

# **THE PENTATEUCH AND CRITICISM**

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**RTSF Monographs**

These lectures were delivered at Midlands Regional Conferences of the Theological Students' Fellowship; the first two in 1974, at Cambridge, the third in 1972 at Loughborough. They were tape-recorded, and Mr Motyer has kindly consented to their being transcribed. They have however been edited only very loosely, and Mr Motyer has not seen the final version which is printed here; so they should not be regarded as a formal publication nor cited as such.

We should like to express our gratitude to those who have been so kind, as to undertake the laborious task of transcription, at a busy time.

**Cambridge University Theological Students' Fellowship**

**June, 1974**

**Reprinted: 1976**

**Reset: 1978, by TSF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP**

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THE PRIMARY DATA

May I share with you God's goodness to me in the course of my life in this basic regard? I was brought up in direct contact with the Scriptures taken as the Word of God. Consequently when I came upon that description of John's Gospel as 'safe enough for a child to paddle in and deep enough for an elephant to swim in', I knew what it meant, because I had discovered in the course of my life that it is safe to let people read the Word of God, and that God in His educative process only allows us to meet with problems in the Bible as we are able to bear them. So that when as a child we read John's Gospel we read it with child-like eyes, and He allows us to see problems that are appropriate to that child-like point in experience. Now of course I find many more problems in the Bible than I ever found when my grandmother was teaching me the Bible. But also, thank God, I've now had over 45 years of acquaintance with the Bible, so that when I meet problems I meet them with a certain background. Now, it seems to me that the difficulty which is faced in all theological courses is that students are plunged into a study faced with problems that are apparent to the specialist who is teaching them. This to my mind is educatively appalling - it is quite the wrong way in which to approach any subject, never mind a subject which is as important as Holy Scripture. Students are plunged into an examination of problems in detail, and are expected to face as beginners problems and questions which have arisen in the course of specialist study.

Now, because that's so, I want to make a small contribution to redressing that educational imbalance. I don't mean by that that I'm going to try to cram into the space of one hour everything that has happened to me since my grandmother first taught me the story of the creation, but I want to use this first lecture to paint in large strokes an over-view of the Pentateuch - so that we will have at least some appreciation that behind these pin-points of problems of which you are doubtless all too aware, there is a proper over-view which the Pentateuch itself declares to us.

I shall discuss this subject under four heads: 1) the nature of the Mosaic claim; 2) the theological dynamic of the five books; 3) the compilation of Genesis; and 4) the meaning of the book of Numbers.

1. The Mosaic claim in the Pentateuch.

I want to set four propositions before you.

**Proposition 1:** that Moses is the central, almost the solitary figure in the books of the Pentateuch after the time of the Patriarchs. Who else in the Pentateuch, after the Patriarchs, could you name besides Moses? Joshua perhaps and Aaron and Hur, and you might even remember that vinegary old spinster Miriam. But Moses is the one figure that stands out. Even if you simply take a chapter count of the Pentateuch, there are in fact 137 chapters, and the name of Moses is absent from only 55 of those. So that the name of Moses is the dominating name in the Pentateuch, and where the name of Moses is absent from a chapter (after Genesis), the absence is explained entirely by the fact that those chapters contain a record of the teaching that Moses gave. So that Moses is the assumption behind the whole of the Pentateuch after the Patriarchal times.

**Proposition 2:** many of the incidents recorded depend directly on Moses, or else are fictional. That is to say that they are all in the same category

as our Lord's temptation narrative - nobody else was there to hear, and therefore they must have proceeded directly from Moses, as the narrative of the temptation in the wilderness must have proceeded directly from the Lord. Moses' call in chapters 3 and 4 of Exodus is typical of so much of the material that is in the Pentateuch. Either it has been written down by him, or has been written down at his dictation, or else been told to someone else by him and then written down, by that person, or else somebody made it up. If you're interested, there are at least 123 such occasions from Exodus 7 to the end of Deuteronomy.

**Proposition 3:** most of the content of the Pentateuch after the book of Genesis is claimed to depend directly on the mediating work of Moses. This is particularly the case in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which is rather interesting because Leviticus and Deuteronomy are the most thoroughly claimed to be non-Mosaic by modern schools of thought. 43 times in the book of Leviticus the claim is registered that this material is from God and through Moses. Concerning Deuteronomy, S. R. Driver - I think it's in his Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament - alleges that Deuteronomy does not purport to be Mosaic, and no printed statement was ever wider of the mark than that! If it helps you to think illustratively, Deuteronomy was woven on the Mosaic loom: it is there in the warp and in the weft. Artur Weiser is much more to the point in his Introduction to the Old Testament (p 72) - he's noting the various passages that claim to be Mosaic - and adds at the end of the list these words: 'also the book of Deuteronomy'. Now that is correct. Deuteronomy has the strongest Mosaic claim of the Pentateuch.

**Proposition 4:** there are certain passages in which Moses appears before us specifically as an author. There are as a matter of fact six passages referring to Moses as an historian, a lawgiver, and a poet - if you're interested to know the ascriptions of these six references to Moses as a writer, they can be distributed evenly over the document groups of J, E and P. But that perhaps is not information of any great significance. It is sometimes difficult to know what are the limits of a passage that is ascribed to Moses as an author or writer, but there is a definite assertion that Moses appears before us as a writer in the post-Patriarchal Pentateuch.

When we begin to appraise the nature of the Mosaic claim, we discover that within this Pentateuch there are also things that are best ascribed to a period after that of Moses. The account of Moses' death and the final appraisal of Moses in Deuteronomy 34 is best considered as having been written by somebody else after Moses' death. Numbers 12:3: 'the man Moses was meek above all men upon the face of the earth' is probably a comment written in by someone who knew Moses, the assumption being that if Moses really was meek, he couldn't have written that about himself. On the other hand, I have never met a person who was truly meek, and what such a person would have been capable of I really don't know. On the whole it is best to say that Numbers 12:3 is one of many examples in the Pentateuch which are best considered as the result of post-Mosaic editorial activity. Then in addition there are literary problems in the Pentateuch. We are told that there are contradictions and duplicate narratives, and the allegation is made that these can only be solved by multiplying editors. There are some post-Mosaic passages which are best ascribed to an editorial hand. But we are told that there are other problems - which we'll look at in a moment - which can be solved only by multiplying editors.

In other words, the nature of the Mosaic claim is this: the Pentateuch insists that it lies on a Mosaic base, but that does not solve the problems of how the Pentateuch came to be in its present form. Even the fact that Deuteronomy 34 is there and Numbers 12:3 is there tells us that the Pentateuch in its present form cannot be explained by the hand of Moses. There is a Mosaic base, but the Mosaic base does not answer the question of the present form of the Pentateuch.

## 2. The theological dynamic of the five books.

Again I want to offer you an over-view. I want you to feel that there is one theme moving all the way through these books. They are not in any sense a haphazard collection of small fragments or even of large segments. There is demonstrable theological unity in the whole thing.

You discover when you stand back and take an over-view of the Pentateuch that it falls into two unequal sections. First, Genesis 1-11: the first bit is all universal and full of great things about the world - think of the covenant with Noah, a covenant with all flesh, with all the world. Then the next section is Genesis 12 - Deuteronomy 34. When you step over that line from Genesis 11 to Genesis 12 - How are you, Abraham?, and he's the only person in the world really, isn't he? Close your eyes and think, in Genesis, how Abraham stalks up and down, a lonely figure in an empty landscape. You're right out of this boiling mass of humanity that's in chapters 1-11, and you're into a lonely landscape, where Abraham is the only person. Occasionally he says How do you do? to Abimelech or somebody, but otherwise he is on his own. Then of course he has a son called Isaac, and Isaac has a son called Jacob, and Jacob has twelve and the world begins to become a little more populated than it has been. But that's what has happened - you're out of the universal and into the particular. That's the first observation. Now in this particular section, you have two mountain tops very close to the beginning - Genesis 15 and 17. They're both covenant mountains. God inaugurates His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15, and brings His covenant into operation in chapter 17. Never read the covenant passages without a concordance because they all depend on different verbs. You've got to get the verb right to understand it. Chapter 15 is inauguration, and chapter 17 is affirmation. The one deals with sacrifice, and the other deals with law. Chapter 15 is where the great covenant sacrifice is made. Abraham divides the animals and God marches up and down between them. Chapter 17 is law: 'Walk thou before me and be thou perfect'. And the law of circumcision is given to Abraham. When you look forward from here, you come to two more mountain tops, Exodus 12 and 20; and they are also covenant mountain tops. Exodus 12 is sacrifice - God comes and offers the covenant sacrifice of Passover; and Exodus 20 is law - He gives the full itemised Mosaic law. Not any more this nice broad commandment 'Walk thou before me and be thou perfect'. How right Paul is in saying that where there is no law there is no knowledge of sin. The Patriarchs never repent; the law was this nice broad bland thing: 'Walk thou before me and be thou perfect'. Compare that with the itemised Mosaic law!

The Pentateuch is beginning to fall into some sort of pattern, isn't it? The Divine covenant is established, and you have a sequence - Genesis 15, Exodus 12 and the book of Leviticus (which elaborates the sacrificial system). And then you have the book of Deuteronomy, and that falls into the other sequence - law, a law in principle - 'walk thou before me and be thou perfect'; the law in itemised detail on Mount Sinai; and the law in

exposition and application, in the life of the people of God, in the book of Deuteronomy. You see - it does begin to hang together as one thing, doesn't it?

But you say, Well all right, but what's this dividing line at Genesis 11 and 12? Does that mean that God gave up on the world and said, Oh well, I can't manage the whole world, so I'll try my luck with one family and see if I can make any better fist of it? Not at all. Genesis 11:10-12:3 is a bridge. At 11:10, the writer of Genesis does a very interesting thing - he steps back from the tower of Babel, right back to the time of Noah, and you get another session of begats and begottens, and you say Whatever are we doing this for? Now if you examine the three great crises that occur here in Genesis 1-11 - the Fall, the Flood and the scattering at Babel - the Fall has a note of hope built into it, the Flood has a note of hope built into it, but the scattering hasn't: 'they were scattered on the face of the earth' full stop. Then you go right back and you're told that Shem begat Arphaxad and you say, How interesting! But why do we go back?

God brings us right back to the new beginning with Noah, and picks up the son of Noah, and tells us about a crowd of people we don't know anything about - but they're all there, the right man at the right place to bring God's purposes to pass. That is why the genealogies in the Bible are so thrilling, as there are all these unknown people occupying key places in God's economy. And we trace the thing through from the new beginning with Noah through to a man named Terah who had a son called Abram; and God said to Abram, in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. So in the Fall and the Flood and the scattering at Babel are the problems that need solving; and here is the solution that solves them: 'In you will all the families of the earth be blessed'. And the word 'covenant' is the bridging word, because it first fell on human ears way back in the days of Noah, and then it began to fall on human ears again in the person of Abraham - who became Abraham in Genesis 17 - and it was brought to perfection. So it all hangs together, doesn't it? That's what I call 'the theological dynamic' of the Pentateuch.

The covenant is God's answer to a universal condition. We have in Genesis 1-11 the universal problem. Then God particularises and offers a solution. That's only one person's way of looking at it, but I share that with you. I want you to feel the weight and strength of the contention that we are dealing here primarily with one unit of literature, and that when you consult it about its own claims it makes a major claim that this one unit arose from one person. I want you to feel the weight and force of that.

### 3. The Compilation of the book of Genesis.

As the book of Genesis stands, its material is described as 'generations' (Hebrew Tholedoth). It appears for the first time in Genesis 2:4 'These are the generations of ...'. Be careful as the RSV after its fashion does not always give the same word the same translation into English. (If you want that kind of fidelity you've got to use the Revised Version). Genesis is based, as we have it, on some sort of 'generations' framework. The phrase occurs twelve times in the book. There is some disagreement among the commentators whether we are to take the phrase 'these are the generations of ...' as beginning or ending the section in which it appears, but there is no disagreement as to the meaning of this word 'generations' (Tholedoth). The verbal base of the word is the verb 'to beget' or 'to bear'.

Tholedhōth means how one thing emerges out of another, one thing gives birth to another. Consequently, if you were on Jerusalem television, and you were providing subtitles for the continuing story of Peyton Place, you'd use the word Tholedhōth. It's the continuing or emerging story - the next step in history. The RSV translates the word as 'descendants' - that's good - how the next generation came out of the last generation. It does so in 11:10. At one point it translates Tholedhōth as 'the history of the family of' (37:2) - Tholedhōth is emergent story, not just history - in general, how history emerges from what has gone before.

This expression provides a problem for the documentary source analysis, because the analysis consistently says that Tholedhōth formula in Genesis must be ascribed to P. They are part of the P editorial scheme, and the P editor introduced this phrase in order to provide redactional subdivision of the material, so that he could impose a P-shaped unity on the whole of the literature as he found it. 'The formula', says Von Rad, 'is exclusively priestly representing a kind of chapter division in the priestly document'. But once you've said that, problems immediately follow. First, according to the analysis, P uses the Tholedhōth sayings as a prefix or a heading. The narrative takes a new turn, and is given a new chapter heading. Except in the case of Genesis 2:4, where the Tholedhōth saying comes not as a heading but as a tail-piece to the narrative of 1:1 - 2:3. Why should that be? The answer is that it has to be, because it is a P saying, and 1:1 - 2:3 is P material; and 2:4 onwards is not P material. Therefore the Tholedhōth saying cannot belong to 2:4ff and must belong to 1:1-2:3, because the theory requires this.

Von Rad adds a problem of his own here. He says that the Tholedhōth saying doesn't really suit Genesis 1; it really means 'family tree' or 'genealogy', a 'register of generations', he says. Why on earth should P want to put it near Genesis 1 at all if it doesn't suit it?

The distribution of the formula in Genesis is very interesting, and I'd like you to help me understand what P's editorial policy was. Tholedhōth occurs at 2:4, and that's to be explained on the documentary theory, that it was added because of the need for system. This is a system of chapter-headings, to divide up the material coherently. Well now, what system would work as follows? It allocates two Tholedhōth sayings to Esau, within the space of nine verses; none at all to Abraham; and introduces the 'generations' saying about Moses at Numbers 3:11. Now what sort of editorial policy is that?

I want to suggest a different view of these Tholedhōth sayings - namely that this formula points to the existence of written records from the earliest times. And the Tholedhōth formula occurs in the book of Genesis as an acknowledgement of sources - written, early sources - from which this material was taken. The occurrence of the formula is determined not by editorial policy, but by the sources that were available. I think that you'll find that this works, if you look at the book of Genesis. Thus Genesis 2:4 - the first time it occurs - 'these are the generations of the heaven and the earth', is a prefix to the narrative of 2:5-25. It answers the question, What happened next? We've had this magnificent display of all creation as a great synthetic Divine enterprise, but what happened next? What is the emergent story? Here is this wonderful, fascinating world, all revolving around the will of God, and climaxing in the production of a creature man, who's in the image of God. Do tell us what happened next!

And in the proper answer to the question, you come into an entirely different setting with man in the centre, and history comes into operation, and you are told 'the continuing story of the heavens and the earth'. And this view matches the programme exactly. It avoids forcing which Von Rad admits at Genesis 2:4, and it exactly suits the material.

Even the non-existence of a Tholedhoth formula for Abraham could almost have been forecast, if we'd sat down to think about it. Abraham's own life story comes under the heading, 'these are the generations of Terah' (11:27); this is what emerged out of Terah, namely Abraham. But Abraham's own son was not born till his father was 100 years old, and in point of fact by comparison with the other Patriarchs did little or nothing - there's hardly anything recorded at all about Isaac. And that matches the implication in Genesis that there was no Tholedhoth book, there was no record kept in written form in the same detail as say for Abraham himself. Ishmael of course lies outside the covenant development and therefore there would not be a Tholedhoth book for Abraham in relation to Ishmael. So that it is almost predictable that there would have been no Tholedhoth book for Abraham. (On the other hand of course if there was one involved, it would have contained the story about Isaac).

Now, there are two Tholedhoth books for Esau - but they refer to different stages of his life. This is what emerged out of the Esau man at one stage, but then he hived off and went to meet them and he opened a new diary. And the unexpected reference to a Tholedhoth book for Moses and Aaron, coming as it does at the beginning of Numbers, shows the free and practical way in which the Pentateuchal writer used his sources. He didn't build an editorial scheme with chapter headings (as the supposed P theory suggests), but he handled his material as he felt he needed to handle it; and the Tholedhoth formula is not a chapter heading but an acknowledgement of sources where he needs to use the material in that source. And it was at Numbers 3 that it was appropriate to take notice of the authorised genealogy of Moses and Aaron. If you want to continue this study of Tholedhoth, have a look at Ruth 4:18 which lends its support to the view that 'generations' points to a written document which had that title, and against the idea that this is an editorial device of the P editor.

The accuracy of the portrayal of Patriarchal times in the book of Genesis (for our knowledge of which we give due thanks to the archaeologists) - the accuracy of the Egyptian material in the story of Joseph, for example - suggests that the Tholedhoth books were written close to the events they record, and that we have in them veritable early records which were put together, sewn together, into our present book of Genesis. I offer you then in this bit on the structure of Genesis a two-stage reasoning - first, that the formula 'these are the generations of ...' is intelligible only as an acknowledgement of sources; it is not intelligible as an editorial device. Secondly, that it introduces material of marked accuracy fitting in well with the situations which it purports to describe. And granted the highly literate state of the ancient world, there is no reason to resist the implication that we have here documents close to the events recorded.

#### 4. The meaning of the book of Numbers.

I hope it didn't escape your attention that when I was doing the Pentateuchal theological over-view, I made no reference to the book of Numbers. It has every appearance of being a bit of a historical, religious and cultic rag-bag,

doesn't it? I'd like you just to look at the book of Numbers with me. Again, my purpose is not to say this is the only way of looking at the book of Numbers, but that this is a way of looking at it. I'd like you to share with me one view of the structure and theology of the book of Numbers.

First of all, it starts with the people of God, an ideal realised (chapters 1-9) - and these fall into two sections, A. Holiness and order, which is not irrelevant as God is a God of order, and it's all part of the orderliness of the people of God (chapters 1-6); and B. Divine indwelling, (chapters 7-9) - God dwelling in the midst of His people.

Then the March (1)(10-12). It has a particular emphasis, if you examine it, on the Lord's tender care to Moses. In these chapters, things are getting a bit on top of our old friend, and the Lord looks after him so graciously.

The next two sections (3 and 4) deal with the topics of faithlessness (chapters 13-15) and after that reassurance. The instance is the matter of the spies. They are faithless in two things - God has gone before them hitherto, but now their faith lapses and they feel they must have men going before them; so they send the spies. And when the spies come back and say that it's a gorgeous land, and two of them say it's a push-over, and the others say No, we can't do it, they accept the report of the 10 and not the minority report, and they refuse to enter the land that God said He would give them. Hence the topic of faithlessness. But the topic is dealt with in chapters 13-15 also in terms of reassurance - that the Lord against whom they act in faithlessness comes back to them and says, Nevertheless you will inherit. Thus God speaks to them of the offerings that they will offer when they come into the land. That's an interesting point, because it shows that this funny mixture that you have in the book of Numbers - of history (the story of the spies) followed immediately by a section dealing with cultic ordinances really has a pattern to it. It is God's way of saying, Nevertheless, you are going in there!

Next we have rebellion (chapters 16-19) coupled with vindication. The rebellion is the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and all that. They rebelled against God's appointed leaders over the people. They had a rebellion against civic, or national, authority, in the person of Moses; and against religious authority in the person of Aaron. And this is followed by a narrative that at first sight might seem to have nothing whatever to do with it. But God steps in and vindicates the Aaronic priesthood - and so you have the passage where Aaron's rod buds, and where God will not accept the strange fire offered to Him by Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The whole thing hangs together, you see - the rebellion was specifically against Moses and Aaron, and God steps in to vindicate His appointed servants.

In the next section, we are back on the march once more. Again, in the March (2) the subject-matter is the Lord's tender care. (You mustn't take my word for this: you must read Numbers tomorrow and find out that this is so!) But here it is His tender care of His people. It's in this passage that you get the fiery serpents attacking the people of God; and God steps in and offers a provision for His people who are under this attack. The March (2) - we're getting very near the borders of the land of Canaan now. And so you come to the last section, which I call the Inheritance (chapters 22-31). That falls into two sections - A. the Supreme Challenge: our old

friend Balaam. Notice this story of Balaam. The challenge of Balaam is written so as to be a direct challenge and threat to the promise that God made to Abraham. Did you ever notice that? When Balak sent to Balaam he said he had been told that whoever he blessed was blessed, and whoever he cursed was cursed - but God promised to Abraham that he would be the blessing of the nations, not Balaam. And here's a direct threat. Is God going to be true to His promise, or is this old fogey from Mesopotamia - is he the person upon whom the whole of world history suspends? The other thing to notice about Balaam particularly is that the people of God weren't aware that they were under threat. This all happened away up on the hills of Moab. You may be certain that Balak didn't send down and tell them, gentlemanly fashion, I feel I ought to let you know that I'm hiring a sorcerer against you from Mesopotamia! It all happened secretly up in the hills of Moab - they didn't know anything about it. They didn't know that they were under supernatural assault. And the significance of the story of Balaam for the book of Numbers is secondly this: when the people of God are under threat of which they are not aware, God is aware of it. And He turns their threat into a blessing. For if God had stepped back and allowed Balaam to operate, that would have stopped them getting into their land. But God said, My promise is going to prevail; and so He steps in and turns the curse of Balaam into a blessing.

And B, where the book of Numbers comes to an end, is Possession and Ratification (chapters 26-31). They begin to possess the land, and in the context of that beginning to possess, a lot of things are ratified by God. First, they will inherit; secondly, the ritual law is His appointment for them; and thirdly, Moses was the mouthpiece of God. So that they begin to go into the land of Canaan with all that they had begun to learn in the wilderness ratified as the will of God for their life in the land.

Well now, if you stand back and look at that, you see that the book of Numbers is not the rag-bag you might have thought it was. Again, please may I say, I'm not saying that this is the only way of looking at the book of Numbers: I'm simply sharing this observation with you. For if you stand back from this apparently heterogeneous mass of material, it can be seen to form a pattern, as I have shown you. You may find another pattern that suits it better. But it can be seen as a pattern and as a coherent whole. It opens with a major section, dealing with the ideal constitution of one people on the face of the earth, the holy people with whom God dwells. And then at the other end of the book, a major section dealing with the fact that this people will be brought into their inheritance by the operation of divine power. So there in those two major sections at the beginning and the end - there you have the theme of the book of Numbers: that God cares for His people, and will bring them to that which He has said. And then the middle section of the book is bracketed around by these two sections dealing with the March; and the centre-piece in each case is God's care, He cares for the individual and for the totality. And in between the two sections on the March, you have - What sort of people are these with whom God is dealing? Why, they are faithless, recalcitrant, rebellious people. And God says Nevertheless: I'm not going to be knocked off my course by their faithlessness and their recalcitrance. Who do you think I am? Do you think I'm a leaf or a twig to be kicked out of the way? And in each of these sections where the people show gross faithlessness - they will not enter the land; gross rebellion - they will not accept God's authorised agents: God says Nevertheless - what's that got to do with it? It's my will and my word that comes to pass. And this funny old rag-bag of the

book of Numbers becomes one of the most thrilling and one of the most satisfying parts of the Bible, once you begin to look at it. And you will find as I showed you so briefly and so quickly in passing - you will find that related to all these historical bits are ritualistic bits, but they are all relevant. They're not irrelevant; they're put there because they are relevant to the experiences through which the people are passing at that particular time.

So now you see we can slot the book of Numbers into the Pentateuch. You have Genesis 15 and 17, the sacrifice and the law; Exodus 12 and 20, the sacrifice and the law; then the end of Exodus and Leviticus where the whole sacrificial system is explained and elaborated - this is what you're to do about it. In Deuteronomy the legal system is elaborated and applied - this is how you are to live and how you are to obey. And right at the centre, there at the end, but when all comes to all, it is not you who are going to inherit, it's God who is going to see that you inherit! See right at the heart of the Pentateuch how the marvellous purposes of God triumph! It is He who brings to pass that which He has pledged He is going to bring to pass. So that whether the threat is an internal threat (look again in Numbers) arising from their own sin against God, or whether it's an external threat, that they may not even be aware about, like the supernatural threat posed by Balaam, God is there to counter and check, and to say His divine Nevertheless - it's not what you say that's going to happen, but what I say that is going to happen. So the whole covenant system in its application revolves around the will of God. It is God who brings to pass that which He purposed and pledged from the beginning. And so these three books that come at the end - Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy - are all books in application. Leviticus applies the sacrificial system into a programme; Deuteronomy applies the legal system into a way of life; and Numbers applies the truth of the sovereign majesty of God who decides whom He is going to save and brings them through to eternal glory. Three books in application.

One sentence in conclusion. I set out to try and share with you the sort of background to the Pentateuch which everyone ought to have before anybody says the word 'problem'. This is the material that we're dealing with. I'm going to start my next lecture pretty well on this point. This is the material that we're dealing with - and when you stand back from it, you find that it's registering two things: one, that it is in the main the product of one man and his life and what God did to it; and that it is in its totality one exercise in theology. And when you come into the detail of it, and we've only dipped into it in the books of Exodus and Numbers, you find as we noted in Genesis that it rests on veritable early records, and when you come to it in the book of Numbers, that even when it appears at its most fragmentary, it is in fact still living within this great, vital, theological unity of the whole, and it all belongs together. I want to share with you that observation of the Pentateuch, trusting that you feel with me the weight of this mass of evidence for its unity, its unitary character, because it is against this background that we ought to be thinking of the problems.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF HYPOTHESES

We've made some appraisal of the primary data. What are we to do with all this material? May I say first of all that a recognition of the Mosaic claim solves no problems when it comes to constructing a hypothesis. There are bits and bobs in the Pentateuch - to put it at its lowest - which are best not ascribed to Moses. Therefore no matter how strongly we hold the Mosaic claim, it doesn't cover the totality of the material. The claim does not openly extend to the book of Genesis. Genesis lays no claim to authorship. The heading which appears in the King James Version - 'the first book of Moses' - is pious, but it's not part of the text.

When we come to this material, are there basic principles that will help us on our way? We're tempted to construct a Pentateuchal hypothesis: are there basic principles that will keep us from using the material in a left-handed or wrongful fashion, so that we will come to wrong conclusions? For clarity of thought, I want to set out some of the issues involved in terms of a series of contrasts. There are four such contrasts.

1. Testimony versus problems; 2. Harmony versus diversity or fragmentation; 3. Exegesis versus editors; and 4. Integration versus isolation.

1. Testimony versus Problems.

This is a sharp contrast, but at least in this case, deservedly so. Within what frame of reference is a subject to be discussed? What offers us a starting-point, a place where it is right to start? Now, we have inherited, in specialist study of the Pentateuch, a problem-orientated method. I mustn't venture to suggest to you what life has been like for you, in your department of theology - I can only tell you what it was like for me. When Pentateuchal lectures started, point number one: Exodus 6:2 & 3 clearly divides the Pentateuch into two strata. That is to say, we were introduced to the Pentateuch at the point of the problem. As you know, out of that particular problem there has arisen the whole construction of the criticism of the Pentateuch, which started in its classical form with Graf and Wellhausen, and has continued with us up to this present day. 'God spake unto Moses and said, I am Jehovah, and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them'. So we came to the Pentateuch at the point of the problem - how do you solve this problem? Because it is manifestly improper to read through the book of Genesis and find the name Jehovah there, and then come to Exodus 6:2 and find that the Patriarchs didn't know the name and then to hold that both Genesis and Exodus 6:2 were written by the same person. It can't be so! What's your answer to the problem? And we were offered a problem-based methodology in approaching the Pentateuch, and it may have been so also with you - it generally is. As I said to you at the beginning of my first lecture today, the difficulty of coming at university level to the study of the Old Testament is that, as a beginner in these things, you are brought face to face with problems which have been unearthed in specialist study. You're expected to work your way in at that point.

One thing has always puzzled me about Exodus 6:2. Here you have a verse which says, I revealed myself to the fathers as God Almighty - that's el Shaddai - note that the word elohim is not there - but I did not tell them my name Yahweh; and on the basis of this we are expected to divide the book of Genesis into an elohim document (of which Exodus 6:2 & 3 says nothing), and a Jehovah document. Now, if Genesis gave evidence of an

el Shaddai document, we'd be getting somewhere. But Exodus 6:2 &3 requires us to divide Genesis into not a J document and an E document, but rather into a J document and an el Shaddai document: nobody's ever attempted that! So why this verse should have been made the basis of that particular reconstruction, I find it difficult to explain. I don't as a matter of fact think that this verse has been correctly interpreted by the Wellhausen schema. It seems to me that this is a verse dealing with the revelation of meaning rather than with the utterance of sounds. When it says in 1 Samuel that the sons of Eli 'knew not Yahweh', does it mean that they alone of all Israel had managed to escape hearing that their God was called Yahweh? They didn't know the divine label? 'By my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them' - Yahweh had not been the basis for revelation. This is how I would understand it. Furthermore, it absolutely matches the testimony of the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis is an el Shaddai book. Revelation is in terms of el Shaddai, and Genesis 17:1 is so typical of the book: 'Yahweh came to Abraham and said unto him, I am el Shaddai'. There's the thing in a nutshell. The Patriarchs know the name, but they do not yet know the revelation which is yet to be embodied in that name. They know the name, but they do not yet know the nature which it conveys. I offer this suggestion for your examination.

What I'm trying to share with you at the moment is that what we have here is a problem-based methodology. Nobody would ever write a book of the science of optics starting off by saying, 'When I squeeze my eye-ball between my fingers ...'. No other subject ever begins at the point of problem. It begins at the point of testimony. And naturally, when a subject is approached from the point of problem, a distorted view of that subject ensues. It may be logical from one point to another, but it is bound to be wrong because it starts out from the wrong starting-point.

Where does the weight of the Pentateuchal evidence lie? The weight of the Pentateuchal evidence, as I've tried to show you, asserts unity - first, theological unity; secondly, literary unity (see our discussion in the earlier lecture of the book of Numbers); and thirdly, a broadly-based origin-unity. I'm not using a question-begging term like authorship - origin-unity, and this is what we studied earlier under the heading of the Mosaic claim. Now that's the testimony, and the testimony pervades. It begins at Genesis and runs right through to Deuteronomy. What therefore is the proper starting-point? What is going to offer you the frame of reference in which to solve your problem? Are you going to take what, when it comes to it, are a mere handful of difficulties, and to say that this mere handful of difficulties are of such importance and weight that for the sake of it you must sacrifice the total testimony? Or are you going to say, the total testimony is of such weight that the answer to this problem must lie within that testimony, even if at the moment I can't see it? This seems to me to be the basic question. What point are you going to start at? Which seems to you the fundamental datum?

## 2. Harmony versus Diversity or Fragmentation.

The assumption of a fragmentary Old Testament apparently no longer needs justification. This is the assumption from which all starts. We are dealing with a Biblical jig-saw in which some of the pieces are attached to pieces next door, but most of them simply lie around the side. This is so much part of established orthodoxy of approach to the Old Testament that nobody is any longer required to offer proof. It is sufficient to say that 'this

is insertional'; because the whole frame of mind in which the Old Testament is approached is an anthological framework. And this has reached the point that even material that binds sections together is discounted as editorial cement. To such an extent is it assumed that what we have before us, properly considered, is simply a table-top covered with historical, cultic and theological fragments - that even where as it stands there is that which links them, it is said to be the work of an editor who wished to insert it. So, for example, you start from the assumption that the stories of Hagar's expulsion are two stories of the same event. And consequently, when in the first account the angel of the LORD sends her back, that is an editorial, harmonistic insertion; so as to make what appeared to be two different accounts of the same event seem to be two consecutive accounts of different events. To such an extent is the assumption of the fragmentary nature of the material taken as a basic starting-point.

Once again, all I can ask you to do is to weigh up likelihoods. Take, for example, a chapter like Genesis 38, which on any sensible reading of the book of Genesis is intrusive. Genesis 38 is that highly disgraceful but perfectly marvellous story about how Judah was tricked by his daughter-in-law, who became pregnant by him; and how Judah then did the heavy-handed Patriarchal act - 'bring her out and burn her!' But nobody notices that the dear girl came out with her hands behind her back, and suffered Judah's pontifical speech about the grossness of her immorality by saying nothing till it was finished, whereupon she took her hands from behind her back, and said, 'the father of my child is the man who owns these!' Which was, as Punch would have said, followed by collapse of stoutparty. To me, it's one of the high literary moments of the Old Testament - and I do hope that you laugh when you read the Bible: Because it's full of the most marvellous stories, of which this is one. But look where it stands - in 37:36, 'the Midianites sold Joseph into Egypt to Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard'. And 39:1, when the story is over, 'And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, brought him.' What an intrusion! You see the smooth flow of the Joseph narrative is rudely interrupted, while we're told this 'News of the World' bit about Judah. And then we go back to Joseph again. Now, anybody could turn round and say, well, don't you see what I mean? The Old Testament is just a series of fragments. Nobody in their senses whould put that in there, breaching the Joseph story. It clearly shows that we're just dealing with an anthology, in which stuff was swept together and if it didn't fit together well, no matter - it was never meant to fit together. Just a table-top full of literary bits.

Now then, let's examine that for a moment. This man Judah. Here is the man Judah as he appears before us in 37:26: 'And Judah said to his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.' What a cynic! How unfeeling can you get? We want to be rid of him, but we might as well make an honest penny on the side, and if we decide to do it this way, we are at least delivered from the guilt of fratricide. If somebody else kills him, well, that's on their hands, isn't it? How cynical and calculating can you get? And then, when they'd sold Joseph, Judah proceeds to help in the slaying of the animal, and the soaking of Joseph's coat in the blood, and off he goes home to his father, 'Know if this be thy son's coat or not'. Imagine - and they've stripped it off the lad and soaked it in blood themselves. Well,

that's Judah for you.

Now turn over to Genesis 44:3. Meantime the brothers of Joseph have been down to Egypt, and Joseph - I suppose by some intuition taught by God - begins to play tricks on them. I find that of all the men in the Bible, Joseph is the one to whom I cannot attribute an ill motive. He does seem to me to be one of the purest of the men of whom Scripture speaks. He was a horrible prig when he was a lad of 17, but then most of us were, weren't we? It's part of the nature of the beast. But when God dealt with him, he became one of the purest of the men of Scripture.

He began to taunt them, and said to them: 'You're spies'. And they said, 'We're not spies!' And so on - and then they go back and find the money and nearly die of fright, and then they bring Benjamin down, and Joseph sends them off with his silver cup in Benjamin's sack, and has them brought back. 'No, no - you're all guiltless, you're lovely people, you go back to your father - I'll keep the chap who had the cup in his sack'. Now look what happened! Of all people, Judah (Genesis 44:18) came near to him and said, 'Let they servant I pray thee speak a word in my lord's ears.' And what's the burden of Judah's utterance? Verse 33 - 'Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. How shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me, lest I see the evil that shall come on my father?' Now, how do you explain that? What's happened to Judah? - to make the Judah of 37 into the Judah of 44? Well - he was discovered to be the father of his daughter-in-law's baby. And everybody said, 'Judah!' And he was right down in the dust, and became a new man. Well, he would, wouldn't he? You see, in the character-building of the Pentateuch, it is exactly so. It has to be told, because this is the only way. Otherwise, as the inspired writer well knew, the Pentateuchal analysts would get to work on the story and they'd say, It can't have been like that. Two men, both by the name of Judah, but they're so different.....! Now, do you see what I'm trying to say?

You've got to decide which point of view is correct. Is it correct to approach any literature on the assumption of fragmentation? If you pick up the 'Forsyte Saga', do you start by saying to yourself, well of course, this is a compilation of many different hands? If you approach any literature on the assumption of fragmentation, you may find evidence there to support you - but you simply don't do it! Now, when you come to this literature, which at least can be looked at as I showed you earlier on with the theological heart-beat that holds it all together from end to end; and when we took a sample dip into the book of Numbers - which I hope you think is the most unpromising bit of material - found a pattern which could be discerned - now what are you going to do with that? Are you simply going to go along with the assumption, well of course this is all fragments, so there's no use in thinking any further? Or will you deal with it like you deal with any other literature and say, that the evidence does seem to suggest that it all ought to hang together, and I must worry away at it until I see how it does hang together? I give you this one example here of the Judah story, and how it is not at all intrusive. It has to be told. And it can be told only by butting into the Joseph narrative. Why? Because that's the time at which it happened. And if it isn't told there, then the thing becomes inexplicable.

### 3. Exegesis versus Editors.

First of all, we ought to say here that there is a true editor, and there is a lunatic editor. I'm sorry about the sharpness of the title - exegesis versus editors - but I'm only thinking of a certain, assumed type of editor. On this question of editing, it does seem to me that there's a basic incoherence in the documentary hypothesis. Why should any editor insert material clumsily and irrelevantly? If a portion of any text or passage is as manifestly out of touch with context, how did anybody ever come to put it there in the first place? It's no problem solved by saying that an editor did it. Why should he do it? Would any editor put something next door to something else with which it had no connection? And which it may even have contradicted? Is that editorial policy? Yet we're told that these editors sometimes had a harmonistic intention, and therefore it's not sufficient to say, 'in the literary conventions of the ancient world editors weren't interested in harmony'. Sometimes, apparently, the editor was interested in harmony.

He was interested in making two diverse accounts of how poor old Hagar was shoved out seem as though they were consecutive accounts by putting in his harmonistic bit. So apparently in the literary conventions of the ancient world harmony had some part to play. What sort of people then were these editors? It would seem to me that a theory which needs the support of lunatics is a suspect theory. If - please don't take that simply because I say so - if you want to see the thing worked out in fantastic detail and with devastating effect, read a book by Nielsen called Oral Tradition (SCM Studies in Biblical Theology, First Series), page 95 following - Nielsen's examination of the analysis of the flood narrative into the component literary documents - and he shows that the concept of the editor is simply made a whipping-boy to explain why, at point after point, the documentary analysis does not work. The analysis and its principles are assumed to be correct, but where they do not work - ah!, but an editor has done this. It reminds one rather of the sowing of literary tares amongst Graf-Wellhausen wheat - an editor has done it! And we must be careful, because it is wider than the Pentateuch.

You take another example in the Bible - the happy endings of the book of Amos, where the commentators nearly all say that Amos was a prophet of unrelieved gloom who preached the end of the covenant relationship, and then they come to a passage in chapter 9:11 onwards in which the prophet manifestly does not preach the end of the covenant relationship but a glorious and as we should say Messianic future. Now, what do they do about it? Ah!, they say, well, you see, after a little while it was clear that the covenant relationship had not come to an end and a later editor wanted to make the message of Amos speak to his own day, so he adapted Amos for his own day. But you see, my dears, he didn't adapt: if they're right, he contradicted it - and the commentators are doing a double thing. They're saying the message of Amos runs totally in one direction, but you can adapt it for a later day by putting in a bit which contradicts it. Well now, to my mind this is lunatic editing.

Now this constant appeal to editors to bale out the hypothesis will not do - and that's what's happening. Editors should only be mentioned when exegesis has failed. But having said that, I want to ask you - how do you know the point at which exegesis has failed? If you have two passages - call one A and the other B - it is totally legitimate to say, I cannot see the

connection between these two passages. It is totally illegitimate to say, there is no connection between these two passages, simply because you can't see it. Editors should only be appealed to when exegesis has failed, - but how can we tell when exegesis has failed? Has it failed simply because you or I, or X, Y or Z, has reached the limit of exegetical observation and insight? Is that the point?

Let's have another look at this Joseph thing. At the end of Genesis 37, how did Joseph get down to Egypt? Oh, what fun the analysts have had here! How did Joseph get down to Egypt? I'm not going to go into the question of whether Reuben or Judah was the prime mover in that story - if you want to see that one solved, spend what used to be a half-a-crown on a Ladybird book called The Story of Joseph - it's all very colourfully solved, and then you can give the book as a Christmas present to your nephew or niece much to his or her little profit. But I want you to look, rather, at this matter. We read in verse 25, 'they say down to eat bread and lifted up their eyes and behold a travelling company of Ishmaelites'. And Judah then says, 'What profit is it that we slay our brother?' Verse 24 - 'Come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites'. Verse 28 - 'And there passed by Midianites, merchant-men, and they lifted up Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites'. I'm a bit puzzled, aren't you? Wait a moment - verse 36 - 'the Midianites sold him into Egypt' - ah, well now, it was the Midianites then, was it?

Well, no - that won't do - because at that point in verse 36, the Hebrew doesn't say Midianites, and the Revised Version has slipped and lost its nerve and attempted a bit of harmonising and has put Midianites in verse 36 and Medanites in the margin. Let's try again. 'And behold, a company of Ishmaelites'. Verse 27 - 'Come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites'. Verse 30 - 'Then passed by Midianites, merchant-men, and they drew up Joseph and lifted him up out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites'. Verse 36 - 'And the Medanites sold him into Egypt'. I don't know! - but still, let's see. Let's have a look in Judges 8:24. They offered Gideon the crown because of his great victory over - who? - the Midianites. Verse 24 - 'And Gideon said to them, I would desire a request of you; give me every man of you the earrings of his spoil. For they had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites. There's an interesting thing! So the Midianites are the Ishmaelites! The French commentator Lods says that the word Ishmaelite is used as a sort of trade or brand name for a certain type of person - a travelling merchant. All right: so maybe the Midianites are Ishmaelites - that would seem to relieve us of at least one burden. Now let's look in Genesis 25:2. 25:1 will give us the connection. 'Abraham took another wife. Her name was Keturah, and she bare him Zimram and Jokshan and Medan and Midian'. So Medan and Midian are brother-tribes within the same family group somehow. Well, it looks as though our hypothesis is slightly cut down, doesn't it? And when we examine the passage, we discover that it is the Midianites who did the buying, and the Medanites who did the selling. That sounds like a good division of labour within a family business to me. So - let's go back again - they sit down to their meal (37:25), lift up their eyes, and behold, a travelling company of Ishmaelites - but that's what you would say - behold, commercial travellers, there they are in the distance - a travelling company of Ishmaelites. And Judah said to his brethren, 'What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come let us sell him to these commercial travellers, these Ishmaelites'. Verse 28 - 'And there passed by Midianites'. So once they come in sight, within hailing distance,

we discover that they are not just any old commercial travellers, they are Midianites. Now we see what tribe they come from, we go through the common courtesies - 'Morning, brethren! Where have you come from? What's your father's name? Who are you?' 'Oh, we are Midianites'. Courtesies have been exchanged. 'And there passed by Midianites, and they drew up Joseph out of the pit, and' - the enormity of it! They sold their brother to a commercial traveller! See - then you get the word Ishmaelites back again, in the moral indignation of the story.

Well, that seems to me to be a perfectly satisfactory harmonisation of the passage. We have solved the problem by exegesis. We've allowed other Scriptures to feed in their evidence. We haven't isolated the problem from the context (after the manner of the documentary theory) - we've allowed the problem to live within its context, and the context has solved the problem. We don't need the editor! Exegesis has won the day!

#### 4. Integration versus Isolation.

I'm not going to say much to you about this, because I don't know much, and because it isn't an aspect of the subject which really interests me. Evolutionary errors set off Pentateuchal study on the wrong lines. The Pentateuch was looked upon as a series of theological evidences, and they were then set out at appropriate points on an evolutionary line - anything that seemed, for example, to be monotheistic had to be tucked in at the end of the line - because that was the point when people were allowed, evolutionary-wise, to attain monotheism. Abraham, therefore, couldn't have said in Genesis 18:25, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' because that is a post-Amos concept. A rejection of the evolutionary view is one of the marks of present Old Testament study, but like the Cheshire Cat, evolution has disappeared and left its smile. And there is still a basic resistance to the pervasive testimony of the Scripture - the monotheistic view of God from the beginning. On this point, you might consult Albright, From Stone-Age to Christianity - one of his great pontifications - 'I insist on the antiquity of the higher culture'. And amongst other things, he says that at least monotheising tendencies are evidenced from the very earliest times. Consult the history of Egypt for the solar monotheism of Akhenaton, to see this worked out in entirely secular circumstances where there's no axe to grind.

On the general question of the relationship between the Pentateuch and the literature outside the Pentateuch, I would refer you to K. A. Kitchen's Ancient Orient and Old Testament, but there are many other books as well. You see now the point of my contrast - integration or isolation. Are we going to keep the Old Testament integrated in the world in which it had its origins, or are we going to isolate it in this apparently logical, but actually remote, Wellhausen schema? If we keep the Old Testament within its own framework, why then should it not be monotheistic from the start? There was monotheism in Egypt in 1400 B.C. What's so perverse about the Old Testament that it can't get places that other people can?

The Old Testament was a slow-moving world. If you travel round the world by jet, you don't talk to anyone, but if you travel by donkey, or camel, or caravan, you talk to everyone. So the ancient world was a highly communicative world. If you fly from England to Australia, you make no contribution to the stopping-places en route, you don't converse with them,

you don't stay overnight, you just refuel and you go on. If you travel by donkey, you talk to everyone - you learn how it is with them, and you have time to tell them how it is with you. The ancient world was therefore a highly communicative world. No culture existed in isolation, every culture was constantly being shared with every other culture, simply because they were slow-moving, because they had to stay overnight to rest the beast if not themselves, and they had to talk to the other people in the inner stopping-place, and cultures fertilised and communicated with each other.

In that setting the isolated concept of 'borrowing', about which the Old Testament specialists make so much to-do, is an entirely wrong idea - it's far too artificial, it's far too logical and aseptic. The whole world is fertilising and sharing. Look at old Amos again - how much Amos knew about the surrounding world! He knew it all - he knew their past, he knew their present, ah!, but then, he also knew their future. Why? Because into that situation of cross-fertilisation, there came a unique factor, which wasn't present anywhere else, a veritable revelation of God. That's the distinct thing in Israel. Everyone knew about agricultural festivals, and about sacrifices and circumcision. But only one people were given that point of theological coherence round which to make all that common material distinct and different.

Now the Pentateuch is not alone in saying that it has this veritable revelation of God. G. E. Wright actually says that as well in his book, The Old Testament against its Environment (SCM Studies in Biblical Theology, First Series). The main thrust of the book is this - the Old Testament cannot be explained in terms of organic evolution. Something must have happened at the beginning to set all this thing off - and that thing that happened at the beginning was a veritable revelation of God. A veritable revelation of God! Now that revelation came to Moses, and that man, Moses, was by implication one of the most highly educated men in the ancient world. Stephen tells us in Acts 7 that he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians - he must have been, mustn't he, brought up in Pharaoh's palace? An incredible story of divine providence that, isn't it? Pharaoh said, 'Kill all the babies'. That was the mind of the royal house. And which princess of Pharaoh's family found Moses? The one that wept when she saw the baby crying. Marvellous providence of God who found a tender-hearted member of the family who could not resist a baby. And the little one was first of all brought up by his mother in all the law of the Levitical family - if you remember Exodus 2:1, 'Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of the house of Levi'. Then he was taken and educated in the Egyptian university, education proper to a prince of the royal blood. And then he was taken out to the mount of God, and God said, 'Now take off your shoes - because your real education is about to start'. And is there any reason why we shouldn't accept that? Integrate the Old Testament into the world in which it belongs, and it will fit in that world. But there is something that does not fit into that world, and that is that God revealed Himself to Moses; and out of that revelation there came the five books.

THE THREE-LEGGED STOOL

May I introduce you to the subject by reminding you of the three-legged stool of Pentateuchal analysis. This great fabric that we are accustomed to hearing about the Pentateuch rests on a three-legged stool. It all began with literary study of the Pentateuch. Somebody noticed that the divine name Yahweh apparently was not revealed until the time of Moses, and since it was unreasonable to suppose that the same author would both use the name before Moses and then say that it was not known until the time of Moses, it seemed more reasonable to assert that we have here two original documents, which at some later date became conflated. Now following along on that initial division of the Pentateuchal material all sorts of other evidences within the literary field began to emerge, which indicated that the trouble was even more deep-seated, and in the end it was not a case of two documents which split neatly over the issue of whether the name Yahweh was known or not known, but it became an issue of four documents.

Among the other facts broadly which emerged in the literary study of the Pentateuch were, first, the existence of contradictions. It is not reasonable to suppose that the same author would write contradictory accounts of the same event, and consequently, the narrative of creation in Genesis 1 must come from a different source from the narrative of creation which is found in Genesis 2. Secondly, confusions. It became evident on the examination, for example, of Genesis 37, that the narrative of how Joseph got down to the land of Egypt cannot be treated as a unity, notwithstanding the fact that for the best part of two millenia people had been treating it as a unity, because it contained manifest difficulties, which could best be explained on the assumption that originally different accounts of how Joseph got into the land of Egypt had been sewn together under some editorial hand. The third literary difference that came up was the existence of duplications. That is to say, the candid reader of a book like Genesis would note that the same events were told more than once, and that again it is unreasonable to suppose that a single author would do this. It was more reasonable to suppose that the events were recorded in originally separate documents, and that when the whole thing was compiled together, in order not to waste anything good, the compiler put in both accounts. For example, there are two accounts in Genesis 12 and 20 about how Abraham tried to pass off Sarah as his sister; there are two accounts in Genesis 16 and 21 of how Hagar was driven out of Abraham's household by Sarah.

So these are the literary evidences, the first leg of the stool.

Then secondly there is the historical leg. This, as I expect, will be coals to Newcastle, but it is necessary background for our discussion and further study. On reading the history books after the time of Moses, particularly the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings, there is no evidence of the existance of a large corpus of recognised legislation. Not only so, but there is much evidence to suggest that there was no such corpus of legislation. Therefore that the legislation attributed to Moses must have come into authoritative statement after the time of the monarchy. So if the first leg of the stool kills the idea of Mosaic authorship, the second leg of the stool kills the idea of a Mosaic period as the point of origin. The Pentateuch now, you see, lies fragmented. It has been sundered by literary study, and it has been shown to be not the product of one early date by historical study, but something that possibly gathered over a period

of time, and was recognised late as an authoritative corpus of legislation.

The third leg of the Pentateuchal stool shows us how a date was imposed on this now diverse collection of material. This is the religious study of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuchal study in its heyday was dominated by the idea of the evolution of religion, and broadly speaking, evolution dictated that religion began with polytheism of some sort; gradually rose to monolatry, the worship of one God without denying the existence of others; and reached its climax in the highest of all, because according to evolution, 'every day in every way we get better and better and better'. That is, it ended up with monotheism. Consequently, for example, if you find that Abraham said, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' (and in that implying that he is a monotheist), you may rightly assume he could not have said any such thing, because he lived too early to say it, and that such expressions of lofty ideals must be, as Dr Simon says, deleted and saved up for the period when they can be said with appropriateness.

Well now, the result of the application of evolution to the fragments of the Pentateuch was, broadly speaking, the order of document with which you are familiar, with the J-E corpus coming first, followed by a D corpus which is dated circa 621 in the time of King Josiah, and finally a P 'activity', not so much a P-corpus in the sense of a volume or book or scroll, but a P-activity, which imposed a Priestly unity on the whole outfit, and inserted Priestly material at significant points. That is the three-legged stool of Pentateuchal analysis. And that is how things came to be in the situation which has doubtless been made clear to you in the lectures you have received elsewhere.

May we move on now to offer some general appraisal of that statement, working backwards through the arguments. First of all, the leg called 'the evolution of religion'. In the first place, the whole concept of evolution of a religion has now been discredited. Both in the field of religious origins, and in the field of archaeological enquiry, it is no longer possible, say, to equate the early and the primitive, and the later with the advanced. Human history moves forward, but the history of ideas is not to be equated with the forward movement of history, chronologically speaking; and it simply is not true that dates advance and ideas advance in step with them. In both the field of enquiry into religious origins; and the field of archaeological enquiry, this is so. One of the phrases which sticks in one's mind as soon as one has heard it, is a statement by W. F. Albright, 'I insist on the antiquity of the higher culture'. It is a most significant statement. Archaeology has shown that the ancient world was a world of developed ideas, and of high social formulations. The idea of God as creator, for example, which had to be saved up for the P writer and therefore could not possibly have been the original Genesis one, is perfectly understandable in an early statement of creation - God as creator is an early and pervasive idea. Monotheism, in some form or other, is by no means a late development, as current enthusiasm for Tutankhamen has reminded us that immediately prior to the days of Tutankhamen, in the days of Akhenaton, a very credible Egyptian monotheism had been promoted by Akhenaton. More important, however, to have mentioned to you that Pentateuchal study rests on evolution as one of its legs, is the opportunity to point out to you how unscientific it is to import an alien principle of interpretation. The Bible not only knows nothing of this idea of religious evolution - whatever may be said about biological

evolution, which is happily outside the sphere of this lecture - but actively and positively resists the idea. The Bible's view of man is not that of one who by enquiry rises higher and higher and higher in the scale of the knowledge of God, but of one who is entirely shut up to revelation which comes from God. There is no room, therefore, in the Biblical literature for a concept of evolution. Therefore it is in the highest degree improper and in the highest degree unscientific to make the Biblical material subserve the interests of an evolutionary hypothesis.

The historical argument or leg on which Pentateuchal criticism rests, has always been sustained only by the assumption that the hypothesis is true. That is to say, it is not in fact the case that the history books of Samuel and Kings know nothing of a legislative corpus lying behind them. To give you one, I think fairly reasonable, example of that, look at Deut. 12:10-11a. Come mentally to II Sam. 7:1. Candidly, you would have really thought that David must have read the book of Deuteronomy in order to arrive at that particular frame of mind and purposes which he compasses in that situation - that the Lord had given him rest, they were in possession of the land, and now was the time to hit upon the place which the Lord, the God of Israel, had chosen. There are many other evidences of the same sort, and even greater evidences that the Pentateuchal books as we know them were available in the time of the monarchy. But what happens when this sort of evidence is brought before people who are devoted to the analysis? The evidence is removed. It is said that we owe II Sam 7 to the Deuteronomic historian. Now what does that mean? It means that, in spite of the plain evidence of II Sam 7, what was really true in the situation was that the Pentateuch originated as four separate documents, and that the Deuteronomic document didn't appear until 621, and therefore anything that appears to be Deuteronomic before 621, in fact happened after 621. But, you see, that's not what the evidence says; that's what the theory says! And the historical leg of Pentateuchal analysis only survived by discounting the actual evidence of historical books, and by assuming that the theory is true and that therefore it is legitimate to manipulate the evidence so that it continues to support the theory.

May I insert a little word in favour of this chap the Deuteronomic historian - he keeps bad company, but he doesn't have to. The book of Deuteronomy is a classical OT statement of the philosophy of history. This is what history is all about, especially Deut. 28 and 29. This is how history works. Now, any history that is going to be written on Biblical principles will be Deuteronomic history. It stands to reason that anybody, whoever he may be, if he wishes to think Biblically and to write history from whatever materials he combines it, will give it a Deuteronomic flavour. The existence, therefore, of the Deuteronomic history gives no support to the idea that Deuteronomy is to be related to the year 621, or that all Deuteronomic marks in the history books must be post-621. If Deuteronomy is what it claims to be, then at any point later than Moses history must be Deuteronomic history. And, of course, since the books of Kings quite clearly and candidly tell us that they are not history de novo but compiled from existing sources, you will find evidence right through the books of Deuteronomic editing. But that is exactly what you would expect if Deuteronomy was there to begin with. It doesn't have to be snarled up with the view that Deuteronomy was the book discovered in the Temple in the years of King Josiah.

Furthermore, under the heading of the historical argument for the sundering of the Pentateuch, the evidences that were quoted were never altogether true. One of the great pursuits of people who examine this line is all the evidences of unlevitical activity in the times of Samuel and Kings, things which could not possibly have happened if this legal corpus was the point of origin, because they would have noted that they were disobeying and therefore they couldn't do it. So, for example, Samuel who was a Temple acolyte and indeed rose to be the main priest wasn't of a Levitical house at all. How un-Levitical can you get! Well, how inaccurate can you get! I Chron. 6:27f specifically says Samuel was born in a Levitical family. Well, what do you do then with that evidence? You say, well of course this was put in by the Chronicler, who was known to be a tendentious and unreliable person, in order to justify having Samuel in the temple precincts. Again, the theory must be true, and the facts must be made to conform. Now, again, I say this is in the highest degree unscientific. Most of the Levitical aberrations which occur throughout the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings can be put down to two causes:

1. that they belong to times of spiritual declension, when anything can happen. As a member of the Church of England, I am free to say, Who looking at the C. of E. in this century could possibly believe that behind this complex, diverse and contradictory amalgam there lay one single book of Common Prayer, one authorised doctrinal statement, and an Act of Uniformity to which all clergy alike subscribe? History doesn't always tell us what has gone before. Much of the unlevitical activity in the history books belongs to times of spiritual declension.
2. Most of the period of the histories fails to conform to Deut. 12:10. The full Levitical code, said Moses, demands for its operation first, that you are in the land, and secondly, that the Lord has given you rest from your enemies, and thirdly, that the Lord has indicated the place He should choose. That only happened in the early days of Solomon. Before that, in David's time, they did not have rest from all their enemies round about. David apparently thought they had, but in II Sam 8 he was back again at war. And God said, You're a man of war, that's your job. After the time of Solomon, the kingdom sundered into two warring factions, and they were under pressure all the time from the nations of the earth. And, of course, in the sundered kingdom there was division of opinion as to what place the Lord their God had chosen. So that, therefore, the whole of the period of time covered by the historical books is declared by Scripture itself to be a time in which you need not expect the full Mosaic-Levitical Code to be in evident operation. Of course, there are some laughable things - Robertson Smith, who was in many ways a careful and accurate OT scholar, was responsible for this one. 'How unlevitical can you get', said he, 'for do we not read in I Kings 9:25, Three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built to the Lord'. He was neither a priest nor a Levite, was he? Well - he actually built the altar himself too, did he? Of course he didn't! Then why if in the same verse you've got to say that he built the altar by means of stone-masons can you not also assume that he offered his offerings through the authorised channels?

Come now to the literary arguments, and let's see if we can't appraise them, and more importantly because these have had the lasting effect. The sources are still assumed proved beyond possibility and question. You'll find this, for example, in such a book as that by Kaufman, The Religion of Israel. He is, I suppose, the most committed opponent of Wellhausen that the last 10/15 years have produced. He holds to the original monotheism of the

people of God; he is firmly a believer in the historicity of Moses; he argues vigorously for the Judges-Joshua view of the conquest; but when all comes to all, the one thing that cannot be disputed, the one thing that has arisen out of Wellhausen and is not open to argument, is that there were four documents! He actually dates them in the order J-E-P-D, which is very interesting. But the fact that there is this four-document view of things - that is sacrosanct. Or take John Bright, such an informed and helpful writer on the OT, in every way. Read his book Early Israel in Recent History Writing, where he's examining the view of Noth that most of the events in the early history of Israel are aetiological - that is, they are fictional stories composed to explain a state of affairs. And he really takes that apart. Having shown that the aetiological argument for the writing of history simply will not work, he ends up his book by saying, 'Nevertheless, the one thing that must stand in all this is the reality of the four documents'. They have a sort of Cheshire Cat quality about them.

Now, if you think of a three-legged stool, once it loses one of its legs it is of no further interest - it demands all three to hold it up. Things are so contracted in this world that the thing will not stand on two legs. But there's a Cheshire Cat quality about the documents. They remain when all else has disappeared.

Well now, first of all, much of the supposed evidence is non-existent. For example, if we examine the suppose duplicate narratives of Genesis 12 and 20, you find that you have two different stories with two different sets of characters that happened on two different occasions. But is it reasonable that a man should try to pass his wife off as his sister twice? But reason doesn't really enter into this, does it? It's evidence that enters into it. And the fact that this may or it may not have happened in Tooting in the reign of Queen Victoria is no evidence whatsoever as to how Abraham would have reacted. And Scripture tells us that this was Abraham's practice, everywhere he went. And all we're told, therefore, is of the two occasions when it failed to work. Many of the pieces of evidence which support the literary arguments are sustained only by assuming the truth of the hypothesis. There are two stories of how Hagar was dismissed from the family of Abraham. Yet as those two stories stand, they belong intelligibly within the story of Abraham. They agree on one point - that Hagar was driven out - but everything else about them is different: the beginning, the middle and the ending. In order, therefore, to say that they are the same, one must assume that an editor fabricated settings which were not there to begin with. You have to assume this editor who consciously framed an editorial setting which would make what he knew to be the same appear as though they were different. And what is this to say, but that the theory is sacrosanct, and must not be challenged by examining the facts? Also, the three narratives which touch on the practice of circumcision. You will find it widely stated in books on OT theology that these are three accounts of the origin of the practice of circumcision in Israel; and that therefore we must assume that anything that makes them appear otherwise is due to deliberate editorial policy. Well, I would ask you to examine that. We cannot simply acquiesce, my brothers and sisters, in a situation which says, This theory is unchallengeable, and everything else must fit into place around it.

his name : make known his accus am-  
people.  
2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him:  
of all his wondrous works.  
3 Glory ye in his holy name: and say I father will love him, and we will come  
in rejoice that seek the L O R D .  
4 Seek the L O R D and his strength, seek he with him.  
Sic ferre ore. + i fureth me not, keepeth not my sayings : and  
**CUM** which you hear, is not r. + t the Father's which ien in  
**E INOXED** Thele thin + i. o bring out pffer  
But the + i. x, wl om  
**QUDSI** Il fend in m. and bri  
**STAGNOT** r re  
Pe c  
w d giv + i  
et  
**ITANTES** Ye  
unto y + i  
**DISCENDO**,  
**ZETIA** come t  
**NCNACD** o + i  
de  
+ i. P  
Fa the  
hance.  
**I AM**  
**DAY** I AM  
E  
e. ry t  
+ i. re fit  
j. No + i  
**AS.**  
**Logui** u.  
Abid in me, I  
, except it abide in  
**EXRECTIA**  
**ED** I am the vine, ye are the bran e. H e t D C D N A  
I in m, the fame bringeth forth much. ui  
o nothin .  
10