

The Pentateuch

Concluding Remarks on the Composition of the Pentateuch

From *Commentary on the Old Testament*, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch.

If we close our commentary with another survey of the entire work, viz., the five books of Moses, we may sum up the result of our detailed exposition, so far as critical opinions respecting its origin are concerned, in these words: We have found the decision which we pronounced in our General Introduction, as to the internal unity and system of the whole Torah, as well as its Mosaic origin, thoroughly confirmed. With the exception of the last chapters of the fifth book, which are distinctly shown to be an appendix to the Mosaic Torah, added by a different hand, by the statement in Deuteronomy 31:24ff., that when the book of the law was finished Moses handed it over to the Levites to keep, there is nothing in the whole of the five books which Moses might not have written.

There are no historical circumstances or events either mentioned or assumed, which occurred for the first time after Moses was dead. Neither the allusion to the place called Dan in Gen. 14:14 (cf. Deuteronomy 34:1); nor the remark in Gen. 36:1, that there were kings in the land of Edom before the children of Israel had a king over them; nor the statement that the monument which Jacob erected over Rachel's grave remained "to this day" (Gen. 35:20); nor even the assertion in Deuteronomy 3:14, that Jair called Bashan "Chavvoth Jair" after his own name, furnishes any definite and unmistakable indication of a post-Mosaic time.³⁹ And the account in Ex. 16:35, that the Israelites ate the manna forty years, till they came to an inhabited land, "to the end," i.e., the extreme boundary, of the land of Canaan, could only be adduced by Bleek (Einl. p. 204) as an evident proof that "this could not have been written before the arrival of the Israelites in the land of Canaan," through a παρερμηνεία, or misinterpretation of the words, "into the land of their dwelling." For were not the Israelites on the border of the land when they were

encamped in the steppes of Moab by the Jordan opposite to Jericho?

Or are we to suppose that the kingdoms of Sihon and Og with their cities, which the Israelites had already conquered under Moses, were an uninhabited land? The passage mentioned last simply proves, that in the middle books of the Pentateuch we have not simple diaries before us containing the historical occurrences of the Mosaic times, but a work drawn up according to a definite plan, and written in the last year of Moses' life. This is apparent from the remarks about the shining face of Moses (Ex. 34:33–35), and the guidance of Israel in all its journeys by the pillar of cloud (Ex. 40:38, cf. Num. 10:34), as well as from the systematic arrangement and distribution of the materials according to certain well-defined and obvious points of view, as we have already endeavoured to show in the introductions to the different books, and in the exposition itself.

If, however, the composition of the whole Torah by Moses is thus firmly established, in accordance with the statements in Deuteronomy 31:9 and 24, it by no means follows that Moses wrote the whole work from Gen. 1 to Deuteronomy 31 *uno tenore*, and in the closing days of his life. Even in this case it may have been written step by step; and not only Genesis, but the three middle books, may have been composed before the discourses in the fifth book, so that the whole work was simply finished and closed after the renewal of the covenant recorded in Deuteronomy 29 and 30. Again, such statements as that Moses wrote this law, and made an end of writing the words of this law in a book till they were finished (Deuteronomy 31:9 and 24), by no means require us to assume that Moses wrote it all with his own hand.

The epistles which the Apostle Paul sent to the different churches were rarely written with his own hand, but were dictated to one of his assistants; yet their Pauline origin is not called in question in consequence. And so Moses may have employed some assistant, either a priest or scribe (shoter), in the composition of the

book of the law, without its therefore failing to be his own work. Still less is the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch rendered doubtful by the fact that he availed himself of written documents from earlier times in writing the primeval history, and incorporated them to some extent in the book of Genesis without alteration; and that in the history of his own time, and when introducing the laws into his work, he inserted documents in the middle books which had been prepared by the priests and shoterim at his own command,—such, for example, as the lists of the numbering of the people (Num. 1–3 and 26), the account of the dedicatory offerings of the tribe-princes (Num. 7), and of the committee of heads of tribes appointed for the purpose of dividing the land of Canaan (Num. 34:16ff.),—in the exact form in which they had been drawn up for public use. This conjecture is rendered very natural by the contents and form of the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch contains historical narrative and law, answering to the character of the divine revelation, which consisted in historical facts, and received a development in accordance with the times. And on closer inspection we find that several different elements may be distinguished in each of these. The historical contents are divisible into an annalistic or monumental portion, and into prophetic-historical accounts. The former includes the simple notices of the most important events from the creation of the world to the death of Moses, with their exact chronological, ethnographical, and geographical data; also the numerous genealogical documents introduced into the history.

To the latter belong statements, whether shorter or longer, respecting those revelations and promises of God, by which the Creator of the heaven and the earth prepared the way from the very earliest time for the redemption of the fallen human race, and which, after laying the foundation for the Old Testament kingdom of God by the guidance of the patriarchs and the redemption of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, He eventually carried out at Sinai by the conclusion of a covenant and the giving of a law.

In the same way, we may distinguish a twofold element in the legal portion of the Pentateuch. The kernel of the Sinaitic legislation is to be found in the decalogue, with the moral and rightful conditions upon the basis of which the Lord concluded the covenant with Israel. The religious and moral truths and commandments, which, as being the absolute demands of the holiness and justice, the love and mercy of God, constitute the very essence of true religion, are surrounded in the covenant economy of the Old Testament by certain religious statutes and institutions, which were imposed upon the people of God simply for the time of its infancy, and constituted that “shadow of things to come” which was to pass away when the “body” appeared.

This “shadow” embraces all the special theocratic ordinances and precepts of the so-called Levitical law (whether ecclesiastical, disciplinary, or magisterial), in which religious and ethical ideas were symbolically incorporated; so that they contained within them eternal truths, whilst their earthly form was to pass away. These covenant statutes are so intimately bound up with the general religious doctrines and the purely moral commands, by virtue of their symbolical significance, that in many respects they interlace one another, the moral commands being enclosed and pervaded by the covenant statutes, and the latter again being sanctified and transformed by the former, so that the entire law assumes the form of a complete organic whole.

A similar organic connection is also apparent between the historical and legal constituents of the Pentateuch. The historical narrative not only supplied the framework or outward setting for the covenant legislation, but it also prepared the way for that legislation, just as God Himself prepared the way for concluding the covenant with Israel by His guidance of the human race and the patriarchs of Israel; and it so pervades every portion of it also, that, on the one hand, the historical circumstances form the groundwork for the legal institutions, and on the other hand a light is thrown by the

historical occurrences upon the covenant ordinances and laws. Just as nature and spirit interpenetrate each other in the world around us and in human life, and the spirit not only comes to view in the life of nature, but transforms it at the same time; so has God planted His kingdom of grace in the natural order of the world, that nature may be sanctified by grace. But, notwithstanding this organic connection between the various constituents of the Pentateuch, from the very nature of the case not only are the historical and legal portions kept quite distinct from one another in many passages, but the distinctions between these two constituents are here and there brought very clearly out to view.

The material differences necessarily determined in various ways the form of the narrative, the phraseology, and even the words employed. In the historical portions many words and expressions occur which are never met with in the legal sections, and vice versa. The same remark also applies to the different portions in which we have either historical narrative, or the promulgation of laws. In addition to this, we might reasonably expect to find whole sections also, in which the ideas and verbal peculiarities of the different constituents are combined.

And this is really the case. The differences stand out very sharply in the earliest chapters of Genesis, where the account of paradise and the fall, together with the promise of the victory of the seed of the woman over the serpent, which contains the germ of all future revelations of God (Gen. 2:4ff.), is appended immediately to the history of the creation of the world (Deuteronomy 1:1–2:3); whilst in the mode of narration it differs considerably from the style of the first chapter. Whereas in Deuteronomy 1 the Creator of the heaven and the earth is called Elohim simply; in the history of paradise and the fall, not to mention other differences, we meet with the composite name Jehovah Elohim; and, after this, the two names Elohim and Jehovah are used interchangeably, so that in many chapters the former only occurs, and in others again only the latter, until the statement

in Ex. 6, that God appeared to Moses and commissioned him to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, after which the name Jehovah predominates, so that henceforth, with but few exceptions, Elohim is only used in an appellative sense.

Upon this interchange in the names of God in the book of Genesis, modern critics have built up their hypothesis as to the composition of Genesis, and in fact of the entire Pentateuch, either from different documents, or from repeated supplementary additions, in accordance with which they discover an outward cause for the change of names, viz., the variety of editors, instead of deducing it from the different meanings of the names themselves; whilst they also adduce, in support of their view, the fact that certain ideas and expressions change in connection with the name of God.

The fact is obvious enough. But the change in the use of the different names of God is associated with the gradual development of the saving purposes of God; and as we have already shown on pp. 45ff., the names Elohim and Jehovah are expressive of different relations on the part of God to the world. Now, as God did not reveal Himself in the full significance of His name Jehovah till the time of the exodus of Israel out of Egypt, and the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, we could expect nothing else than what we actually find in Genesis, namely, that this name is not used by the author of the book of Genesis before the call of Abraham, except in connection with such facts as were directly preparatory to the call of Abraham to be the father of the covenant nation; and that even in the history of the patriarchs, in which it predominates from Gen. 12–16, it is used less frequently again after Jehovah revealed Himself to Abraham as El Shaddai, and other titles of God sprang out of the continued manifestations of God to the patriarchs, which could take the place of that name. (For more detailed remarks, see pp. 213ff.)

It would not have been by any means strange, therefore, if the name Jehovah had not occurred

at all in the account of the creation of the world, in the genealogies of the patriarchs of the primeval and preparatory age (Gen. 5 and 11), in the table of nations (Gen. 10), in the account of the negotiations of Abraham with the Hittites concerning the purchase of the cave of Machpelah for a family sepulchre (Gen. 23), in the notices respecting Esau and the Edomitish tribe-princes and kings (Gen. 36), and other narratives of similar import. Nevertheless we find it in the genealogy in Gen. 5:29, and in the table of nations in Gen. 10:9, where the critics, in order to save their hypothesis, are obliged to have recourse to an assumption of glosses, or editorial revisions. They have dealt still more violently with Gen. 17:1. There Jehovah appears to Abram, and manifests Himself to him as El Shaddai, from which it is very evident that the name El Shaddai simply expresses one particular feature in the manifestation of Jehovah, and describes a preliminary stage, anticipatory of the full development of the nature of the absolute God, as expressed in the name Jehovah.

This is put beyond all doubt by the declaration of God to Moses in Ex. 6:3, "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as El Shaddai, and by My name Jehovah was I not known to them." Even Astruc observes, with reference to these words, "The passage in exodus, when properly understood, does not prove that the name of Jehovah was a name of God unknown to the patriarchs, and revealed for the first time to Moses; it simply proves that God had not shown the patriarchs the full extent of the meaning of this name, as He had made it known to Moses." The modern critics, on the other hand, have erased Jehovah from the text in Gen. 17:1, and substituted Elohim in its place, and then declare El Shaddai synonymous with Elohim, whilst they have so perverted Ex. 6:3 as to make the name Jehovah utterly unknown to the patriarchs.

By similar acts of violence they have mangled the text in very many other passages, for the purpose of carrying out the distinction between the Elohim and Jehovah documents; and yet for all that they cannot escape the admission, that

there are certain portions or sections of the book of Genesis in which the separation is impossible.

It is just the same with the supposed "favourite expressions" of the Elohistic and Jehovistic sections, as with the names of God. "There are certain favourite expressions, it is said, which are common to the Elohistic portions; and the same things are frequently called by different names in the Elohistic and Jehovistic sections. Among the Elohistic expressions are: אֶחָדָה (possession), מְגוּרֵי אֲרָץ (land of the stranger's sojourn), הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה (the self-same day), Padan-Aram (the Jehovistic for this is always (?) Aram-Naharaim, or simply Aram),⁴⁰ רֵיתֶךָ הַקִּיּוֹם, וְרָבָה פָּרָה (the Jehovistic is רַתָּה (בְּרִית פָּרָה); wherever the name Elohim occurs, these expressions also appear as its inseparable satellites."

This statement is in part incorrect, and not in accordance with fact; and even where there is any foundation for it, it really proves nothing. In the first place, it is not correct that אֶחָדָה and אֲרָץ מְגוּרֵי are only to be met with in Elohistic portions. In the very first passage in which we meet with this word in the Pentateuch (Gen. 17:8), it is not Elohim, but Jehovah, who appears as El Shaddai, and promises Abraham and his seed the land of his pilgrimage, the land of Canaan, עוֹלָם לְאֶחָדָה. This passage is clearly pointed to in Gen. 48:4. In addition to this, the word achuzzah occurs in Gen. 23:4, 9, 20; 49:30; 50:13, in connection with the family sepulchre which Abraham had acquired as a possession by purchase; also in the laws concerning the sale and redemption of landed property (Lev. 25 and 27 very frequently), and in those concerning the division of the land as a possession among the tribes and families of Israel (Num. 27:7; 32:5ff., 35:2, 8); also in Lev. 25:34 and Gen. 36:43, —in both passages with reference to property or a fixed landed possession, for which there was no other word in the Hebrew language that could be used in these passages; not to mention the fact, that Stähelin, Knobel, and others, pronounce Num. 32:32 a Jehovistic passage.

So again the expressions *בְּרִית הַקִּים* (to set up a covenant) and *לְדֹרֹתָם* (in their generations) occur in Gen. 17:7 in a Jehovistic framework; for it was not Elohim, but Jehovah, who appeared to Abram (see v. 1), to set up (not conclude) His covenant with him and his posterity as an everlasting covenant, according to their generations. To set up (i.e., realize, carry out) a covenant, and to conclude a covenant, are certainly two distinct ideas.

In Gen. 47:27, again, and Lev. 26:9, we meet with *פָּרָה וְרָבָה פָּרָה* in two sections, which are pronounced Jehovistic. The other three, no doubt, occur in Genesis in connection with Elohim; but the expression, “in the self-same day,” could not be expected in Jehovistic sections, for the simple reason, that the time of the revelations and promises of God is not generally reckoned by day and hour. “After his kind” is only met with in four sections in the whole of the Pentateuch,—in the accounts of the creation and that of the flood (Gen. 1 and 6–7), and in the laws concerning clean and unclean beasts (Lev. 11 and Deuteronomy 14), where it is simply the species of animals that are referred to.

Can this word then be called a favourite Elohist expression, which constantly appears like an inseparable satellite, wherever the name Elohim occurs? The same remarks apply to other words and phrases described as Elohist: e.g., *tholedoth* (which stands at the head of a Jehovistic account, however, in Gen. 2:4), “father’s house,” “in their families” (*Mishpachoth*), and many others. But just as such expressions as these are not to be expected in the prophetic-historical sections, for the simple reason that the ideas which they express belong to a totally different sphere, so, on the other hand, a considerable number of notions and words, which are associated with the visible manifestations of God, the promises to the patriarchs, their worship, etc., are found in the book of Genesis always in connection with the name Jehovah: see, for example, *קָרָא* *יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם* (עליות), *עוֹלָה הַשְּׂעִלָּה* (עליות), *הַנְּחֹחַ רֵיחַ*, and others of the same kind.

And yet the last two occur in the laws of the middle books, which the critics attribute to the Elohist much more frequently than many of the so-called Elohist expressions and formulas of the book of Genesis. This fact clearly shows, that there are no such things as favourite expressions of the Elohist and Jehovist, but that the words are always adapted to the subject. In the covenant statutes of the middle books, we find Elohist and Jehovistic expressions combined, because the economy of the Sinaitic covenant was anticipated on the one hand by the patriarchal revelations of Jehovah the covenant God, and established on the other hand upon the natural foundations of the Israelitish commonwealth.

The covenant which Jehovah concluded with the people of Israel at Sinai (Ex. 24) was simply the setting up and full realization of the covenant which He made with Abram (Gen. 15), and had already begun to set up with him by the promise of a son, and the institution of circumcision as the covenant sign (Gen. 17).

The indispensable condition of membership in the covenant was circumcision, which Jehovah commanded to Abraham when He made Himself known to him as El Shaddai (Gen. 17), and in connection with which we meet for the first time with the legal formulas, “a statute for ever,” “in your generations,” and “that soul shall be cut off,” which recur so constantly in the covenant statutes of the middle books, but so arranged, that the expression “a statute for ever” is never used in connection with general religious precepts or purely moral commandments, the eternal significance of which did not need to be enjoined, since it naturally followed from the unchangeable holiness and justice of the eternal God whilst this could not be assumed without further ground of the statutory laws and ordinances of the covenant.

But these covenant ordinances also had their roots in the natural order of the world and of the national life. The nation of Israel which sprang from the twelve sons of Israel by natural generation, received its division into tribes, and

the constitution founded upon this, as a covenant nation and congregation of Jehovah. The numbering of the people was taken in tribes, according to the families and fathers' houses of the different tribes; and the land of Canaan, which was promised them for an inheritance, was to be divided among the tribes, with special reference to the number and magnitude of their families. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that in the laws and statements concerning these things, words and formularies should be repeated which already occur in the book of Genesis in connection with the genealogical notices.

Modern critics, as is well known, regard the whole of the Sinaitic legislation, from Ex. 25 to Num. 10:28, as an essential part of the original work, with the exception of Ex. 20–23, Lev. 17–20 and 26, and a few verses in Lev. 10, 23, 24, 25, and Num. 4 and 8. Now, as a great variety of things are noticed in this law—such as the building and setting up of the tabernacle, the description of the priests' clothes, the order of sacrifice—which are not mentioned again in the other parts of the Pentateuch, it was very easy for Knobel to fill several pages with expressions from the original Elohist work, which are neither to be found in the Jehovistic historical narratives, nor in the general commands of a religious and moral character, by simply collecting together all the names of these particular things.

But what does such a collection prove? Nothing further than that the contents of the Pentateuch are very varied, and the same things are not repeated throughout. Could we expect to find beams, pillars, coverings, tapestries, and the vessels of the sanctuary, or priests' dresses and sacrificial objects, mentioned in the ten commandments, or among the rights of Israel (Ex. 20–23), or in the laws of marriage and chastity and the moral commandments (Lev. 17–20)? With the exception of the absence of certain expressions and formulas, which are of frequent occurrence in the covenant statutes, the critics are unable to adduce any other ground for excluding the general religious and moral commandments from the legislation of

the so-called original work, than the a priori axiom, "The Elohist had respect simply to the theocratic law; and such laws as are introduced in Ex. 21–23, in connection with moral and civil life, lay altogether outside his plan." These are assertions, not proofs.

The use of words in the Pentateuch could only furnish conclusive evidence that it had been composed by various authors, if the assertion were a well founded one, that different expressions are employed for the same things in different parts of the work. But all that has hitherto been adduced in proof of this amounts to nothing more than a few words, chiefly in the early chapters of Genesis; whilst it is assumed at the same time that Gen. 2:4ff. contains a second account of the creation, whereas it simply gives a description of paradise, and a more minute account of the creation of man than is to be found in Gen. 1, the difference in point of view requiring different words.

To this we have to add the fact, that by no means a small number of sections exhibit, so far as the language is concerned, the peculiarities of the two original documents or main sources, and render a division utterly impossible.

The critics have therefore found themselves compelled to assume that there was a third or even a fourth source, to which they refer whatever cannot be assigned to the other two. This assumption is a pure offshoot of critical difficulty, whilst the fact itself is a proof that the Pentateuch is founded upon unity of language, and that the differences which occur here and there arise for the most part from the variety and diversity of the actual contents; whilst in a very few instances they may be attributable to the fact that Moses availed himself of existing writings in the composition of the book of Genesis, and in the middle books inserted public documents without alteration in his historical account.

The other proofs adduced, for the purpose of supporting the evidence from language, viz., the frequent repetitions of the same thing and the actual discrepancies, are even weaker still. No doubt the Pentateuch abounds in repetitions.

The longest and most important is the description of the tabernacle, where we have, first of all, the command to prepare this sanctuary given in Ex. 25–31, with a detailed description of all the different parts, and all the articles of furniture, as well as of the priests' clothing and the consecration of the priests and the altar; and then again, in Ex. 35–39 and Lev. 8, a detailed account of the fulfilment of these instructions in almost the same words.

The holy candlestick is mentioned five times (Ex. 25:31–40; 27:20, 21; 30:7, 8, Lev. 24:1–4, and Num. 8:1–4); the command not to eat blood occurs as many as eight times (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26, 27; 17:10–14; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23, 24, and 15:23), and on the first three occasions, at all events, in passages belonging to the so-called original work.

Now, if these repetitions have not been regarded by any of the critics, with the exception of J. Popper, as furnishing proofs of difference of authorship, what right can we have to adduce other repetitions of a similar kind as possessing any such significance?—But lastly, the critics have involved themselves in almost incomprehensible contradictions, through the supposed contradictions in the Pentateuch.

Some of them, e.g., Stähelin and Bertheau, think these discrepancies only apparent, or at least as of such a character that the last editor saw no discrepancies in them, otherwise he would have expunged them. Others, such as Knobel and Hupfeld, place them in the foreground, as the main proofs of a plurality of authors; whilst Hupfeld especially, by a truly inquisitorial process, has made even the smallest differences into irreconcilable contradictions.

Yet, for all that, he maintains that the Pentateuch, in its present form, is a work characterized by unity, arranged and carried out according to a definite plan, in which the different portions are so arranged and connected together, “with an intelligent regard to connection and unity or plan,” yea, “dovetailed together in so harmonious a way, that they have the deceptive appearance of a

united whole” (Hupfeld, *die Quellen der Genes.* p. 196).

In working up the different sources, the editor, it is said, “did not hesitate to make systematic corrections of the one to bring it into harmony with the other,” as, for example, in the names Abram and Sarai, which he copied from the original document into the Jehovistic portions before Gen. 17, because “he would not allow of any discrepancy between his sources in these points, and in fact could not have allowed it without a manifest contradiction, and the consequent confusion of his readers” (p. 198).

How then does it square with so intelligent a procedure, to assume that there are irreconcilable contradictions in the work? An editor who worked with so much intelligence and reflection would never have left actual contradictions standing; and modern critics have been able to discover them simply because they judge the biblical writings according to modern notions, and start in their operations from a fundamental opinion which is directly at variance with the revelation of the Bible.

The strength of the opposition to the unity and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch arises much less from the peculiarities of form, which the critics have placed in the foreground, than from the offence which they take at the contents of the books of Moses, which are irreconcilable with the naturalism of the modern views of the world.

To the leaders of modern criticism, not only is the spuriousness, or post-Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, an established fact, but the gradual rise of the Mosaic laws in connection with the natural development of the Hebrew people, without any direct or supernatural interposition on the part of God, is also firmly established a priori on dogmatical grounds. This is openly expressed by De Wette in the three first editions of his Introduction, in which he opens the critical inquiry concerning the Pentateuch with this observation (§ 145): “Many occurrences are opposed to the laws of nature, and presuppose a direct interposition

on the part of God;" and then proceeds to say, that "if to an educated mind it is a decided fact that such miracles have never really occurred, the question arises whether, perhaps, they may have appeared to do so to the eye-witnesses and persons immediately concerned; but to this also we must give a negative reply.

And thus we are brought to the conclusion that the narrative is not contemporaneous, or derived from contemporaneous sources." Ewald has expressed his naturalistic views, which acknowledge no supernatural revelation from God, in his "History of the People of Israel," and developed the gradual formation of the Pentateuch from the principles involved in these fundamental views.

But just as De Wette expressed this candid confession in a much more cautious and disguised manner in the later editions of his Introduction, so have his successors endeavoured more and more to conceal the naturalistic background of their critical operations, and restricted themselves to arguments, the weakness and worthlessness of which they themselves admit in connection with critical questions which do not affect their naturalistic views.

So long as biblical criticism is fettered by naturalism, it will never rise to a recognition of the genuineness and internal unity of the Pentateuch.

For if the miraculous acts of the living God recorded in it are not true, and did not actually occur, the account of them cannot have come down from eye-witnesses, but can only be myths, which grew up in the popular belief long after the events referred to.

And if there is no prophetic foresight of the future produced by the Spirit of God, Moses cannot have foretold the rejection of Israel and their dispersion among the heathen even before their entrance into Canaan, whereas they did not take place till many centuries afterwards.

If, on the other hand, the reality of the supernatural revelations of God, together with miracles and prophecies, be admitted, not only

are the contents of the Pentateuch in harmony with its Mosaic authorship, but even its formal arrangement can be understood and scientifically vindicated, provided only we suppose the work to have originated in the following manner.

After the exodus of the tribes of Israel from Egypt, and their adoption as the people of Jehovah through the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, when Moses had been commanded by God to write down the covenant rights (Ex. 24:4, and 34:27), and then formed the resolution not only to ensure the laws which the Lord had given to the people through his mediation against alteration and distortion, and hand them down to futurity by committing them to writing, but to write down all the great and glorious things that the Lord had done for His people, for the instruction of his own and succeeding generations, and set himself to carry out this resolution; he collected together the traditions of the olden time, which had been handed down in Israel from the days of the patriarchs, partly orally, and partly in writings and records, for the purpose of combining them into a preliminary history of the kingdom of God, which was founded by the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai.

Accordingly, in all probability during the stay at Sinai, in the five or six months which were occupied in building the tabernacle, he wrote not only the book of Genesis, but the history of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and the march to Sinai (Ex. 19), to which the decalogue, with the book of the covenant (Ex. 20-23), is attached, according to that plan of the kingdom of God which had then been fully revealed, or, in other words, from a theocratic point of view.

As he had written the covenant rights in a book by the command of God, as a preliminary to the conclusion of the covenant itself (Ex. 24:4), there can be no doubt whatever that he did not merely publish to the people by word of mouth the very elaborate revelation and directions of God concerning the construction of the tabernacle and the apparatus of worship, which he had received upon the mountain (Ex. 25-

31), as well as all the rest of the laws, but either committed them to writing himself directly after he had received them from the Lord, or had them written out by one of his assistants, and collected together for the purpose of forming them eventually into a complete work.

We may make the same assumption with reference to the most important events which occurred during the forty years' journey through the desert, so that, on the arrival of the camp in the steppes of Moab, the whole of the historical and legal materials for the three middle books of the Pentateuch were already collected together, and all that remained to be done was to form them into a united whole, and give them a final revision.

The collection, arrangement, and final working up of these materials would be accomplished in a very short time, since Moses had, at all events, the priests and shoterim by his side.—All this had probably taken place before the last addresses of Moses, which compose the book of Deuteronomy, so that nothing further remained to be done but to write down these addresses, and append them as a fifth book to the four already in existence. With this the writing of “all the words of this book of the law” was finished, so that the whole book of the law could be handed over in a complete state to the priests, to be properly taken care of by them (Deuteronomy 31:24ff.).

A copy of the song of Moses was added to this written work, in all probability immediately after it had been deposited by the side of the ark of the covenant; and, after his death, the blessing pronounced upon the tribes before his departure was also committed to writing.

Finally, after the conquest of Canaan, possibly on the renewal of the covenant under Joshua, an account of the death of Moses was added to these last two testimonies of the man of God, and adopted along with them, in the form of an appendix, into his book of the law.
