the sceptical critics. Yet a fourth qualification is important, namely, spirituality, which says : “ Oh, how *love* I Thy Law ! ” The four are all prominent in the Paper before us, —a Paper marked by acuteness in argument, cogency and cumulative force in reasoning, and fairness toward opponents.

I am especially struck with the arguments showing inter-relation of parts and unity of plan ; also with those drawn from linguistic considerations and foreign words. The Holy Spirit was the Author of Pentateuch, as of all the Scriptures. Moses was indeed the principal writer. God has spoken to man by His holy prophets from the very earliest times. There has from the beginning been a Revelation, and this Revelation has not been left to the uncertainty and corruption of merely oral tradition. It has been *written* under the “ inspiration of God.”

Mr. M. L. ROUSE, B.A., B.L. : Before now in such discussions as these I have pointed out that several times in Joshua allusion is made to Deuteronomy, and once or twice in such terms as no forger could have thought of using. The passages are : “ As I have said unto Moses, all this land shall be thine ; ” again, when Joshua rallied the Israelites into two companies to hear the Commandments, he added “ as the Lord commanded Moses.” Then, in an account of how many nations or cities were left, we read : “ for it was the Lord’s will to destroy them . . . as the Lord commanded Moses.” These passages are witnesses to the fact that Deuteronomy was written earlier than the book of Joshua was. In Job viii, 8, we read :

Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to

the search of their fathers, for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow. Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?" and so on. How could one inquire of the former age if the records were not written in a book?

MR. E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.: Some years ago a friend of mine, who was very much attracted by the Higher Criticism, wrote me several letters on the subject, and in one of these he referred to the account of the Flood, saying that it resolved itself into two narratives, so distinct that the man who ran could detect them. I wrote back and said, Take Genesis, and give me your analysis of the Story of the Flood, without consulting any critic, and see how your analysis agrees with that of the Higher Critics. I added, I can give you a modern instance to work out. My wife and I brought out a book between us. Will you go through and tell us, how much and which chapters, each of us wrote? He declined to take up either challenge.

A MEMBER: I cannot imagine David offering up sacrifice or Solomon offering sacrifices at the dedication of the Temple if they knew they were absolutely forbidden to touch such things by the Law; and why should Hosea (ch. iii) have said there should be no king and no prince and no sacrifice? Those things are absolutely taboo in the book of Deuteronomy. It certainly helps me to understand the Bible much better if I conceive of the Pentateuch as growing gradually, as the Law grew.

Remarks on the subject were also made by Rev. J. Tuckwell, M.R.A.S.

THE vote of thanks, having been seconded by the Rev. Bernard W. Harvey, was carried with acclamation.

#### LECTURER'S REPLY.

MR. FINN: The time is short, and I must pass some of the points raised. First, with regard to meekness being found in the Old Testament, I was speaking rather of the general things in the Oriental world as to what meekness might mean. References in Joshua supporting the fact that Deuteronomy was written first, I can accept; and I also believe that the earlier part of the Pentateuch must have been derived from earlier documents. With regard to the use of

the word *Elohim* with the definite article, I only used that to show that this rather remarkable usage is not confined to one book.

As to David and Solomon offering sacrifices, I know of no passage in the Old Testament that asserts that either of those kings offered sacrifices with their own hands. It says that David builded an altar. Did he do that with his own hands? It says that he gave to the assembly a portion of meat and bread. Did David go round and do that himself? It simply means that he commanded or allowed sacrifices to be offered by the appropriate agent. As to the difference between Kings and Chronicles, the one inspired with the spirit of Deuteronomy and the other with the spirit of Leviticus, modern history is written in exactly the same way: there is the secular and the ecclesiastical point of view.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

The Rev. Canon R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A. : I have read Mr. Finn's paper with great interest, and agree with his view that the Pentateuch is one and ancient; but whilst the **FOUR** books may be regarded as authorised by Moses, the *first* was accepted by him as having come down from Patriarchal times. He might be called the inspired Redactor of it, but hardly the author. It was pre-Mosaic, and covers a long period during which we now know that the art of writing was carried on. See the code of Hammurabi (Abraham's contemporary). The whole is a growth, and shows signs of stratification. This is a fascinating subject for the true critic. Why, e.g., do we find the Egyptian name *Abib* for the Paschal month, and in later days *Nisan*?

Mr. Finn has noticed several of these points. In my book on the "Building up of the Old Testament," I have shown that Genesis consists of contemporary historical materials, and is the fountain of formulæ which run through the rest of the books. It is Semitic in language, and monotheistic in teaching throughout, and is the Fountain-head of Promise and the Foundation on which the rest of the Bible is built up.

The Rev. CHANCELLOR LIAS, M.A. : I heartily congratulate the Institute on Mr. Finn's excellent paper—the more so as it is the complement rather than the continuation of the work he mentions



at the outset. In that work he shows exhaustively how unsatisfactory German Biblical criticism is, how full it is of unproved assumptions and *petitiones principii*; and how hopelessly unscientific it is in its axioms, postulates, and definitions. In this paper he gives us the converse of the proposition he has proved in his book, and undertakes to show that the evidence—internal as well as external—points to the conclusion that the Pentateuch is a single work of Mosaic origin.

I ask the reader to note Mr. Finn's words (page 33) on external evidence, and especially to ii. On page 34, I have to remark that I could at any time undertake to produce from the works of historians so graphic and picturesque as Macaulay and Froude, passages as "prosaic and formal" as Wellhausenism produces from the Pentateuch. On page 35, I ask attention to the paragraph beginning, "If all the passages." Page 37 contains a reference to the similarity of character displayed in Exod. xxiii, 20-33; Lev. xxvi, Deut. xxviii; and also in Exod. xxxii, 11-13, 31 (and following verses), Num. xiv, 13-19, and Deut. ix, 26-29. This argument can as easily be tested by anyone entirely ignorant of Hebrew as by the profoundest Hebrew scholar. I have often said that the Wellhausen theory on such points is about as ridiculous as Aaron's excuse that he put the gifts he received from the people in the fire, and "there came out this calf." Note also the remarks under head v on this page. Also in page 38 note the use of the definite article with the plural word *Elohim* (lit. *gods*), showing that the writer was a believer in the Unity of God, whereas Wellhausenism contends that the Israelites were originally worshippers of the gods of Palestine; and in page 39, on the "majestic unity of design" displayed throughout the five books of Moses, and the impossibility of an array of "redactors" contriving to bring so "majestic an unity" about on Wellhausenist assumptions.

As to the word *Torah* (p. 41), I knew something of the Revisers of the Old and New Testament translations, and I am sure that undue and unnecessary deference was paid by many of them to those who were inclined to pay respect to Wellhausenists. Constantly, in the margin of the Revised Version, appears the word "teaching," as alternatives to *Law*, in the text. From Exodus to Malachi, the word *Torah* means *Law* (see Hos. viii, 12), though not, perhaps,

universally. But the verb from which it is derived means to *fling*, or *cast*, as a command *thrown out* by authority. There are very few passages in the Old Testament where it means anything but a law, and it generally means the Law of Moses. It very seldom means *custom*, and it is not certain whether it ever does mean "teaching." On page 42, I could say a good deal about the occurrence of *naghar* for *nagharah* in Gen. xxxiv, and generally of the Wellhausen division of that chapter into "sources." But I must refrain. I will only remark that it is an example of the resolution of the German critic not to see what he does not want to see. I will only add (see page 46), that the idea of meekness being a "serious difficulty" in the way of the genuineness of the Pentateuch involves a gross anachronism.