

Introduction to the Old Testament

John Edgar McFadyen

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Title: Introduction to the Old Testament

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Release Date: December, 2004 [EBook #7168]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on March 19, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

By

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To My Pupils Past and Present

PREFACE

This Introduction does not pretend to offer anything to specialists. It is written for theological students, ministers, and laymen, who desire to understand the modern attitude to the Old Testament as a whole, but who either do not have the time or the inclination to follow the details on which all thorough study of it must ultimately rest. These details are intricate, often perplexing, and all but innumerable, and the student is in danger of failing to see the wood for the trees. This Introduction, therefore, concentrates attention only on the more salient features of the discussion. No attempt has been made, for example, to relegate every verse in the Pentateuch^[1] to its documentary source; but the method of attacking the Pentateuchal problem has been presented, and the larger documentary divisions indicated.

[Footnote 1: Pentateuch and Hexateuch are used in this volume to indicate the first five and the first six books of the Old Testament respectively, without reference to any critical theory. As the first five books form a natural division by themselves, and as their literary sources are continued not only into Joshua, but probably beyond it, it is as legitimate to speak of the Pentateuch as of the Hexateuch.]

It is obvious, therefore, that the discussions can in no case be exhaustive; such treatment can only be expected in commentaries to the individual books. While carefully considering all the more important alternatives, I have usually contented myself with presenting the conclusion which seemed to me most probable; and I have thought it better to discuss each case on its merits, without referring expressly and continually to the opinions of English and foreign scholars.

In order to bring the discussion within the range of those who have no special linguistic equipment, I have hardly ever cited Greek or Hebrew words, and never in the original alphabets. For a similar reason, the verses are numbered, not as in the Hebrew, but as in the English Bible. I have sought to make the discussion read continuously, without distracting the attention--excepting very occasionally-by foot-notes or other devices.

Above all things, I have tried to be interesting. Critical

discussions are too apt to divert those who pursue them from the absorbing human interest of the Old Testament. Its writers were men of like hopes and fears and passions with ourselves, and not the least important task of a sympathetic scholarship is to recover that humanity which speaks to us in so many portions and so many ways from the pages of the Old Testament. While we must never allow ourselves to forget that the Old Testament is a voice from the ancient and the Semitic world, not a few parts of it--books, for example, like Job and Ecclesiastes--are as modern as the book that was written yesterday.

But, first and last, the Old Testament is a religious book; and an Introduction to it should, in my opinion, introduce us not only to its literary problems, but to its religious content. I have therefore usually attempted--briefly, and not in any homiletic spirit--to indicate the religious value and significance of its several books.

There may be readers who would here and there have desiderated a more confident tone, but I have deliberately refrained from going further than the facts seemed to warrant. The cause of truth is not served by unwarranted assertions; and the facts are often so difficult to concatenate that dogmatism becomes an impertinence. Those who know the ground best walk the most warily. But if the old confidence has been lost, a new confidence has been won. Traditional opinions on questions of date and authorship may have been shaken or overturned, but other and greater things abide; and not the least precious is that confidence, which can now justify itself at the bar of the most rigorous scientific investigation, that, in a sense altogether unique, the religion of Israel is touched by the finger of God.

JOHN E. McFADYEN.

ENGELBERG, SWITZERLAND.

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THE ORDER OF THE BOOKS

In the English Bible the books of the Old Testament are arranged, not in the order in which they appear in the Hebrew Bible, but in that assigned to them by the Greek translation. In this translation the various books are grouped according to their contents--first the historical books, then the poetic, and lastly the prophetic. This order has its advantages, but it obscures many important facts of which the Hebrew order preserves a reminiscence. The Hebrew Bible has also three divisions, known respectively as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. _The Law_ stands for the Pentateuch. _The Prophets_ are subdivided into (i) the former prophets, that is, the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, regarded as four in number; and (ii) the latter prophets, that is, the prophets proper--Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve (i.e. the Minor Prophets). _The Writings_ designate all the rest of the books, usually in the following order--Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles.

It would somewhat simplify the scientific study even of the English Bible, if the Hebrew order could be restored, for it is in many ways instructive and important. It reveals the unique and separate importance of the Pentateuch; it suggests that the historical books from Joshua to Kings are to be regarded not only as histories, but rather as the illustration of prophetic principles; it raises a high probability that Ruth ought not to be taken with Judges, nor Lamentations with Jeremiah, nor Daniel with the prophets. It can be proved that the order of the divisions represents the order in which they respectively attained canonical importance--the law before 400 B.C., the prophets about 200 B.C., the writings about 100 B.C.--and, generally speaking, the latest books are in the last division. Thus we are led to suspect a relatively late origin for the Song and Ecclesiastes, and Chronicles, being late, will not be so important a historical authority as Kings. The facts suggested by the Hebrew order and confirmed by a study of the literature are sufficient to justify the adoption of that order in preference to that of the English Bible.

GENESIS

The Old Testament opens very impressively. In measured and dignified language it introduces the story of Israel's origin and settlement upon the land of Canaan (Gen.--Josh.) by the story of creation, i.-ii. 4_a_, and thus suggests, at the very beginning, the far-reaching purpose and the world-wide significance of the people and religion of Israel. The narrative has not travelled far till it becomes apparent that its dominant interests are to be religious and moral; for, after a pictorial sketch of man's place and task in the world, and of his need of woman's companionship, ii. 4_b_-25, it plunges at once into an account, wonderful alike in its poetic power and its psychological insight, of the tragic and costly[1] disobedience by which the divine purpose for man was at least temporarily frustrated (iii.). His progress in history is, morally considered, downward. Disobedience in the first generation becomes

murder in the next, and it is to the offspring of the violent Cain that the arts and amenities of civilization are traced, iv. 1-22. Thus the first song in the Old Testament is a song of revenge, iv. 23, 24, though this dark background of cruelty is not unlit by a gleam of religion, iv. 26. After the lapse of ten generations (v.) the world had grown so corrupt that God determined to destroy it by a flood; but because Noah was a good man, He saved him and his household and resolved never again to interrupt the course of nature in judgment (vi.-viii.). In establishing the covenant with Noah, emphasis is laid on the sacredness of blood, especially of the blood of man, ix. 1-17. Though grace abounds, however, sin also abounds. Noah fell, and his fall revealed the character of his children: the ancestor of the Semites, from whom the Hebrews sprang, is blessed, as is also Japheth, while the ancestor of the licentious Canaanites is cursed, ix. 18-27. From these three are descended the great families of mankind (x.) whose unity was confounded and whose ambitions were destroyed by the creation of diverse languages, xi. 1-9. [Footnote 1: Death is the penalty (iii. 22-24). Another explanation of how death came into the world is given in the ancient and interesting fragment vi. 1-4.]

It is against this universal background that the story of the Hebrews is thrown; and in the new beginning which history takes with the call of Abraham, something like the later contrast between the church and the world is intended to be suggested. Upon the sombreness of human history as reflected in Gen. i.-xi., a new possibility breaks in Gen. xii., and the rest of the book is devoted to the fathers of the Hebrew people (xii.-l.). The most impressive figure from a religious point of view is Abraham, the oldest of them all, and the story of his discipline is told with great power, xi. 10-xxv. 10. He was a Semite, xi. 10-32, and under a divine impulse he migrated westward to Canaan, xii. 1-9.

There various fortunes befell him--famine which drove him to Egypt, peril through the beauty of his wife,[1] abounding and conspicuous prosperity--but through it all Abraham displayed a true magnanimity and enjoyed the divine favour, xii. 10-xiii., which was manifested even in a striking military success (xiv.). Despite this favour, however, he grew despondent, as he had no child. But there came to him the promise of a son, confirmed by a covenant (xv.), the symbol of which was to be circumcision (xvii.); and Abraham trusted God, unlike his wife, whose faith was not equal to the strain, and who sought the fulfilment of the promise in foolish ways of her own,[2] xvi., xviii. 1-15. Then follows the story of Abraham's earnest but ineffectual intercession for the wicked cities of the plain--a story which further reminds us how powerfully the narrative is controlled by moral and religious interests, xviii. 16-xix. Faith is rewarded at last by the birth of a son, xxi. 1-7, and Abraham's prosperity becomes so conspicuous that a native prince is eager to make a treaty with him, xxi. 22-34. The supreme test of his faith came to him in the impulse to offer his son to God in sacrifice; but at the critical moment a substitute was providentially provided, and Abraham's faith, which had stood so terrible a test, was rewarded by another renewal of the divine assurance (xxii.). His wife died, and for a burial-place he purchased from the natives a field and cave in Hebron, thus winning in the promised land ground he could legally call his own (xxiii.). Among his eastern kinsfolk a wife is providentially found for Isaac (xxiv.), who becomes his father's heir, xxv. 1-6. Then Abraham dies, xxv. 7-11, and the uneventful

career of Isaac is briefly described in tales that partly duplicate^[3] those told of his greater father, xxv. 7-xxvi.

[Footnote 1: This story (xii. 10-20) is duplicated in xx.; also in xxvi. 1-11 (of Isaac).]

[Footnote 2: The story of the expulsion of Hagar in xvi. is duplicated in xxi. 8-21.]

[Footnote 3: xxvi. 1-11=xii. 10-20 (xx.); xxvi. 26-33=xxi. 22-34.]

The story of Isaac's son Jacob is as varied and romantic as his own was uneventful. He begins by fraudulently winning a blessing from his father, and has in consequence to flee the promised land, xxvii.-xxviii. 9. On the threshold of his new experiences he was taught in a dream the nearness of heaven to earth, and received the assurance that the God who had visited him at Bethel would be with him in the strange land and bring him back to his own, xxviii. 10-22. In the land of his exile, his fortunes ran a very checkered course (xxix.-xxxi.). In Laban, his Aramean kinsman, he met his match, and almost his master, in craft; and the initial fraud of his life was more than once punished in kind. In due time, however, he left the land of his sojourn, a rich and prosperous man. But his discipline is not over when he reaches the homeland. The past rises up before him in the person of the brother whom he had wronged; and besides reckoning with Esau, he has also to wrestle with God. He is embroiled in strife with the natives of the land, and he loses his beloved Rachel (xxxii.-xxxv.).

Into the later years of Jacob is woven the most romantic story of all—that of his son Joseph (xxxvii.-i.)^[1] the dreamer, who rose through persecution and prison, slander and sorrow (xxxvii.-xl.) to a seat beside the throne of Pharaoh (xli.). Nowhere is the providence that governs life and the Nemesis that waits upon sin more dramatically illustrated than in the story of Joseph. Again and again his guilty brothers are compelled to confront the past which they imagined they had buried out of sight for ever (xlii.-xliv.). But at last comes the gracious reconciliation between Joseph and them (xlv.), the tender meeting between Jacob and Joseph (xlvi.), the ultimate settlement of the family of Jacob in Egypt,^[2] and the consequent transference of interest to that country for several generations. The book closes with scenes illustrating the wisdom and authority of Joseph in the time of famine (xlvii.), the dying Jacob blessing Joseph's sons (xlviii.), his parting words (in verse) to all his sons (xlix.), his death and funeral honours, l. 1-14, Joseph's magnanimous forgiveness of his brothers, and his death, in the sure hope that God would one day bring the Israelites back again to the land of Canaan, l. 15-26.

[Footnote 1: xxxvi. deals with the Edomite clans, and xxxviii. with the clans of Judah.]

[Footnote 2: In one version they are not exactly in Egypt, but near it, in Goshen (xlvii. 6).]

The unity of the book of Genesis is unmistakable; yet a close inspection reveals it to be rather a unity of idea than of execution. While in general it exhibits the gradual progress of the divine purpose on its way through primeval and patriarchal history, in detail it presents a number of phenomena incompatible with unity of authorship. The theological presuppositions of different parts of the book vary widely; centuries of religious thought, for example, must lie between the God who partakes of the hospitality of Abraham under a tree (xviii.) and the majestic, transcendent, invisible Being at whose word the worlds are born (i.). The style, too,

differs as the theological conceptions do: it is impossible not to feel the difference between the diffuse, precise, and formal style of ix. 1-17, and the terse, pictorial and poetic manner of the immediately succeeding section, ix. 18-27. Further, different accounts are given of the origin of particular names or facts: Beersheba is connected, e.g. with a treaty made, in one case, between Abraham and Abimelech, xxi. 31, in another, between Isaac and Abimelech, xxvi. 33. But perhaps the most convincing proof that the book is not an original literary unit is the lack of inherent continuity in the narrative of special incidents, and the occasional inconsistencies, sometimes between different parts of the book, sometimes even within the same section.

This can be most simply illustrated from the story of the Flood (vi. 5ff.), through which the beginner should work for himself--at first without suggestions from critical commentaries or introductions--as here the analysis is easy and singularly free from complications; the results reached upon this area can be applied and extended to the rest of the book. The problem might be attacked in some such way as follows. Ch. vi. 5-8 announces the wickedness of man and the purpose of God to destroy him; throughout these verses the divine Being is called Jehovah.[1] In the next section, _vv_. 9-13, He is called by a different name--God (Hebrew, _Elohim_)--and we cannot but notice that this section adds nothing to the last; _vv_. 9, 10 are an interruption, and _vv_. 11-13 but a repetition of _vv_. 5-8. Corresponding to the change in the divine name is a further change in the vocabulary, the word for _destroy_ being different in _vv_. 7 and 13. Verses 14-22 continue the previous section with precise and minute instructions for the building of the ark, and in the later verses (cf. 18, 20) the precision tends to become diffuseness. The last verse speaks of the divine Being as God (Elohim), so that both the language and contents of _vv_. 9-22 show it to be a homogeneous section. Note that here, _vv_. 19, 20, two animals of every kind are to be taken into the ark, no distinction being drawn between the clean and the unclean. Noah must now be in the ark; for we are told that he had done all that God commanded him, _vv_. 22, 18. [Footnote 1: Wrongly represented by _the Lord_ in the English version; the American Revised Version always correctly renders by _Jehovah_. _God_ in v. 5 is an unfortunate mistake of A.V. This ought also to be _the Lord_, or rather _Jehovah_.]

But, to our surprise, ch. vii. starts the whole story afresh with a divine command to Noah to enter the ark; and this time, significantly enough, a distinction is made between the clean and the unclean--seven pairs of the former to enter and one pair of the latter (vii. 2). It is surely no accident that in this section the name of the divine Being is Jehovah, _vv_. 1, 5; and its contents follow naturally on vi. 5-8. In other words we have here, not a continuous account, but two parallel accounts, one of which uses the name God, the other Jehovah, for the divine Being. This important conclusion is put practically beyond all doubt by the similarity between vi. 22 and vii. 5, which differ only in the use of the divine name. A close study of the characteristics of these sections whose origin is thus certain will enable us approximately to relegate to their respective sources other sections, verses, or fragments of verses in which the important clue, furnished by the name of the divine Being, is not present. Any verse, or group of verses, e.g. involving the distinction between the clean and the unclean, will belong to the _Jehovistic_ source, as it is

called (J). This is the real explanation of the confusion which every one feels who attempts to understand the story as a unity. It was always particularly hard to reconcile the apparently conflicting estimates of the duration of the Flood; but as soon as the sources are separated, it becomes clear that, according to the Jehovist, it lasted sixty-eight days, according to the other source over a year (vii. 11, viii. 14).

Brief as the Flood story is, it furnishes us with material enough to study the characteristic differences between the sources out of which it is composed. The Jehovist is terse, graphic, and poetic; it is this source in which occurs the fine description of the sending forth of the raven and the dove, viii. 6-12. It knows how to make a singularly effective use of concrete details: witness Noah putting out his hand and pulling the dove into the ark, and her final return with an olive leaf in her mouth. A similarly graphic touch, interesting also for the sidelight it throws on the Jehovist's theological conceptions is that, when Noah entered the ark, "Jehovah closed the door behind him," vii. 16. Altogether different is the other source. It is all but lacking in poetic touches and concrete detail of this kind, and such an anthropomorphism as vii. 16 would be to it impossible. It is pedantically precise, giving the exact year, month, and even day when the Flood came, vii. 11, and when it ceased, viii. 13, 14. There is a certain legal precision about it which issues in diffuseness and repetition; over and over again occur such phrases as "fowl, cattle, creeping things, each after its kind," vi. 20, vii. 14, and the dimensions of the ark are accurately given. Where J had simply said, "Thou and all thy house," vii. 1, this source says, "Thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy sons' wives with thee," vi. 18. From the identity of interest and style between this source and the middle part of the Pentateuch, notably Leviticus, it is characterized as the priestly document and known to criticism as P.

Thus, though the mainstay of the analysis, or at least the original point of departure, is the difference in the names of the divine Being, many other phenomena, of vocabulary, style, and theology, are so distinctive that on the basis of them alone we could relegate many sections of Genesis with considerable confidence to their respective sources. In particular, P is especially easy to detect. For example, the use of the term Elohim, the repetitions, the precise and formal manner, the collocation of such phrases as "fowl, cattle, creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," i. 26 (cf. vii. 21), mark out the first story of creation, i.-ii. 4_a_, as indubitably belonging to P. Besides the stories of the creation and the flood, the longest and most important, though not quite the only passages^[1] belonging to P are ix. 1-17 (the covenant with Noah), xvii. (the covenant with Abraham), and xxiii. (the purchase of a burial place for Sarah). This is a fact of the greatest significance. For P, the story of creation culminates in the institution of the Sabbath, the story of the flood in the covenant with Noah, with the law concerning the sacredness of blood, the covenant with Abraham is sealed by circumcision, and the purchase of Machpelah gives Abraham legal right to a footing in the promised land. In other words the interests of this source are legal and ritual. This becomes abundantly plain in the next three books of the Pentateuch, but even in Genesis it may be justly inferred from the unusual fulness of the narrative at these four points.

[Footnote 1: The curious ch. xiv. is written under the influence of

P. Here also ritual interests play a part in the tithes paid to the priest of Salem, v. 20 (i.e. Jerusalem). In spite of its array of ancient names, xiv. 1, 2, which have been partially corroborated by recent discoveries, this chapter is, for several reasons, believed to be one of the latest in the Pentateuch.]

When we examine what is left in Genesis, after deducting the sections that belong to P, we find that the word God (Elohim), characteristic of P, is still very frequently and in some sections exclusively used. The explanation will appear when we come to deal with Exodus: meantime the fact must be carefully noted. Ch. xx., e.g., uses the word Elohim, but it has no other mark characteristic of P. It is neither formal nor diffuse in style nor legal in spirit; it is as concrete and almost as graphic as anything in J. Indeed the story related--Abraham's denial of his wife--is actually told in that document, xii. 10-20 (also of Isaac, xxvi. 1-11); and in general the history is covered by this document, which is called the Elohist[1] and known to criticism as E, in much the same spirit, and with an emphasis upon much the same details, as by J. In opposition to P, these are known as the prophetic documents, because they were written or at least put together under the influence of prophetic ideas. The close affinity of these two documents renders it much more difficult to distinguish them from each other than to distinguish either of them from P, but within certain limits the attempt may be successfully made. The basis of it must, of course, be a study of the duplicate versions of the same incidents; that is, such a narrative as ch. xx., which uses the word God (Elohim) is compared with its parallel in xii. 10-20, which uses the word Jehovah, and in this way the distinctive features and interests of each document will most readily be found. The parallel suggested is easy and instructive, and it reveals the relative ethical and theological superiority of E to J. J tells the story of Abraham's falsehood with a quaint naivete (xii.); E is offended by it and excuses it (xx.). The theological refinement of E is suggested not only here, xx. 3, 6, but elsewhere, by the frequency with which God appears in dreams and not in bodily presence as in J (cf. iii. 8). Similarly the expulsion of Hagar, which in J is due to Sarah's jealousy (xvi.), in E is attributed to a command of God, xxi. 8-21; and the success of Jacob with the sheep, which in J is due to his skill and cunning, xxx. 29-43, is referred in E to the intervention of God, xxxi. 5-12. In general it may be said that J, while religious, is also natural, whereas E tends to emphasize the supernatural, and thus takes the first step towards the austere theology of P.[2]

[Footnote 1: In this way it is distinguished from P, which, as we have seen, is also Elohist, but is not now so called.]

[Footnote 2: A detailed justification of the grounds of the critical analysis will be found in Professor Driver's elaborate and admirable Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, where every section throughout the Hexateuch is referred to its special documentary source. To readers who desire to master the detail, that work or one of the following will be indispensable: The Hexateuch, edited by Carpenter and Battersby, Addis's Documents of the Hexateuch, Bacon's Genesis of Genesis and Triple Tradition of the Exodus, or Kent's Student's Old Testament (vol. i.)]

J is the most picturesque and fascinating of all the sources-attractive alike for its fine poetic power and its profound religious insight. This is the source which describes the wooing of Isaac's bride (xxiv.),

and the meeting of Jacob and Rachel at the well, xxix. 2-14; in this source, too, which appears to be the most primitive of all, there are speaking animals--the serpent, e.g., in Genesis iii. (and the ass in Num. xxii. 28). The story of the origin of sin, in every respect a masterpiece, is told by J; we do not know whether to admire more the ease with which Jehovah, like a skilful judge, by a few penetrating questions drives the guilty pair to an involuntary confession, or the fidelity with which the whole immortal scene reflects the eternal facts of human nature. The religious teaching of J is extraordinarily powerful and impressive, all the more that it is never directly didactic; it shines through the simple and unstudied recital of concrete incident.

It is one of the most delicate and not the least important tasks of criticism to discover by analysis even the sources which lie so close to each other as J and E, for the literary efforts represented by these documents are but the reflection of religious movements. They testify to the affection which the people cherished for the story of their past; and when we have arranged them in chronological order, they enable us further, as we have seen, to trace the progress of moral and religious ideas. But, for several reasons, it is not unfair, and, from the beginner's point of view, it is perhaps even advisable, to treat these documents together as a unity: firstly, because they were actually combined, probably in the seventh century, into a unity (JE), and sometimes, as in the Joseph story, so skilfully that it is very difficult to distinguish the component parts and assign them to their proper documentary source; secondly, because, for a reason to be afterwards stated, beyond Ex. iii. the analysis is usually supremely difficult; and, lastly, because in language and spirit, the prophetic documents are very like each other and altogether unlike the priestly document. For practical purposes, then, the broad distinction into prophetic and priestly will generally be sufficient. Wherever the narrative is graphic, powerful, and interesting, we may be sure that it is prophetic,[1] whereas the priestly document is easily recognizable by its ritual interests, and by its formal, diffuse, and legal style.

[Footnote 1: If inconsistencies, contradictions or duplicates appear in the section which is clearly prophetic, the student may be practically certain that these are to be referred to the two prophetic sources. Cf. the two derivations of the name of Joseph in consecutive verses whose source is at once obvious: "God (Elohim) has taken away my reproach" (E); and "Jehovah adds to me another son" (J), Gen. xxx. 23, 24. Cf. also the illustrations adduced on pp. 13, 14.]

The documents already discussed constitute the chief sources of the book of Genesis; but there are occasional fragments which do not seem originally to have belonged to any of them. There were also collections of poetry, such as the Book of Jashar (cf. Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18), at the disposal of those who wrote or compiled the documents, and to such a collection the parting words of Jacob may have belonged (xlix.). The poem is in reality a characterization of the various tribes; v. 15, and still more plainly vv. 23, 24, look back upon historical events. The reference to Levi, vv. 5-7, which takes no account of the priestly prerogatives of that tribe, shows that the poem is early (cf. xxxiv. 25); but the description of the prosperity of Joseph (i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh), vv. 22-26, and the pre-eminence of Judah, vv. 8-12,

bring it far below patriarchal times--at least into the period of the Judges. If *_vv_*. 8-12 is an allusion to the triumphs of David and *_vv_*. 22-26 to northern Israel, the poem as a whole, which can hardly be later than Solomon's time--for it celebrates Israel and Judah equally--could not be earlier than David's; but probably the various utterances concerning the different tribes arose at different times.

The religious interest of Genesis is very high, the more so as almost every stage of religious reflection is represented in it, from the most primitive to the most mature. Through the ancient stories there gleam now and then flashes from a mythological background, as in the intermarriage of angels with mortal women, vi. 1-4, or in the struggle of the mighty Jacob, who could roll away the great stone from the mouth of the well, xxix. 2, 10, with his supernatural visitant, xxxii. 24. It is a long step from the second creation story in which God, like a potter, fashions men out of moist earth, ii. 7, and walks in the garden of Paradise in the cool of the day, iii. 8, to the first, with its sublime silence on the mysterious processes of creation (i.). But the whole book, and especially the prophetic section, is dominated by a splendid sense of the reality of God, His interest in men, His horror of sin, His purpose to redeem. Broadly speaking, the religion of the book stands upon a marvellously high moral level. It is touched with humility--its heroes know that they are "not worth of all the love and the faithfulness" which God shows them, xxxii. 10; and it is marked by a true inwardness--for it is not works but implicit trust in God that counts for righteousness, xv. 16. Yet in practical ways, too, this religion finds expression in national and individual life; it protests vehemently against human sacrifice (xxii.), and it strengthens a lonely youth in an hour of terrible temptation, xxxix. 9.

EXODUS

The book of Exodus--so named in the Greek version from the march of Israel out of Egypt--opens upon a scene of oppression very different from the prosperity and triumph in which Genesis had closed. Israel is being cruelly crushed by the new dynasty which has arisen in Egypt (i.) and the story of the book is the story of her redemption. Ultimately it is Israel's God that is her redeemer, but He operates largely by human means; and the first step is the preparation of a deliverer, Moses, whose parentage, early training, and fearless love of justice mark him out as the coming man (ii.). In the solitude and depression of the desert, he is encouraged by the sight of a bush, burning yet unconsumed, and sent forth with a new vision of God^[1] upon his great and perilous task (iii.). Though thus divinely equipped, he hesitated, and God gave him a helper in Aaron his brother (iv.). Then begins the Titanic struggle between Moses and Pharaoh--Moses the champion of justice, Pharaoh the incarnation of might (v.). Blow after blow falls from Israel's God upon the obstinate king of Egypt and his unhappy land: the water of the Nile is turned into blood (vii.), there are plagues of frogs, gnats, gadflies (viii.), murrain, boils, hail (ix.), locusts, darkness (x.), and--last and most terrible of all--the smiting of the first-born,

an event in connexion with which the passover was instituted. Then Pharaoh yielded. Israel went forth; and the festival of unleavened bread was ordained for a perpetual memorial (xi., xii.); also the first-born of man and beast was consecrated, xiii. 1-16.

[Footnote 1: The story of the revelation of Israel's God under His new name, Jehovah, is told twice (in ch. iii. and ch. vi.).]

Israel's troubles, however, were not yet over. Their departing host was pursued by the impenitent Pharaoh, but miraculously delivered at the Red Sea, in which the Egyptian horses and horsemen were overwhelmed, xiii. 17-xiv. The deliverance was celebrated in a splendid song of triumph, xv. 1-21. Then they began their journey to Sinai--a journey which revealed alike the faithlessness and discontent of their hearts, and the omnipotent and patient bounty of their God, manifested in delivering them from the perils of hunger, thirst and war, xv. 22-xvii. 16. On the advice of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, God-fearing men were appointed to decide for the people on all matters of lesser moment, while the graver cases were still reserved for Moses (xviii.)^[1]The arrival at Sinai marked a crisis; for it was there that the epoch-making covenant was made--Jehovah promising to continue His grace to the people, and they, on their part, pledging themselves to obedience. Thunder and lightning and dark storm-clouds accompanied the proclamation of the ten commandments,^[2] which represented the claims made by Jehovah upon the people whom He had redeemed, xix.-xx. 22. Connected with these claims are certain statutes, partly of a religious but much more of a civil nature, which Moses is enjoined to lay upon the people, and obedience to which is to be rewarded by prosperity and a safe arrival at the promised land, xx. 23-xxiii. 33. This section is known as the Book of the Covenant, xxiv. 7. The people unitedly promised implicit obedience to the terms of this covenant, which was then sealed with the blood of sacrifice. After six days of preparation, Moses ascended the mountain in obedience to the voice of Jehovah (xxiv.).

[Footnote 1: This chapter is apparently misplaced. In Deut. i. 9-18 the incident is set just before the _departure from_ Sinai (cf. i. 19). It may therefore originally have stood after Ex. xxxiv. 9 or before Num. x. 29.]

[Footnote 2: Or rather, the ten words. In another source, the commands are given differently, and are ritual rather than moral, xxxiv. 10-28 (J).]

At this point the story takes on a distinctly priestly complexion, and interest is transferred from the fortunes of the people to the construction of the sanctuary, for which the most minute directions are given (xxv.-xxxi.), concerning the tabernacle with all its furniture, the ark, the table for the shewbread, the golden candlestick (xxv.), the four-fold covering for the tabernacle, the wood-work, the veil between the holy and the most holy place, the curtain for the door (xxvi.), the altar, the court round about the tabernacle, the oil for the light (xxvii.), the sacred vestments for the high priest and the other priests (xxviii.), the manner of consecration of the priests, the priestly dues, the atonement for the altar, the morning and evening offering (xxix.), the altar of incense, the poll-tax, the laver, the holy oil, the incense (xxx.), the names and divine equipment of the overseers of the work of constructing the tabernacle, the sanctity of the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant (xxxi.).

After this priestly digression, the thread of the story is resumed. During the absence of Moses upon the mount, the people imperilled their covenant relationship with their God by worshipping Him in the form of a calf; but, on the very earnest intercession of Moses they were forgiven, and there was given to him the special revelation of Jehovah as a God of forgiving pity and abounding grace. In the tent to which the people regularly resorted to learn the divine will, God was wont to speak to Moses face to face, xxxii. 1-xxxiv. 9. Then follows the other version of the decalogue already referred to--ritual rather than moral, xxxiv. 10-28--and an account of the transfiguration of Moses, as he laid Jehovah's commands upon the people, xxxiv. 29-35. From this point to the end of the book the atmosphere is again unmistakably priestly. Chs. xxxv.-xxxix, beginning with the Sabbath law, assert with a profusion of detail that the instructions given in xxv.-xxxi. were carried out to the letter. Then the tabernacle was set up on New Year's day, the divine glory filled it, and the subsequent movements of the people were guided by cloud and fire (xl.).

The unity of Exodus is not quite so impressive as that of Genesis. This is due to the different proportion in which the sources are blended, P playing a much more conspicuous part here than there. Without hesitation, more than one-fourth of the book may be at once relegated to this source: viz. xxv.-xxxi., which describe the tabernacle to be erected with all that pertained to it, and xxxv.-xl., which relate that the instructions there given were fully carried out. The minuteness, the formality and monotony of style which we noticed in Genesis reappear here; but the real spirit of P, its devotion to everything connected with the sanctuary and worship, is much more obvious here than there. This document is also fairly prominent in the first half of the book, and its presence is usually easy to detect. The section, e.g., on the institution of the passover and the festival of unleavened bread, xi. 9-xii. 20, is easily recognized as belonging to this source. Of very great importance is the passage, vi. 2-13, which describes the revelation given to Moses, asserting that the fathers knew the God of Israel only by the name El Shaddai, while the name of Jehovah, which was then revealed to Moses for the first time, was unknown to them. The succeeding genealogy which traces the descent of Moses and Aaron to Levi, vi. 14-30, and Aaron's commission to be the spokesman of Moses, vii. 1-7, also come from P. This source also gives a brief account of the oppression and the plagues, and the prominence of Aaron the priest in the story of the latter is very significant. In E the plagues come when Moses stretches out his hand or his rod at the command of Jehovah, ix. 22, x. 12, 21; in P, Jehovah says to Moses, "Say unto Aaron, 'Stretch forth thy hand' or 'thy rod,'" viii. 5, 16.

The story to which we have just alluded, of the revelation of the name Jehovah, is also told in ch. iii., where it is connected with the incident of the burning bush. Apart from the improbability of the same document telling the same story twice, the very picturesque setting of ch. iii, is convincing proof that we have here a section from one of the prophetic documents, and we cannot long doubt which it is. For while one of those documents (J), as we have seen, uses the word Jehovah without scruple throughout the whole of Genesis, and regards that name as known not only to Abraham, xv. 7, but even to the antediluvians, iv. 26, the other regularly uses Elohim. This prophetic story, then, of the revelation of the name Jehovah to Moses, must belong to E, who deliberately avoids the name Jehovah

throughout Genesis, because he considers it unknown before the time of Moses. This very fact, however, greatly complicates the subsequent analysis of the prophetic documents in the Pentateuch; because, from this point on, both are now free to use the name Jehovah of the divine Being, and thus one of the principal clues to the analysis practically disappears.[1] Considering the affinity of these documents, it is therefore competent, as we have seen, to treat them as a unity.

[Footnote 1: Naturally there are other very important and valuable clues. e.g, the holy mount is called Sinai in J and Horeb in E.]

The proof, however, that both prophetic documents are really present in Exodus, if not at first sight obvious or extensive, is at any rate convincing. In one source, e.g. (J), the Israelites dwell by themselves in a district called Goshen, viii. 22 (cf. Gen. xiv. 10); in the other, they dwell among the Egyptians as neighbours, so that the women can borrow jewels from them, iii. 22, and their doors have to be marked with blood on the night of the passover to distinguish them from the Egyptians, xii. 22. Again in J, the people number over 600,000, xii. 37; in E they are so few that they only require two midwives, i. 15. Similar slight but significant differences may be found elsewhere, particularly in the account of the plagues. In J, e.g., Moses predicts the punishment that will fall if Pharaoh refuses his request, and next day Jehovah sends it: in E, Moses works the wonders by raising his rod. In Exodus, as in Genesis, J reveals the divine through the natural, E rather through the supernatural. It is an east wind, e.g., in J, as in the poem, xv. 10, that drives back the Red Sea, xiv. 21a (as it had brought the locusts, x. 13); in E this happens on the raising of Moses' rod, xiv. 16. Here again, as in Genesis, we find that E has taken the first step on the way to P. For this miracle (in E) at the Red Sea, which in J is essentially natural, and miraculous only in happening at the critical moment, is considerably heightened in P, who relates that the waters were a wall unto the people on the right hand and on the left, xiv. 22.

These three great documents constitute the principal sources of the book of Exodus; but here, as in Genesis, there are fragments that belong to a more primitive order of ideas than that represented by the compilers of the documents (cf. iv. 24-26); there is, besides the two decalogues, a body of legislation, xx. 23-xxiii. 33; and there is a poem, xv. 1-18. The Book of the Covenant, as it is called, is a body of mainly civil but partly religious law, practically independent of the narrative. The style and contents of the code show that it is not all of a piece, but must have been of gradual growth. The 2nd pers. sing., e.g., sometimes alternates with the pl. in consecutive verses, xxii. 21, 22. Again, while some of the laws state, in the briefest possible words, the official penalty attached to a certain crime, xxi. 12, others are longer and introduce a religious sanction, xxii. 23, 24, and a few deal definitely with religious feasts, xxiii. 14-19, obligations, xxii. 29-31, or sanctuaries, xx. 23-26. In general, the code implies the settled life of an agricultural and pastoral people, and the community for which it is designed must have already attained a certain measure of organization, as we must assume that there were means for enacting the penalties threatened. A remarkably humanitarian spirit pervades the code. It mitigates the lot of the slave, it encourages a spirit of justice in social relations, and it exhibits a fine regard for the poor and defenceless, xxii. 21-27. It

probably represents the juristic usages, or at least ideals, of the early monarchy.

The Song of Moses, xv. 1-18, also appears to belong to the monarchy. The explicit mention of Philistia, Edom and Moab in _vv_. 14, 15 imply that the people are already settled in Canaan, and the sanctuary in _v. 17b_ is most naturally, if not necessarily, interpreted of the temple. The poem appears to be an elaboration of the no doubt ancient lines:

Sing to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider He hath thrown into the sea (xv. 21).

The religious, as opposed to the theological, interest of the book lies entirely within the prophetic sources. Here the drama of redemption begins in earnest, and it is worked out on a colossal scale. From his first blow struck in the cause of justice to the day on which, in indignation and astonishment, he destroyed the golden calf, Moses is a figure of overwhelming moral earnestness. Few books in the Old Testament have a higher conception of God than Exodus. The words of the decalogue are His words, xx. 1, and the protest against the calf-worship (xxxii.-xxxiv.) is an indirect plea for His spirituality. But the highest heights are touched in the revelation of Him as merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, xxxiv. 6--a revelation which lived to the latest days and was cherished in these very words by the pious hearts of Israel (cf. Pss. lxxxvi. 15; ciii. 8; cxi. 4; cxlv. 8).

LEVITICUS

The emphasis which modern criticism has very properly laid on the prophetic books and the prophetic element generally in the Old Testament, has had the effect of somewhat diverting popular attention from the priestly contributions to the literature and religion of Israel. From this neglect Leviticus has suffered most. Yet for many reasons it is worthy of close attention; it is the deliberate expression of the priestly mind of Israel at its best, and it thus forms a welcome foil to the unattractive pictures of the priests which confront us on the pages of the prophets during the three centuries between Hosea and Malachi. And if we should be inclined to deplore the excessively minute attention to ritual, and the comparatively subordinate part played by ethical considerations in this priestly manual, it is only fair to remember that the hymn-book used by these scrupulous ministers of worship was the Psalter--enough surely to show that the ethical and spiritual aspects of religion, though not prominent, were very far from being forgotten. In xvii.-xxvi. the ethical element receives a fine and almost surprising prominence: the injunction to abstain from idolatry, e.g., is immediately preceded by the injunction to reverence father and mother, xix. 3,4. Indeed, ch. xix. is a good compendium of the ethics of ancient Israel; and, while hardly to be compared with Job xxxi., still, in its care for the resident alien, and in its insistence upon motives of benevolence and humanity, it is an eloquent reminder of the moral elevation of Israel's religion, and is peculiarly welcome in a book so largely devoted to the externals of the cult.

The book of Leviticus illustrates the origin and growth of law. Occasionally legislation is clothed in the form of narrative--the law of blasphemy, e.g., xxiv. 10-23 (cf. x. 16-20)--thus suggesting its origin in a particular historical incident (cf. I Sam. xxx. 25); and traces of growth are numerous, notably in the differences between the group xvii.-xxvi. and the rest of the book, and very ancient heathen elements are still visible through the transformations effected by the priests of Israel, as in the case of Azazel xvi. 8,22, a demon of the wilderness, akin to the Arabic jinns. Strictly speaking, though Leviticus is pervaded by a single spirit, it is not quite homogeneous: the first group of laws, e.g. (i.-vii.), expressly acknowledges different sources--certain laws being given in the tent of meeting, i. 1, others on Mount Sinai, vii. 38. The sections are well defined--note the subscriptions at the end of vii. and xxvi.--and marked everywhere by the scrupulous precision of the legal mind.

There is no trace in Leviticus of the prophetic document JE. That the book is essentially a law book rather than a continuation of the narrative of the Exodus is made plain by the fact that that narrative (Ex. xl.) is not even formally resumed till ch. viii.

I. LAWS OF SACRIFICE (i.-vii.)

(a) For worshippers, i.-vi. 7. Laws for the burnt offering of the herd, of the flock, and of fowls (i.). Laws for the different kinds of cereal offerings--the use of salt compulsory, honey and leaven prohibited (ii.). Laws for the peace-offering--the offerer kills it, the priest sprinkles the blood on the sides of the altar and burns the fat (iii.) For an unconscious transgression of the law, the high priest shall offer a bullock, the community shall offer the same, a ruler shall offer a he-goat, one of the common people shall offer a female animal (iv.). A female animal shall be offered for certain legal and ceremonial transgressions; the poor may offer two turtle doves, or pigeons, or even flour, v. 1-13. Sacred dues unintentionally withheld or the property of another man dishonestly retained must be restored together with twenty per cent. extra, v. 14-vi. 7.

(b) For priests, vi. 8-vii. 38. Laws regulating the daily burnt offering, the cereal offering, the daily cereal offering of the high priest, and the ordinary sin offering, vi. 8-30. Laws regulating the guilt offering, the priests' share of the sacrifices, the period during which the flesh of sacrifice may be eaten, the prohibition of the eating of fat and blood (vii.).

II. THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD (viii.-x.)

This section is the direct continuation of Exodus xl., which prescribes the inauguration of Aaron and his sons into the priestly office. Laws regulating the consecration of the high priest and the other priests--washing, investiture, anointing, sin offering, burnt offering, with accompanying rites (viii., cf. Exod. xxix.). The first sacrificial service at which Aaron and his sons officiate--the benediction being followed by the appearance of Jehovah's glory (ix.). The first violation of the law of worship and its signal

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