**Pentateuch**

*http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11646c.htm Catholic Encyclopedia*

*Pentateuch*, in Greek *pentateuchos*, is the name of the first five books of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm).

**Name**

Though it is not certain whether the word originally was an adjective, qualifying the omitted noun *biblos*, or a substantive, its literal meaning "five cases" appears to refer to the sheaths or boxes in which the separate rolls or volumes were kept. At what precise time the first part of the [Bible](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) was divided into five books is a question not yet finally settled. Some regard the division as antedating the [Septuagint](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) translation; others attribute it to the authors of this translation; [St. Jerome](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08341a.htm) was of opinion (Ep. 52, ad Paulin., 8; P.L., XXII, 545) that St. Paul alluded to such a division into five books in [1 Corinthians 14:19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1co014.htm#vrs19); at any rate, Philo and [Josephus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08522a.htm) are familiar with the division now in question ("De Abrahamo", I; "Cont. Apion.", I, 8). However ancient may be the custom of dividing the initial portion of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) into five parts, the early [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) had no name indicating the partition. They called this part of the [Bible](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) *hattorah* (the law), or *torah* (law), or *sepher hattorah* (book of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm)), from the nature of its contents ([Joshua 8:34](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos008.htm#vrs34); [1:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos001.htm#vrs8); [Ezra 10:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/ezr010.htm#vrs3); [Nehemiah 8:2, 3, 14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh008.htm#vrs2); [10:35, 37](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh010.htm#vrs35); [2 Chronicles 25:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch025.htm#vrs4)); they named it *torath Mosheh* (law of Moses), *sepher Mosheh* (book of Moses), *sepher torath Mosheh* (book of the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm)) on account of its authorship ([Joshua 8:31, 32](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos008.htm#vrs31); [23:6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos023.htm#vrs6); [1 Kings 2:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki002.htm#vrs3); [2 Kings 14:16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki014.htm#vrs16); [23:25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki023.htm#vrs25); [Daniel 9:11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/dan009.htm#vrs11); [Ezra 3:2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/ezr003.htm#vrs2); [6:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/ezr006.htm#vrs18); [Nehemiah 8:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh008.htm#vrs1); [13:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh013.htm#vrs1); etc.); finally, the Divine origin of the [Mosaic Law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm) was implied in the names: law of [Yahweh](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08329a.htm) ([Ezra 7:10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/ezr007.htm#vrs10); etc.), [law of God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09071a.htm) ([Nehemiah 8:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh008.htm#vrs18); etc.), book of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of [Yahweh](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08329a.htm) ([2 Chronicles 17:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch017.htm#vrs9); etc.), book of the [law of God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09071a.htm) ([Joshua 24:26](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos024.htm#vrs26); etc.). The word law in the foregoing expressions has been rendered by *nomos*, with or without the article, in the [Septuagint version](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm). The [New Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14530a.htm) refers to the Mosaic law in various ways: the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) ([Matthew 5:17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat005.htm#vrs17); [Romans 2:12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/rom002.htm#vrs12); etc.); the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm) ([Luke 2:22](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk002.htm#vrs22); [24:44](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk024.htm#vrs44); [Acts 28:23](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/act028.htm#vrs23)); the book of Moses ([Mark 12:26](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar012.htm#vrs26)); or simply, Moses ([Luke 24:2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk024.htm#vrs2); [Acts 15:21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/act015.htm#vrs21)). Even the Talmud and the older Rabbinic writings call the first part of the [Bible](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) the book of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), while in Aramaic it is simply termed law (cf. Buxtorf, "Lexicon Chaldaicum Talmudicum Rabbinicum", 791, 983; Levy, "Chaldaisches Worterbuch", 268, 16; Aicher, "Das Alte Testament in der Mischna", Freiburg, 1906, p. 16).

The Greek name *pentateuchos*, implying a division of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) into five parts, occurs for the first time about A.D. 150-75 in the letter to Flora by the Valentinian Ptolemy (cf. [St. Epiphanius](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05504a.htm), "Haer.", XXXIII, iv; P.G., XLI, 560). An earlier occurrence of the name was supposed to exist in a passage of [Hippolytus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07360c.htm) where the [Psalter](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12543b.htm) is called *kai auto allon pentateuchon* (cf. edition of de Lagarde, [Leipzig](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09138b.htm) and London, 1858 p. 193); but the passage has been found to belong to Epiphanius (cf. "Hippolytus" in "Die griechischen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte", Leipzig, 1897, t. I, 143). The name is used again by [Origen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11306b.htm) (Comment. in Ev. Jo., t. II; P.G., XIV, 192; cf. P.G., XIII, 444), St. Athanasius (Ep. ad Marcellin., 5; P.G., XXVII, 12), and several times by [St. Epiphanius](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13393b.htm) (De mensur. et ponderib., 4, 6; P.G., XLIII, 244). In Latin, [Tertullian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14520c.htm) uses the masculine form *Pentateuchus* (Adv. [Marcion](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09645c.htm)., I, 10; P.L., II, 257), while [St. Isidore of Seville](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08186a.htm) prefers the neuter *Pentateuchum* (Etym., VI, ii, 1, 2; P.L., LXXXII, 230). The analogous forms Octateuch, Heptateuch, and [Hexateuch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07318a.htm) have been used to refer to the first, eight, seven, and six books of the [Bible](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) respectively. The Rabbinic writers adopted the expression "the five-fifths of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm)" or simply "the five-fifths" to denote the five books of the Pentateuch.

Both the Palestinian and the Alexandrian [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) had distinct names for each of the five books of the Pentateuch. In Palestine, the opening words of the several books served as their titles; hence we have the names: *bereshith, we'elleh shemoth* or simply *shemoth, wayyiqra, wayedhabber*, and *elleh haddebarim* or simply *debarim*. Though these were the ordinary Hebrew titles of the successive Pentateuchal books, certain Rabbinic writers denote the last three according to their contents; they called the third book *torath kohanim*, or law of priests; the fourth, *homesh happiqqudhim*, or book of census; the fifth, *mishneh thorah*, or repetition of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm). The Alexandrian [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) derived their Greek names of the five books from the contents of either the whole or the beginning of each division. Thus the first book is called *Genesis kosmou* or simply *Genesis*; the second, *Exodus Aigyptou* or *Exodus*; the third, *Leueitikon*; the fourth, *Arithmoi*; and the fifth, *Deuteronomion*. These names passed from the [Septuagint](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) into the [Latin Vulgate](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15515b.htm), and from this into most of the translations of the [Vulgate](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15515b.htm). *Arithmoi* however was replaced by the Latin equivalent Numeri, while the other names retained their form.

**Analysis**

The contents of the Pentateuch are partly of an historical, partly of a legal character. They give us the history of the Chosen People from the creation of the world to the death of Moses, and acquaint us too with the civil and religious legislation of the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) during the life of their great lawgiver. Genesis may be considered as the introduction to the other four books; it contains the early history down to the preparation of [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) exit from [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm). Deuteronomy, consisting mainly of discourses, is practically a summary repetition of the [Mosaic legislation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm), and concludes also the history of the people under the leadership of Moses. The three intervening books consider the wanderings of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) and the successive legal enactments. Each of these three great divisions has its own special introduction ([Genesis 1:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen001.htm#vrs1)-[2:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen002.htm#vrs3); [Exodus 1:1-1:7](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo001.htm#vrs1); [Deuteronomy 1:1-5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu001.htm#vrs1)); and since the subject matter distinguishes Leviticus from Exodus and Numbers, not to mention the literary terminations of the third and fourth books ([Leviticus 27:34](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/lev027.htm#vrs34); [Numbers 26:13](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num026.htm#vrs13)), the present form of the Pentateuch exhibits both a literary unity and a division into five minor parts.

**Genesis**

The Book of Genesis prepares the reader for the Pentateuchal legislation; it tells us how [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) chose a particular [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm) to keep His Revelation, and how He trained the Chosen People to fulfil its mission. From the nature of its contents the book consists of two rather unequal parts; cc. i-xi present the features of a general history, while cc. xii-1 contain the particular history of the Chosen People. By a literary device, each of these parts is subdivided into five sections differing in length. The sections are introduced by the phrase *elleh tholedhoth* (these are the generations) or its variant *zeh sepher toledhoth* (this is the book of the generations). "Generations", however, is only the etymological meaning of the [Hebrew](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07176a.htm) *toledhoth*; in its context the formula can hardly signify a mere genealogical table, for it is neither preceded nor followed by such tables. As early Oriental history usually begins with genealogical records, and consists to a large extend of such records, one naturally interprets the above introductory formula and its variant as meaning, "this is the history" or "this is the book of the history." History in these phrases is not to be understood as a narrative resting on folklore, as Fr. Von Hummelauer believes ("Exegetisches zur Inspirationsfrage, Biblische Studien", Freiburg, 1904, IX, 4, pp. 26-32); but as a record based on genealogies. Moreover, the introductory formula often refers back to some principal feature of the preceding section, thus forming a transition and connection between the successive parts. [Genesis 5:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen005.htm#vrs1), e.g., refers back to [Genesis 2:7 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen002.htm#vrs7); [6:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen006.htm#vrs) to [5:29 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen005.htm#vrs) and [6:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen006.htm#vrs); [10:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen010.htm#vrs) to [9:18-19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen009.htm#vrs), etc. Finally, the sacred writer deals very briefly with the non-chosen [families](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm) or tribes, and he always considers them before the chosen branch of the [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm). He treats of Cain before he speaks of Seth; similarly, Cham and Japhet precede Sem; the rest of Sem's posterity precedes Abraham; Ismael precedes Isaac; Esau precedes Jacob.

Bearing in mind these general outlines of the contents and the literary structure of Genesis, we shall easily understand the following analytical table.

* *Introduction (*[*Genesis 1:1*](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen001.htm#vrs1)*-*[*2:3*](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen002.htm#vrs3)*) --* Consists of the Hexaemeron; it teaches the power and [goodness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06636b.htm) of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) as manifested in the creation of the world, and also the dependence of creatures on the dominion of the Creator.
* *General History (2:4-11:26) --* Man did not acknowledge his dependence on [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm). Hence, leaving the disobedient to their own devices, [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) chose one special [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm) or one individual as the depositary of His Revelation.
  + *History of* [*Heaven*](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07170a.htm) *and Earth (2:4-4:26) --* Here we have the story of the fall of our [first parents](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01129a.htm), ii, 5-iii, 24; of the fratricide of Cain, iv, 1-16; the posterity of Cain and its elimination, iv, 17-26.
  + *History of Adam (5:1-6:8) --* The writer enumerates the Sethites, another line of Adam's descendants, v, 1-32, but shows that they too became so corrupt that only one among them found favour before [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), vi, 1-8.
  + *History of* [*Noah*](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11088a.htm) *(6:9-9:29) --* Neither the [Deluge](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04702a.htm) which destroyed the whole [human race](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12620b.htm) excepting [Noah's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11088a.htm) [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm), vi, 11-viii, 19, nor [God's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) covenant with [Noah](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11088a.htm) and his sons, viii, 20-ix, 17, brought about the amendment of the human [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm), and only one of [Noah's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11088a.htm) sons was chosen as the bearer of the Divine [blessings](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02599b.htm), ix, 18-29.
  + *History of the Sons of* [*Noah*](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11088a.htm) *(10:1-11:9) --* The posterity of the non-chosen sons, x, 1-32, brought a new punishment on the [human race](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09580c.htm) by its [pride](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12405a.htm), xi, 1-9.
  + *History of Sem (11:10-26) --* The posterity of Sem is enumerated down to Thare the father of Abraham, in whose seed all the nations of the earth shall be [blessed](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02599b.htm).
* *Special History (11:27-50:26) --* Here the inspired writer describes the special Providence watching over Abraham and his offspring which developed in [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) into a large nation. At the same time, he eliminates the sons of Abraham who were not children of [God's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) promise. This teaches the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) that carnal descent from Abraham does not suffice to make them [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) sons of Abraham.
  + *History of Thare (11:27-25:11) --* This section tells of the call of Abraham, his transmigration into [Chanaan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03569b.htm), his covenant with [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), and His promises.
  + *History of Ismael (25:12-28) --* This section eliminates the tribes springing from Ismael.
  + *History of Isaac (25:19-35:29 --* Here we have the history of Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob.
  + *History of Esau (36:1-37:1) --* The sacred writer gives a list of Esau's posterity; it does not belong to the number of the Chosen People.
  + *History of Jacob (37:2-50:26) --* This final portion of Genesis tells of the fate of Jacob's [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm) down to the death of the Patriarch and of Joseph.

What has been said shows a uniform plan in the structure of Genesis, which some scholars prefer to call "schematism". (i) The whole book is divided into ten sections. (ii) Each section is introduced by the same formula. (iii) The sections are arranged according to a definite plan, the history of the lateral genealogical branches always preceding that of the corresponding part of the main line. (iv) Within the sections, the introductory formula or the title is usually followed by a brief repetition of some prominent feature of the preceding section, a fact duly noted and explained by as early a writer as [Rhabanus Maurus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12617a.htm) (Comment. In Gen., II, xii; P.G., CVII, 531-2), but misconstrued by our recent critics into an argument for a diversity of sources. (v) The history of each Patriarch tells of the development of his [family](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm) during his lifetime, while the account of his life varies between a bare notice consisting of a few words or lines, and a more lengthy description. (vi) When the life of the Patriarch is given more in detail, the account usually ends in an almost uniform way, indicating the length of his life and his burial with his ancestors (cf. ix, 29; xi, 32; xxv, 7; xxxv, 28; xlvii, 28). Such a definite plan of the book shows that it was written with a definite end in view and according to preconceived arrangement. The critics attribute this to the final "redactor" of the Pentateuch who adopted, according to their views, the genealogical framework and the "schematism" from the Priestly Code. The value of these views will be discussed later; for the present, it suffices to [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) that a striking unity prevails throughout the Book of Genesis (cf. Kurtrz, "Die Einheit der Genesis", [Berlin](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02493b.htm), 1846; Delattre, "Plan de la Genèse" in "Revue des quest. hist.", July, 1876; XX, pp. 5-43; Delattre, "Le plan de la Genese et les generations du ciel et de la terre" in "La science cath.", 15 Oct., 1891, V, pp. 978-89; de Broglie, "Etude sur les genealogies bibliques" in "Le congres scientif. internat. des catholiques de 1888", Paris, 1889, I, pp. 94-101; Julian, "Etude critique sur la composition de la Genese", Paris, 1888, pp. 232-50).

**Exodus**

After the death of Joseph, [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) had grown into a people, and its history deals no longer with mere genealogies, but with the people's national and religious development. The various [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) are given and [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) as occasion required them; hence they are intimately connected with the history of the people, and the Pentateuchal books in which they are recorded are rightly numbered among the historical books of Scripture. Only the third book of the Pentateuch exhibits rather the features of a legal code. The Book of Exodus consists of a brief introduction and three main parts:

* *Introduction, i, 1-7.-* A brief summary of the history of Jacob connects Genesis with Exodus, and serves at the same time as transition from the former to the latter.
* *(1) First Part, i, 8-xiii, 16.-* It treats of the events preceding and preparing the exit of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) from [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm).
  + (a) [Exodus 1:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo001.htm#vrs8)-[2:25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo002.htm#vrs25); the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) are oppressed by the new [Pharao](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11788c.htm) "that knew not Joseph", but [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) prepares them a liberator in Moses.
  + (b) [Exodus 3:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo003.htm#vrs1)-[4:31](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo004.htm#vrs31). -- Moses is called to free his people; his brother Aaron is given him as companion; their reception by the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm).
  + (c) v, 1-x, 29.-Pharao refuses to listen to Moses and Aaron; [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) renews his promises; genealogies of Moses and Aaron; the heart of [Pharao](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11788c.htm) is not moved by the first nine plagues.
  + (d) xi, 1-xiii, 16.-The tenth plague consists in the death of the [first-born](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06081a.htm); [Pharao](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11788c.htm) dismisses the people; law of the annual celebration of the [pasch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11512b.htm) in memory of the liberation from [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm).
* *(2) Second Part, xiii, 17-xviii, 27.-* Journey of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) to [Mt. Sinai](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14011a.htm) and [miracles](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.htm) preparing the people for the Sinaitic Law.
  + (a) xiii, 1-xv, 21.-The [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm), led and protected by a [pillar of cloud and fire](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12099b.htm), cross the [Red Sea](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12688a.htm), but the persecuting Egyptians perish in the waters.
  + (b) xv, 22-xvii, 16.-The route of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) is passing through Sur, Mara, Elim, Sin, Rephidim. At Mara the bitter waters are made sweet; in the Desert of Sin [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) sent quails and [manna](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09604a.htm) to the children of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm); at Raphidim [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) gave them water form the rock, and defeated [Amalec](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01377c.htm) through the [prayers](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) of Moses.
  + (c) xviii, 1-27.-Jethro visits his kinsmen, and at his suggestion Moses institutes the judges of the people.
* *(3) Third Part, xix, 1-xl, 38.-* Conclusion of the Sinaitic covenant and its renewal. Here Exodus assumes more the character of a legal code.
  + (a) xix, 1-xx, 21.-The people journey to Sinai, prepare for the coming legislation, receive the [decalogue](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04664a.htm), and ask to have the future [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) through Moses.
  + (b) xx, 22-xxiv, 8.-Moses [promulgates](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) certain [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) together with promises for their observance, and confirms the covenant between [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) and the people with a sacrifice. The portion xx, 1-xxiii, 33, is also called the Book of the Covenant.
  + (c) xxiv, 9-xxxi, 18.-Moses alone remains with [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) on the mountain for forty days, and receives various instructions about the tabernacle and other points pertaining to Divine worship.
  + (d) xxxii, 1-xxxiv, 35.-The people adore the [golden calf](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06628b.htm); at this sight, Moses breaks the divinely given tables of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), punishes the [idolaters](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07636a.htm), obtains pardon from [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) for the survivors, and, renewing the covenant, receives other tables of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm).
  + (e) xxxv, 1-xl, 38.-The tabernacle with its appurtenances is prepared, the [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) are anointed, and the cloud of the Lord covers the tabernacle, thus showing that He had made the people His own.

**Leviticus**

Leviticus, called by Rabbinic writers "Law of the Priests" or "Law of the Sacrifices", contains nearly a complete collection of [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) concerning the [Levitical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) ministry. They are not codified in any [logical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09324a.htm) order, but still we may discern certain groups of regulations touching the same subject. The Book of Exodus shows what [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) had done and was doing for His people; the Book of Leviticus prescribes what the people must do for [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), and how they must render themselves worthy of His constant presence.

* (1) First Part, i, 1-x, 20.-Duties of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) toward [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) living in their midst.
  + (a) i, 1-vi, 7.-The different kinds of [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm) are enumerated, and their rites are described.
  + (b) vi, 8-vii, 36.-The [duties](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05215a.htm) and [rights](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13055c.htm) of the [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm), the official offerers of the [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm), are stated.
  + (c) viii, 1-x, 20.-The first [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) are [consecrated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04276a.htm) and introduced into their office.
* (2) Second Part, xi, 1-xxvii, 34.-Legal cleanness demanded by the Divine presence.
  + (a) xi, 1-xx, 27.-The entire people must be legally clean; the various ways in which cleanness must be kept; interior cleanness must be added to external cleanness.
  + (b) xxi, 1-xxii, 33.-Priests must excel in both internal and external cleanness; hence they have to keep special regulations.
  + (c) xxiii, 1-xxvii, 34.-The other [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) and the promises and threats made for the observance or the violation of the [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) belong to both [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) and people.

**Numbers**

Numbers, at times called "In the Desert" by certain Rabbinic writers because it covers practically the whole time of [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) wanderings in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm). Their story was begun in Exodus, but interrupted by the Sinaitic legislation; Numbers takes up the account from the first month of the second year, and brings it down to the eleventh month of the fortieth year. But the period of 38 years is briefly treated, only its beginning and end being touched upon; for this span of time was occupied by the generation of [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) that had been condemned by [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm).

* (1) First Part, i, 1-xiv, 45.-Summary of the happenings before the rejection of the rebellious generation, especially during the first two months of the second year. The writer inverts the chronological order of these two months, or order not to interrupt the account of the people's wanderings by a description of the census, of the arrangement of the tribes, of the [duties](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05215a.htm) of the various [families](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm) of the [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm), all of which occurrences or ordinances belong to the second month. Thus he first states what remained unchanged throughout the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) life of the people, and then reverts to the account of the wanderings from the first month of the second year.
  + (a) i, 1-vi, 27.-The census is taken, the tribes are arranged in their proper order, the [duties](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05215a.htm) of the [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) are defined, the regulations concerning cleanness is the camp are [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm).
  + (b) vii, 1-ix, 14.-Occurrences belonging to the first month: offerings of the princes at the dedication of the tabernacle, [consecration](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04276a.htm) of the [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) and duration of their ministry, celebration of the second [pasch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11512b.htm).
  + (c) ix, 15-xiv, 45.-Signals for breaking up the camp; the people leave Sinai on the twenty-second day of the second month, and journey towards Cades in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) Pharan; they murmur against Moses on account of fatigue, want of flesh-meat, etc.; deceived by faithless spies, they refuse to enter into the Promised Land, and the whole living generation is rejected by [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm).
* (2) Second Part, xv, 1-xix, 22.-Events pertaining to the rejected generation.
  + (a) xv, 1-41.-Certain [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) concerning [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm); Sabbath-breaking is [punished with death](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12565a.htm); the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of fringes on the garments.
  + (b) xvi, 1-xvii, 13.-The [schism](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13529a.htm) of Core and his adherents; their punishment; the [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) is confirmed to Aaron by the blooming rod which is kept for a remembrance in the tabernacle.
  + (c) xviii, 1-xix, 22.-The charges of the [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) and [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm), and their portion; the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the sacrifice of the red cow, and the water of expiation.
* (3) Third Part, xx, 1-xxxvi, 13.-History of the journey from the first to the eleventh month of the fortieth year.
  + (a) xx, 1-xxi, 20.-Death of Mary, sister of Moses; [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) again gives the murmuring people water from the rock, but refuses Moses and Aaron entrance to the Promised Land on account of their [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm); Aaron dies while the people go around the Idumean mountains; the malcontents are punished with fiery serpents.
  + (b) xxi, 21-xxv, 18.-The land of the [Amorrhites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01433c.htm) is seized; the [Moabites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10409b.htm) vainly attempt to destroy [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) by the curse of [Balaam](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02214b.htm); the [Madianites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09513b.htm) lead the people into [idolatry](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07636a.htm).
  + (c) xxvi, 1-xxvii, 23.-A new census is taken with a view of dividing the land; the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of inheritance; [Josue](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08524a.htm) is appointed to succeed Moses.
  + (d) xxviii, 1-xxx, 17.-Certain [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) concerning [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm), [vows](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15511a.htm), and feasts are repeated and completed.
  + (e) xxxi, 1-xxxii, 40.-After the defeat of the [Madianites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09513b.htm), the country across Jordan is given to the tribes of [Ruben](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13214b.htm) and [Gad](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06331b.htm), and to half of the tribe of Manasses.
  + (f) xxxiii, 1-40.-List of encampments of people of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) during their wandering in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm).
  + (g) xxxiii, 50-xxxvi, 13.-Command to destroy the [Chanaanites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03569b.htm); limits of the Promised Land and names of the men who are to divide it; [Levitical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) cities, and [cities of refuge](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12712a.htm); law concerning [murder](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07441a.htm) and manslaughter; ordinance concerning the marriage of heiresses.

**Deuteronomy**

Deuteronomy is a partial repetition and explanation of the foregoing legislation together with an urgent exhortation to be faithful to it. The main body of the book consists of three discourses delivered by Moses to the people in the eleventh month of the fortieth year; but the discourses are precede by a short introduction, and they are followed by several appendices.

* Introduction, i, 1-5.-Brief indication of the subject matter, the time, and the place of the following discourses.
* (1) First Discourse, i, 6-iv, 40.-God's benefits are enumerated, and the people are exhorted to keep the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm).
  + (a) i, 6-iii, 29.-The main occurrences during the time of the wandering in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) are recalled as showing the [goodness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06636b.htm) and [justice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm) of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm).
  + (b) iv, 1-40.-Hence the covenant with [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) must be kept. By way of parenthesis, the sacred writer adds here (i) the appointment of three [cities of refuge](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12712a.htm) across the [Jordan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08501a.htm), iv, 41-43; (ii) an historical preamble, preparing us for the second discourse, iv, 44-49.
* (2) Second Discourse, v, 1-xxvi, 19.-This forms almost the bulk of Deuteronomy. It rehearses the whole economy of the covenant in two sections, the one general, the other particular.
  + (a) The General Repetition, v, 1-xi, 32.-Repetition of the [decalogue](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04664a.htm), and reasons for the [promulgation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) through Moses; explanation of the first commandment, and prohibitions of all intercourse with the [gentiles](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06422a.htm); reminder of the Divine favours and punishments; promise of victory over the [Chanaanites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03569b.htm); [God's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) blessing on the observance of the Law, His curse on the transgressors.
  + (b) Special Laws, xii, 1-xxvi, 19.-(i) Duties towards [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm): He is to be duly worshiped, never to be abandoned; distinction of [clean and unclean](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04010c.htm) meats; [tithes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14741b.htm) and [first-fruits](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06082a.htm); the three principal solemnities of the year. (ii) Duties towards [God's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) representatives: toward the judges, the future kings, the [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm), and Prophets. (iii) Duties towards the neighbour: as to life, external possessions, marriage, and various other particulars.
* (3) Third Discourse, xxvii, 1-xxx, 20.-A renewed exhortation to keep the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), based on diverse reasons.
  + (a) xxvii, 1-26.-Command to inscribe the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) on stones after crossing the [Jordan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08501a.htm), and to [promulgate](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) the [blessings](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02599b.htm) and curses connected with the observance or non-observance of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm).
  + (b) xxviii, 1-68.-A more minute statement of the [good](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06636b.htm) or [evil](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05649a.htm) depending on the observance or violation of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm).
  + (c) xxix, 1-xxx, 20.-The [goodness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06636b.htm) of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) is extolled; all are urged to be faithful to [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm).
* (4) Historical Appendix, xxxi, 1-xxxiv, 12.
  + (a) xxxi, 1-27.-Moses appoints Josue as his successor, orders him to read the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) to the people every seven years, and to place a copy of the same in the ark.
  + (b) xxxi, 28-xxxii, 47.-Moses calls an assembly of the Ancients and recites his canticle.
  + (c) xxxii, 48-52.-Moses views the Promised Land from a distance.
  + (d) xxxiii, 1-29.-He [blesses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02599b.htm) the tribes of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm).
  + (e) xxxiv, 1-12.-His death, burial, and special eulogium.

**Authenticity**

The contents of the Pentateuch furnish the basis for the history, the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), the worship, and the life of the [Chosen People of God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm). Hence the authorship of the work, the time and manner of its origin, and its historicity are of paramount importance. These are not merely literary problems, but questions belonging to the fields of history of religion and [theology](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14580x.htm). The [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch is inseparably connected with the question, whether and in what sense Moses was the author or intermediary of the [Old-Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) legislation, and the bearer of pre-Mosaic tradition. According to the trend of both Old and [New Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14530a.htm), and according to Jewish and [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) [theology](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14580a.htm), the work of the great lawgiver Moses is the origin of the history of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) and the basis of its development down to the time of [Jesus Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm); but modern criticism sees in all this only the result, or the precipitate, of a purely natural historical development. The question of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch leads us, therefore, to the alternative, revelation or historical evolution; it touches the historical and [theological](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14580x.htm) foundation of both the Jewish and the [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) [dispensation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05041a.htm). We shall consider the subject first in the light of Scripture; secondly, in the light of Jewish and [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) tradition; thirdly, in the light of internal evidence, furnished by the Pentateuch; finally, in the light of [ecclesiastical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) decisions.

**Testimony of Sacred Scripture**

It will be found convenient to divide the Biblical evidence for the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch into three parts: (1) Testimony of the Pentateuch; (2) Testimony of the other [Old-Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) books; (3) Testimony of the [New Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14530a.htm).

**Witness of the Pentateuch**

The Pentateuch in its present form does not present itself as a complete literary production of Moses. It contains an account of Moses' death, it tells the story of his life in the third [person](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11726a.htm) and in an indirect form, and the last four books do not exhibit the literary form of memoirs of the great lawgiver; besides, the expression "God said to Moses" shows only the Divine origin of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) but does not prove that Moses himself codified in the Pentateuch the various [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) by him. On the other hand, the Pentateuch ascribes to Moses the literary authorship of at least four sections, partly historical, partly legal, partly poetical. (a) After [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) victory over the Amalecites near Raphidim, the Lord said to Moses ([Exodus 17:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo017.htm#vrs14)): "Write this for a memorial in a book, and deliver it to the ears of Josue." This order is naturally restricted to [Amalec's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01377c.htm) defeat, a benefit which [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) wished to keep alive in the memory of the people ([Deuteronomy 25:17-19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu025.htm#vrs17)). The present pointing of the Hebrew text reads "in the book", but the [Septuagint version](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) omits the definite article. Even if we suppose that the [Massoretic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10035a.htm) pointing gives the original text, we can hardly prove that the book referred to is the Pentateuch, though this is highly probable (cf. von Hummelauer "Exodus et Leviticus", Paris, 1897, p. 182; Idem, "Deuteronomium", Paris, 1901, p. 152; Kley, "Die Pentateuchfrage", Munster, 1903, p. 217). (b) Again, [Exodus 24:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo024.htm#vrs4): "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." The context does not allow us to understand these words in an indefinite manner, but as referring to the words of the Lord immediately preceding or to the so-called "Book of the Covenant", [Exodus 20](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo020.htm)-[23](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo023.htm). (c) [Exodus 34:27](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo034.htm#vrs27): "And the Lord said to Moses: Write thee these words by which I have made a covenant both with thee and with [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm)." The next verse adds: "and he wrote upon the tables the ten words of the covenant." [Exodus 34:1-4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo034.htm#vrs1), shows how Moses had prepared the tables, and [Exodus 34:10-26](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo034.htm#vrs10), gives us the contents of the ten words. (d) [Numbers 33:1-2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num033.htm#vrs1): "These are the mansions of the [children of Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm), who went out of [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) by their troops under the conduct of Moses and Aaron, which Moses wrote down according to the places of their encamping." Here we are informed that Moses wrote the list of the people's encampments in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm); but where it this list to be found? Most probably it is given in [Numbers 33:3-49](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num033.htm#vrs3), or the immediate context of the passage telling of Moses' literary activity; there are, however, scholars who understand this latter passage as referring to the history of [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) departure from [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) written in the order of the people's encampments, so that it would be our present Book of Exodus. But this view is hardly probable; for its assumption that [Numbers 33:3-49](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num033.htm#vrs3), is a summary of Exodus cannot be upheld, as the chapter of Numbers mentions several encampments not occurring in Exodus.

Besides these four passages there are certain indications in Deuteronomy which point to the literary activity of Moses. [Deuteronomy 1:5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu001.htm#vrs5): "And Moses began to expound the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) and to say"; even if the "law" in this text refer to the whole of the Pentateuchal legislation, which is not very probable, it shows only that Moses [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) the whole law, but not that he necessarily wrote it. Practically the entire Book of Deuteronomy claims to be a special legislation [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) by Moses in the land of [Moab](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10409b.htm): iv, 1-40; 44-49; v, 1 sqq.; xii, 1 sqq. But there is a suggestion of writing too: xvii, 18-9, enjoins that the future kings are to receive a copy of this [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) from the [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) in order to read and observe it; xxvii, 1-8, commands that on the west side of the [Jordan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08501a.htm) "all the words of this [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm)" be written on stones set up in Mount Hebal; xxviii, 58, speaks of "all the words of this [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), that are written in this volume" after enumerating the [blessings](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02599b.htm) and curses which will come upon the observers and violators of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) respectively, and which are again referred to as written in a book in xxix, 20, 21, 27, and xxxii, 46, 47; now, the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) repeatedly referred to as written in a book must be at least the Deuteronomic legislation. Moreover, xxxi, 9-13 states, "and [Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) wrote this [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm)", and xxxi, 26, adds, "take this book, and put it in the side of the ark. . .that it may be there for a testimony against thee"; to explain these texts as fiction or as anachronisms is hardly compatible with the inerrancy of [Sacred Scripture](http://www.newadvent.org/bible). Finally, xxxi, 19, commands Moses to write the canticle contained in [Deuteronomy 32:1-43](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu032.htm#vrs1).

The Scriptural scholar will not complain that there are so few express indications in the Pentateuch of Moses' literary activity; he will rather be surprised at their number. As far as explicit testimony for its own, at least partial, authorship is concerned, the Pentateuch compares rather favourably with many other books of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm).

**Witness of other Old Testament books**

(a) Josue.-The narrative of the Book of Josue presupposes not merely the facts and essential ordinances contained in the Pentateuch, but also the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) given by Moses and written in the book of the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm): [Joshua 1:7-8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos001.htm#vrs7); [8:31](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos008.htm#vrs); [22:5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos022.htm#vrs); [23:6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos023.htm#vrs). Josue himself "wrote all these things in the volume of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Lord" (xxiv, 26). Prof. Hobverg maintains that this "volume of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Lord" is the Pentateuch ("Über den Ursprung des Pentateuchs" in "Biblische Zeitschrift", 1906, IV, 340); Mangenot believes that it refers at least to Deuteronomy (Dict. de la Bible, V, 66). At any rate, Josue and his contemporaries were acquainted with a written [Mosaic legislation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm), which was divinely revealed.

(b) Judges; I, II Kings.-In the [Book of Judges](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08547a.htm) and the first two Books of Kings there is no explicit reference to Moses and the book of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), but a number of incidents and statements presuppose the existence of the Pentateuchal legislation and institutions. Thus [Judges 15:8-10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg015.htm#vrs8), recalls [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) delivery from [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) and its conquest of the Promised Land; [Judges 11:12-28](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg011.htm#vrs12), states incidents recorded in [Numbers 20:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num020.htm#vrs14); [21:13, 24](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg021.htm#vrs13); [22:2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg022.htm#vrs2); [Judges 13:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg013.htm#vrs4), states a practice founded on the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Nazarites in [Numbers 6:1-21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/numb006htm#vrs1); [Judges 18:31](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg018.htm#vrs31), speaks of the tabernacle existing in the times when there was no king in [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm); [Judges 20:6-8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg020.htm#vrs6) mentions the [ark of the covenant](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01721a.htm), the various kinds of [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm), and the Aaronic [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm). The Pentateuchal history and [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) are similarly presupposed in [1 Samuel 10:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa010.htm#vrs18); [15:1-10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa015.htm#vrs1); [10:25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa010.htm#vrs25); [21:1-6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa021.htm#vrs1); [22:6 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa022.htm#vrs6); [23:6-9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa023.htm#vrs6); [2 Samuel 6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa006.htm).

(c) [1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki000.htm) and [2 Kings](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki000.htm).-The last two Books of Kings repeatedly speak of the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm). To restrict the meaning of this term to Deuteronomy is an arbitrary [exegesis](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05692b.htm) (cf. [1 Kings 2:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki002.htm#vrs3); [10:31](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki010.htm#vrs31)); Amasias showed mercy to the children of the murderers "according to that which is written in the book of the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm)" ([2 Kings 14:6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki014.htm#vrs6)); the sacred writer records the Divine promise of protecting the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) "Only if they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) which my servant Moses commanded them" ([2 Kings 21:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki021.htm#vrs8)). In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josias was found the book of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) ([2 Kings 22:8, 11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki022.htm#vrs8)), or the book of the covenant ([2 Kings 23:2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki023.htm#vrs2)), according to which he conducted his religious reform ([2 Kings 23:10-24](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki023.htm#vrs10)), and which is identified with "the law of Moses" ([2 Kings 23:25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki023.htm#vrs25)). [Catholic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm) commentators are not at one whether this law-book was Deuteronomy (von Hummelauer, "Deuteronomium", Paris, 1901, p. 40-60, 83-7) or the entire Pentateuch (Clair, "Les livres des Rois", Paris, 1884, II, p. 557 seq.; Hoberg, "Moses und der Pentateuch", Frieburg, 1905, p. 17 seq.; "uber den Ursprung des Pentateuchs" in "Biblische Zeitschrift", 1906, IV, pp. 338-40).

(d) Paralipomenon.-The inspired writer of Paralipomenon refers to the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) and the book of Moses much more frequently and clearly. The objectionable names and numbers occurring in these books are mostly due to transcribers. The omission of incidents which would detract from the glory of the [Israelite](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) kings or would not edify the reader is not detrimental to the credibility or [veracity](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) of the work. Otherwise one should have to place among works of fiction a number of biographical or patriotic publications intended for the young or for the common reader. On their part, the modern critics are too eager to discredit the authority of Paralipomena. "After removing the account of Paralipomena", writes de Wette (Beitrage, I, 135), "the whole Jewish history assumes another form, and the Pentateuchal investigations take another turn; a number of strong [proofs](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454c.htm), hard to explain away, for the early existence of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) books have disappeared, the other vestiges of their existence are placed in a different light." A glance at the contents of [Paralipomenon](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11472a.htm) suffices to explain the efforts of de Witte and Wellhausen to disprove the historicity of the books. Not only are the genealogies ([1 Chronicles 1-9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ch001.htm)) and the descriptions of worship traced after the data and [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Pentateuch, but the sacred writer expressly points out their conformity with what is written in the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Lord ([1 Chronicles 16:40](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ch016.htm#vrs40)), in the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm) ([2 Chronicles 23:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch023.htm#vrs18); [31:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch031.htm#vrs3)), thus identifying the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Lord with that written by Moses (cf. [2 Chronicles 25:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch025.htm#vrs4)). The reader will find similar indications of the existence and the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) origin of the Pentateuch in [1 Chronicles 22:12 seq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ch022.htm#vrs12); [2 Chronicles 17:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch017.htm#vrs9); [33:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch033.htm#vrs4); [34:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch034.htm#vrs14); [35:12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ch035.htm#vrs12). By an artificial interpretation, indeed, the Books of Paralipomenon may be construed to represent the Pentateuch as a book containing the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) by Moses; but the natural sense of the foregoing passages regards the Pentateuch as a book edited by Moses.

(e) I, II Esdras.-The Books of Esdras and Nehemias, too, taken in their natural and commonly accepted sense, consider the Pentateuch as the book of Moses, not merely as a book containing the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm). This contention is based on the study of the following texts: I Esd., iii, 2 sqq.; vi, 18; vii, 14; II Esd., i, 7 sqq.; viii, 1, 8, 14; ix, 3; x, 34, 36; xiii, 1-3. Graf and his followers expressed the view that the book of Moses referred to in these texts is not the Pentateuch, but only the Priestly Code; but when we keep in mind that the book in question contained the [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of Lev., xxiii, and [Deuteronomy 7:2-4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu007.htm#vrs2); [15:2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu015.htm#vrs2), we perceive at once that the book of Moses cannot be restricted to the Priestly Code. To the witness of the historical books we may add II Mach., ii, 4; vii, 6; [Judith 8:23](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jth008.htm#vrs23); [Sirach 24:33](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/sir024.htm#vrs33); [45:1-6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/sir045.htm#vrs1); [45:18](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/sir045.htm#vrs18), and especially the Preface of Ecclus.

(f) Prophetic Books.-Express reference to the written law of Moses is found only in the later Prophets: Bar., ii, 2, 28; [Daniel 9:11-13](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/dan009.htm#vrs11); Mal., iv, 4. Among these, Baruch knows that Moses has been commanded to write the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), and though his expressions run parallel to those of [Deuteronomy 28:15, 53, 62-64](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu028.htm#vrs15), his threats contain allusions to those contained in other parts of the Pentateuch. The other Prophets frequently refer to the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Lord guarded by the [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) (cf. [Deuteronomy 31:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu031.htm#vrs9)), and they put it on the same level with Divine Revelation and the eternal covenant of the Lord. They appeal to [God's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) covenant, the sacrificial [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) the calendar of feasts, and other [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the Pentateuch in such a way as to render it probable that a written legislation formed the basis of their prophetic admonitions (cf. [Hosea 8:12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos008.htm#vrs12)), and that they were acquainted with verbal expressions of the book of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm). Thus in the northern kingdom Amos (iv, 4-5; v, 22 sqq.) and [Isaias](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08179b.htm) in the south ([1:11 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa001.htm#vrs11)) employ expressions which are practically technical words for sacrifice occurring in Lev., i-iii; vii, 12, 16; and [Deuteronomy 12:6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu012.htm#vrs6).

**Witness of the New Testament**

We need not show that [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) and the Apostles quoted the whole of the Pentateuch as written by Moses. If they attributed to Moses all the passages which they happen to cite, if they ascribe the Pentateuch to Moses whenever there is question of its authorship, even the most exacting critics must admit that they express their conviction that the work was indeed written by Moses. When the [Sadducees](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13323a.htm) quote against [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) the marriage law of [Deuteronomy 25:5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu025.htm#vrs5), as written by Moses ([Matthew 22:24](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat022.htm#vrs24); [Mark 12:19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar012.htm#vrs19); [Luke 20:28](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk020.htm#vrs28)), [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) does not deny the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship, but appeals to [Exodus 3:6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo003.htm#vrs6), as equally written by Moses ([Mark 12:26](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar012.htm#vrs26); [Matthew 22:31](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat022.htm#vrs31); [Luke 20:37](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk020.htm#vrs37)). Again, in the [parable](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11460a.htm) of Dives and Lazarus ([Luke 16:29](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk016.htm#vrs29)), He speaks of "Moses and the prophets", while on other occasions He speaks of "the law and the [prophets](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12477a.htm)" ([Luke 16:16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk016.htm#vrs16)), thus showing that in His mind the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), or the Pentateuch, and Moses are identical. The same expressions reappear in the last discourse addressed by [Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) to His disciples ([Luke 24:44-6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk024.htm#vrs44); cf. 27): "which are written in the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm), and in the [prophets](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12477a.htm), and in the psalms concerning me". Finally, in [John 5:45-47](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh005.htm#vrs), [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) is more explicit in asserting the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch: "There is one that accuseth you, Moses. . .for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" Nor can it be maintained that Christ merely accommodated himself to the current [beliefs](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02408b.htm) of his contemporaries who considered Moses as the author of the Pentateuch not merely in a moral but also in the literary sense of authorship. [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) did not need to enter into the critical study of the nature of [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship, but He could not expressly endorse the popular [belief](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02408b.htm), if it was [erroneous](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm).

The Apostles too felt convinced of, and testified to, the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship. "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him: We have found him of whom Moses in the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), and the [prophets](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12477a.htm) did write." St. Peter introduces a quotation from [Deuteronomy 18:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu018.htm#vrs15), with the words: "For Moses said" ([Acts 3:22](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/act003.htm#vrs22)). St. James and St. Paul relate that Moses is read in the [synagogues](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14379b.htm) on the [Sabbath day](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13287b.htm) ([Acts 15:21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/act015.htm#vrs21); [2 Corinthians 3:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2co003.htm#vrs15)). The great Apostle speaks in other passages of the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm) ([Acts 13:33](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/act013.htm#vrs33); [1 Corinthians 9:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1co009.htm#vrs9)); he preaches [Jesus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) according to the [law of Moses](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm) and the Prophets ([Acts 28:23](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/act028.htm#vrs23)), and cites passages from the Pentateuch as words written by Moses ([Romans 10:5-8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/rom010.htm#vrs5); 19). St. John mentions the canticle of Moses ([Revelation 15:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/rev015.htm#vrs3)).

**Witness of Tradition**

The voice of tradition, both Jewish and [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm), is so unanimous and constant in proclaiming the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch that down to the seventeenth century it did not allow the rise of any serious [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm). The following paragraphs are only a meagre outline of this living tradition.

**Jewish tradition**

It has been seen that the books of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm), beginning with those of the Pentateuch, present Moses as the author of at least parts of the Pentateuch. The writer of the Books of Kings believes that Moses is the author of Deuteronomy at least. Esdras, Nehemias, Malachias, the author of Paralipomena, and the Greek authors of the [Septuagint Version](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) consider Moses as the author of the whole Pentateuch. At the time of [Jesus Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) and the Apostles friend and foe take the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch for granted; neither our Lord nor His enemies take exception to this assumption. In the first century of the [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) era, [Josephus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08522a.htm) ascribes to Moses the authorship of the entire Pentateuch, not excepting the account of the lawgiver's death ("Antiq. Jud.", IV, viii, 3-48; cf. I Procem., 4; "Contra Apion.", I, 8). The Alexandrian [philosopher](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12025c.htm) Philo is convinced that the entire Pentateuch is the work of Moses, and that the latter wrote a prophetic account of his death under the influence of a special divine inspiration ("De vita Mosis", ll. II, III in "Opera", [Geneva](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09040a.htm), 1613, pp. 511, 538). The [Babylonian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02179b.htm) Talmud ("Baba-Bathra", II, col. 140; "Makkoth", fol. IIa; "Menachoth", fol. 30a; cf. [Vogue](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15501b.htm), "Hist. de la Bible et de l'exegese biblique jusqua'a nos jours", Paris, 1881, p. 21), the Talmud of [Jerusalem](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08344a.htm) (Sota, v, 5), the rabbis, and the [doctors](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05072b.htm) of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) (cf. Furst, "Der Kanon des Alten Testaments nach den Überlieferungen im Talmud und Midrasch", Leipzig, 1868, pp. 7-9) bear testimony to the continuance of this tradition for the first thousand years. Though Isaac ben Jasus in the eleventh century and Abenesra in the twelfth admitted certain post-Mosaic additions in the Pentateuch, still they as well as [Maimonides](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09540b.htm) upheld its [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship, and did not substantially differ in this point from the teaching of R. Becchai (thirteenth cent.), Joseph Karo, and Abarbanel (fifteenth cent.; cf. Richard Simon, "Critique de la Bibl. des aut. eccles. de E. Dupin", Paris, 1730, III, pp. 215-20). Only in the seventeenth century, [Baruch Spinoza](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14217a.htm) rejected the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch, pointing out the possibility that the work might have been written by Esdras ("Tract. Theol.-politicus", c. viii, ed. Tauchnitz, III, p. 125). Among the more recent Jewish writers several have adopted the results of the critics, thus abandoning the tradition of their forefathers.

**Christian tradition**

The Jewish tradition concerning the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch was brought in to the [Christian Church](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) by [Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) Himself and the [Apostles](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01626c.htm). No one will seriously deny the existence and continuance of such a tradition from the patristic period onward; one might indeed be curious about the interval between the time of the Apostles and beginning of the third century. For this period we may appeal to the ["Epistle of Barnabas"](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0124.htm) (x, 1-12; Funk, "Patres apostol.", 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1901, I, p. 66-70; xii, 2-9k; ibid., p. 74-6), to [St. Clement of Rome](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04012c.htm) ([1 Corinthians 41:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1co041.htm#vrs1); ibid., p. 152), [St. Justin](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08580c.htm) ("Apol. I", 59; P.G., VI, 416; I, 32, 54; ibid., 377, 409; [*Dialogue with Trypho* 29](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01282.htm)), to the author of "Cohort. Ad Graec." (9, 28, 30, 33, 34; ibid., 257, 293, 296-7, 361), to St. Theophilus ("Ad Autol.", III, 23; ibid., 1156; 11, 30; ibid., 1100), to St. Irenæus (Cont. haer., I, ii, 6; P.G., VII, 715-6), to [St. Hippolytus of Rome](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07360c.htm) ("Comment. In Deut.", xxxi, 9, 31, 35; cf. Achelis, "Arabische Fragmente etc.", Leipzig, 1897, I, 118; "Philosophumena", VIII, 8; X, 33; P.G., XVI, 3350, 3448), to [Tertullian of Carthage](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14520c.htm) (Adv. Hermog., XIX; P.L., II, 214), to [Origen of Alexandria](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11306b.htm) (Contra. Cels., III, 5-6; P.G., XI, 928; etc.), to [St. Eustathius of Antioch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05627b.htm) (De engastrimytha c. Orig., 21; P.G., XVIII, 656); for all these writers, and others might be added, bear witness to the continuance of the [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. A list of the later Fathers who bear witness to the same [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) may be found in Mangenot's article in the "Dict. de la Bible" (V, 74 seq.). Hoberg (Moses und der Pentateuch, 72 seq.) has collected the testimony for the existence of the tradition during the [Middle Ages](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10285c.htm) and in more recent times.

But [Catholic tradition](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15006b.htm) does not necessarily maintain that Moses wrote every letter of the Pentateuch as it is today, and that the work has come down to us in an absolutely unchanged form. This rigid view of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship began to develop in the eighteenth century, and practically gained the upper hand in the nineteenth. The arbitrary treatment of Scripture on the part of [Protestants](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12495a.htm), and the succession of the various destructive systems advanced by Biblical criticism, caused this change of front in the [Catholic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm) camp. In the sixteenth century Card. [Bellarmine](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02411d.htm), who may be considered as a reliable exponent of [Catholic tradition](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15006b.htm), expressed the opinion that Esdras had collected, readjusted, and corrected the scattered parts of the Pentateuch, and had even added the parts [necessary](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10733a.htm) for the completion of the Pentateuchal history (De verbo Dei, II, I; cf. III, iv). The views of Génebrard, Pereira, Bonfrere, [a Lapide](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04377a.htm), Masius, [Jansenius](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08285a.htm), and of other notable Biblicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are equally elastic with regard to the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch. Not that they agree with the contentions of our modern Biblical criticism; but they show that today's Pentateuchal problems were not wholly unknown to [Catholic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm) scholars, and that the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch as determined by the [Biblical Commission](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02557a.htm) is no concession forced on the [Church](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) by unbelieving Bible students.

**Voice of internal evidence**

The possibility of producing a written record at the time of Moses is no longer contested. The art of writing was known long before the time of the great lawgiver, and was extensively practised both in [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) and Babylon. As to the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm), Flinders Petrie infers from certain [Semitic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13706a.htm) inscriptions found in 1905 on the Sinaitic peninsula, that they kept written accounts of their national history from the time of their captivity under Ramses II. The [Tell-el-Amarna tablets](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14477d.htm) show the language of Babylon was in a way the official language at the time of Moses, known in Western [Asia](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01777b.htm), Palestine, and [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm); the finds of Taanek have confirmed this fact. But it cannot be inferred from this that the Egyptians and [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) employed this sacred or official language among themselves and in their religious documents (cf. Benzinger, "Hebraische Archaologie", 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1907, p. 172 sqq.). It is not merely the possibility of writing at the time of Moses and the question of language that confronts us here; there is the further problem of the kind of written signs used in the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) documents. The hieroglyphic and cuneiform signs were widely employed at that early [date](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04636c.htm); the oldest inscriptions written in alphabetical characters date only from the ninth century B.C. But there can hardly be any [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm) as to the higher antiquity of alphabetic writing, and there seems to be nothing to prevent our extending it back to the time of Moses. Finally, the Code of [Hammurabi](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07125a.htm), discovered in Susa in 1901 by the French expedition funded by Mr. And Mrs. Dieulafoy, shows that even in pre-Mosaic times legal enactments were committed to, and preserved in, writing; for the Code antedates Moses some five centuries, and contains about 282 regulations concerning various contingencies in the civic life.

Thus far it has been shown negatively that an historic and legal document claiming to be written at the time of Moses involves no antecedent improbability of its authenticity. But the internal characteristics of the Pentateuch show also positively that the work is at least probably [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm). It is [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) that the Pentateuch contains no express declaration of its entire [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship; but even the most exacting of critics will hardly require such testimony. It is practically lacking in all other books, whether sacred or profane. On the other hand, it has already been shown that four distinct passages of the Pentateuch are expressly ascribed to the authorship of Moses. [Deuteronomy 31:24-29](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu031.htm#vrs24), is especially noted; for it knows that Moses wrote the "words of this [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) in a volume" and commanded it to be placed in the [ark of the covenant](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01721a.htm) as a testimony against the people who have been so rebellious during the lawgiver's life and will "do wickedly" after his death. Again, a number of legal sections, though not explicitly ascribed to the writing of Moses, are distinctly derived from Moses as the lawgiver. Besides, many of the Pentateuchal [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) bear evidence of their origin in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm); hence they too lay an indirect claim to [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) origin. What has been said of a number of Pentateuchal [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) is equally [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) of several historical sections. These contain in the Book of Numbers, for instance, so many names and numbers that they must have been handed down in writing. Unless the critics can bring irrefutable evidence showing that in these sections we have only fiction, they must grant that these historical details were written down in contemporary documents, and not transmitted by mere oral tradition. Moreover, Hommel ("Die altisraelitische Überlieferung in inschriftlicher Beleuchtung", p. 302) has shown that the names in the lists of the Book of Numbers bear the character of the Arabian names of the second millennium before Christ, and can have originated only in the time of Moses, though it must be admitted that the text of certain portions, e.g., [Numbers 13](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num013.htm), has suffered in its transmission. We need not remind the reader that numerous Pentateuchal [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) and data imply the conditions of a nomadic life of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm). Finally, both the author of the Pentateuch and its first readers must have been more familiar with the topography and the social conditions of [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) and with the Sinaitic peninsula than with the land of [Chanaan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03569b.htm). Cf., e.g., [Deuteronomy 8:7-10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu008.htm#vrs7) and [11:10 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu011.htm#vrs10) These internal characteristics of the Pentateuch have been developed at greater length by Smith, "The Book of Moses or the Pentateuch in its Authorship, Credibility, and Civilisation", London, 1868; Vigouroux, "La Bible et les decouvertes modernes", 6th ed., Paris, 1896, I, 453-80; II, 1-213, 529-47, 586-91; Idem, Les Livres Saints et la critique rationaliste", Paris, 1902, III, 28-46, 79-99, 122-6; Heyes, "Bibel und Ægypten", Munster, 1904, p. 142; [Cornely](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04378a.htm), "Introductio specialis in histor. Vet. Test. libros", I, Paris, 1887, pp. 57-60; Poole, "Ancient [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm)" in "Contemporary Review", March, 1879, pp. 757-9.

**Ecclesiastical decisions**

In accordance with the voice of the triple argument thus far advanced for the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch, the [Biblical Commission](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02557a.htm) on 27 June, 1906, answered a series of questions concerning this subject in the following way:

(1) The arguments accumulated by the critics to impugn the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the sacred books designated by the name Pentateuch are not of such weight as to give us the right, after setting aside numerous passages of both Testaments taken collectively, the continuous consensus of the Jewish people, the constant tradition of the [Church](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm), and internal indications derived from the text itself, to maintain that these books have not Moses as their author, but are compiled from sources for the greatest part later than the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) age.

(2) The [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch does not necessarily require such a redaction of the whole work as to render it absolutely imperative to maintain that Moses wrote all and everything with his own hand or dictated it to his secretaries; the hypothesis of those can be admitted who believe that he entrusted the composition of the work itself, conceived by him under the influence of [Divine inspiration](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08045a.htm), to others, but in such a way that they were to express faithfully his own thoughts, were to write nothing against his will, were to omit nothing; and that finally the work thus produced should be approved by the same Moses, its principal and inspired author, and published under his name.

(3) It may be granted without prejudice to the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch, that Moses employed sources in the production of his work, i.e., written documents or oral traditions, from which he may have drawn a number of things in accordance with the end he had in view and under the influence of [Divine inspiration](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08045a.htm), and inserted them in his work either literally or according to their sense, in an abbreviated or amplified form.

(4) The substantial [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity and integrity of the Pentateuch remains intact if it be granted that in the long course of centuries the work has suffered several modifications, as; post-Mosaic additions either appended by an inspired author or inserted into the text as glosses and explanations; the translation of certain words and forms out of an antiquated language into the recent form of speech; finally, wrong readings due to the fault of transcribers, which one may investigate and pass sentence on according to the [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of criticism.

The post-Mosaic additions and modifications allowed by the [Biblical Commission](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02557a.htm) in the Pentateuch without removing it from the range of substantial integrity and [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity are variously interpreted by [Catholic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm) scholars.

(1) We should have to understand them in a rather wide sense, if we were to defend the views of von Hummelauer or Vetter. This latter writer admits legal and historical documents based on [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) tradition, but written only in the times of the [Judges](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08547a.htm); he places the first redaction of the Pentateuch in the time of the erection of Solomon's temple, and its last redaction in the time of Esdras. Vetter died in 1906, the year in which the [Biblical Commission](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02557a.htm) issued the above [Decree](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04670a.htm); it is an interesting question, whether and how the scholar would have modified his theory, if time had been granted him to do so.

(2) A less liberal interpretation of the [Decree](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04670a.htm) is implied in the Pentateuchal hypotheses advanced by Hobert ("Moses und der Pentateuch; Die Pentateuch Frage" in "Biblische Studien", X, 4, Freiburg, 1907; "Erklarung des Genesis", 1908, [Freiburg](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06264a.htm), I-L), Schopfer (Geschichte des Alten Testamentes, 4th ed., 226 sqq.), Hopfl ("Die hohere Bibelkritik", 2nd ed., Paderborn, 1906), Brucker ("L'eglise et la critique", Paris, 1907, 103 sqq.), and Selbst (Schuster and Holzammer's "Handbuch zur Biblischen Geschichte", 7th ed., Freiburg, 1910, II, 94, 96). The last-named writer believes that Moses left a written law-book to which Josue and Samuel added supplementary sections and regulations, while [David](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04642b.htm) and Solomon supplied new [statutes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) concerning worship and [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm), and other kings introduced certain religious reforms, until Esdras [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) the whole law and made it the basis of [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) restoration after the Exile. Our present Pentateuch is, therefore, an Esdrine edition of the work. Dr. Selbst feels convinced that his admission of both textual changes and material additions in the Pentateuch agrees with the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of historical development and with the results of literary criticism. Historical development adapts [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) and regulations to the religious, civil, and social conditions of successive ages, while literary criticism discovers in our actual Pentateuch peculiarities of words and phrases which can hardly have been original, and also historical additions or notices, legal modifications, and signs of more recent administration of [justice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm) and of later forms of worship. But Dr. Selbst believes that these peculiarities do not offer a sufficient basis for a distinction of different sources in the Pentateuch.

(3) A strict interpretation of the words of the [Decree](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04670a.htm) is implied in the views of [Kaulen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08611a.htm) (Einleitung, n. 193 sqq.), Key ("Die Pentateuchfrage, ihre Geschichte un ihre System", Munster, 1903), Flunk (Kirchenlexicon, IX, 1782 sqq.), and Mangenot ("L'authenticite mosaique du Pentateuque", Paris, 1907; Idem, "Dict. de la Bible", V, 50-119. With the exception of those portions that belong to the time after the death of Moses, and of certain accidental changes of the text due to transcribers, the whole of the Pentateuch is the work of Moses who composed the work in one of the ways suggested by the [Biblical Commission](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02557a.htm).

Finally, there is the question as the [theological](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14580x.htm) [certainty](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03539b.htm) of the thesis maintaining the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) [authenticity](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02137a.htm) of the Pentateuch.

(1) Certain [Catholic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm) scholars who wrote between 1887 and 1906 expressed their opinion that the thesis in question is not revealed in Scripture nor taught by the [Church](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm); that it expresses a [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) not contained in Revelation, but a tenet which may be freely contested and discussed. At that time, [ecclesiastical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) authority had issued no pronouncement on the question.

(2) Other writers grant that the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch is not explicitly revealed, but they consider it as a [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) revealed formally implicitly, being derived from the revealed formulae not by a syllogism in the strict sense of the word, but by a simple explanation of the terms. The denial of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch is an [error](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm), and the contradictory of the thesis maintaining the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch is considered erronea in fide (cf. Mechineau, "L'origine mosaique du Pentateuque", p. 34).

(3) A third class of scholars considers the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch neither as a freely debatable tenet, nor as a [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) formally implicitly revealed; they believe it has been virtually revealed, or that it is inferred from [revealed](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13001a.htm) [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) by truly syllogistic deduction. It is, therefore, a theologically certain [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm), and its contradictory is a rash (temeraria) or even [erroneous](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm) proposition (cf. Brucker, "Authenticite des livres de Moise" in "Etudes", March, 1888, p. 327; *ibid.*, January, 1897, p. 122-3; Mangenot, "L'authenticité mosaïque du Pentateuque", pp. 267-310.

Whatever effect the [ecclesiastical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) decision concerning the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch may have had, or will have, on the opinion of students of the Pentateuchal question, it cannot be said to have occasioned the conservative attitude of scholars who wrote before the [promulgation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) of the [Decree](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04670a.htm). The following list contains the names of the principal recent defenders of [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity: Hengstenberg, "Die Bucher Moses und Aegypten", [Berlin](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02493b.htm), 1841; Smith, "The Book of Moses or the Pentateuch in its Authorship, Credibility, and Civilisation", London, 1868; C. Schobel, "Demonstration de l'authenticite du Deuteronome", Paris, 1868; Idem, "Demonstration de l'authenticite mosaique de l'Exode", Paris, 1871; Idem, "Demonstration de l'authenticite mosaique du Levitique et des Nombres", Paris, 1869; Idem, "Demonstration de l'authenticite de la Genese", Paris, 1872; Idem, "Le Moise historique et la redaction mosaique du Pentateuque", Paris, 1875; Knabenbauer, "Der Pentateuch und die unglaubige Bibelkritik" in "Stimmen aus Maria-Laach", 1873, IV; Bredenkamp, "Gesetz und Propheten", Erlangen, 1881; Green, "Moses and the Prophets", New York, 1883; Idem, "The Hebrew Feasts", New York, 1885; Idem, "The Pentateuchal Question" in "Hebraica", 1889-92; Idem, "The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch", New York, 1895; Idem, "The Unity of the Book of Genesis", New York, 1895; C. Elliot, "Vindication of the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch", [Cincinnati](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03773a.htm), 1884; Bissel, "The Pentateuch, its Origin and Structure", New York, 1885; Ubaldi, "Introductio in Sacram Scripturam", 2nd ed., Rome, 1882, I, 452- 509; [Cornely](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04378a.htm), "Introductio specialis in historicos V. T. libros", Paris, 1887, pp. 19-160; Vos, "Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuchal Codes", London, 1886; Bohl, "Zum Gesetz und zum Zeugniss", [Vienna](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15417a.htm), 1883; Zah, "Erneste Blicke in den Wahn der modernen Kritik des A. T.", Gutersloh, 1893; Idem, "Das Deuteronomium", 1890; Idem, "Israelitische und judische Geschichte", 1895; Rupprecht, "Die Anschauung der kritischen Schule Wellhausens vom Pentateuch", Leipzig, 1893; Idem, "Das Rathsel des Funfbuches Mose und seine falsche Losung", Gutersloh, 1894; Idem, "Des Rathsels Losung order Beitrage zur richtigen Losung des Pentateuchrathsels", 1897; Idem, "Die Kritik nach ihrem Recht uknd Unrecht", 1897; "Lex Mosaica, or the Law of Moses and the Higher Criticism" (by Sayce, Rawlinson, Trench, Lias, Wace, etc.), London, 1894; Card. Meignan, "De L'Eden a Moise", Paris, 1895, 1-88; Baxter, "Sanctuary and Sacrifice", London, 1896; Abbé de Broglie, "Questions bibliques", Paris, 1897, pp. 89-169; Pelt, "Histoire de l'A.T.", 3rd ed., Paris, 1901, I, pp. 291-326; Vigouroux, Les Livres Saints et la critique rationaliste", Paris, 1902, III, 1-226; IV, 239-53, 405-15; Idem, "Manuel biblique", 12th ed., Paris, 1906, I, 397-478; Kley, "Die Pentateuchfrage, ihre Geschichte und ihre Systeme", Munster, 1903; Hopfl, "Die hohere Bibelkritik", [Paderborn](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11383c.htm), 1902; Thomas, "The Organic Unity of the Pentateuch", London, 1904; Wiener, "Studies in Biblical Law", London, 1904; Rouse, "The Old Testament in New Testament Light", London, 1905; Redpath, "Modern Criticism and the Book of Genesis", London, 1905; Hoberg, "Moses und der Pentateuch", Freiburg, 1905; Orr, "The Problem of the Old Testament considered with reference to Recent Criticism", London, 1906.

**Opponents of the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch**

A detailed account of the opposition to the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch is neither desirable nor [necessary](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10733a.htm) in this article. In itself it would form only a noisome history of human [errors](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm); each little system has had its day, and its successors have tried their best to bury it in hushed oblivion. The actual difficulties we have to consider are those advanced by our actual opponents of today; only the fact that the systems of the past show us the fleeting and transitory character of the actual theories now in vogue can induce us to briefly enumerate the successive views upheld by the opponents of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship.

**Abandoned theories**

The views advanced by the Valentinian Ptolemy, the Nazarites, Abenesra, Carlstadt, Isaac Peyrerius, [Baruch Spinoza](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14217a.htm), Jean Leclerc are sporadic phenomena. Not all of them were wholly incompatible with the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship as now understood, and the others have found their answer in their own time.-With the work of John Astrue, published in 1753, began the so-called Hypothesis of Documents which was further developed by Eichhorn and Ilgen. But the works of the suspended [priest](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm), Alexander Geddes, published in 1792 and 1800, introduced the Hypothesis of Fragments, which in its day was elaborated and championed by Vater, de Wette (temporarily at least), Berthold, Hartmann, and von Bohlen. This theory was soon confronted by, and had to yield to the Hypothesis of Complements or Interpolations which numbered among its patrons Kelle, Ewald, Stahelin, Bleek, Tuch, de Wette, von Lengerke, and for a brief period also Franz Delitzsch. The theory of interpolations again had hardly found any adherents before Gramberg (1828), Stahelin (1830), and Bleek (1831) returned to the Hypothesis of Documents, proposing it in a somewhat modified form. Subsequently, Ewald, Knobel, Hupfeld, Noldeke, and Schrader advanced each a different explanation of the documentary hypothesis. But all of these are at present only of an historical interest.

**Present hypothesis of documents**

A course of religious development in [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) had been proposed by Reuss in 1830 and 1834, by Vatke in 1835, and by George in the same year. In 1865-66 Graf took up this [idea](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07630a.htm) and applied it to the literary criticism of the [Hexateuch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07318a.htm); for the critics had begun to consider the Book of Josue as belonging to the preceding five books, so that the collection formed a [Hexateuch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07318a.htm) instead of a Pentateuch. The same application was made by Merx in 1869. Thus modified the documentary theory continued in its development until it reached the state described in the translation of the [Bible](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) by Kautzsch (3rd ed., with Introduction and Annotations, Tübingen, 1908 sqq.). In itself there is nothing against the assumption of documents written by Moses; but we cannot ascribe with [certainty](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03539b.htm) anything of our literary remains to the hands of the Hebrew lawgiver. The beginning of written accounts must be placed towards the end of the time of [Judges](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08547a.htm); only then were fulfilled the conditions which must precede the origin of a literature properly so called, i.e., a general acquaintance with the art of writing and reading, stationary settlement of the people, and national prosperity. What then are the oldest literary remains of the Hebrews? They are the collections of the songs [dating](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04636c.htm) from the heroic time of the nation, e.g., the Book of the Wars of the Lord ([Numbers 21:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num021.htm#vrs14)), the Book of the Just ([Joshua 10:12 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos010.htm#vrs12)), the Book of Songs ([1 Kings 8:53](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki008.htm#vrs53); cf. Budde, "Geschichte der althebr. Literature", Leipzig, 1906, 17). The Book of the Covenant ([Exodus 20:24](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo020.htm#vrs24)-[23:19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo023.htm#vrs19)) too must have existed before the other sources of the Pentateuch. The oldest historical work is probably the book of the Yahwist, designated by J, and ascribed to the [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) of Juda, belonging most probably to the ninth century B.C.

Akin to this is the [Elohim](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05393a.htm) document, designated by E, and written probably in the northern kingdom (Ephraim) about a century after the production of the [Yahweh](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08329a.htm) document. These two sources were combined by a redactor into one work soon after the middle of the sixth century. Next follows the law-book, almost entirely embodied in our actual Book of Deuteronomy, discovered in the temple 621 B.C., and containing the precipitate of the prophetic teaching which advocated the abolition of the [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm) in the so- called high places and the centralization of worship in the temple of [Jerusalem](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08344a.htm). During the Exile originated the Priestly Code, P, based on the so-called law of [holiness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm), Lev., xvii-xxvi, and the programme of Ezechiel, xl-xlviii; the substance of P was read before the post-exilic community by Esdras about 444 B.C. ([Nehemiah 8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh008.htm)-[10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/neh010.htm)), and was accepted by the multitude. History does not tell us when and how these divers historical and legal sources were combined into our present Pentateuch; but it is generally assumed that there was an urgent call for a compilation of the tradition and pre-exilic history of the people. The only indication of time may be found in the fact that the [Samaritans](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) accepted the Pentateuch as a sacred book probably in the fourth century B.C. Considering their [hatred](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07149b.htm) for the [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm), one must conclude that they would not have taken this step, unless they had felt certain of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) origin of the Pentateuch. Hence a considerable time must have intervened between the compilation of the Pentateuch and its acceptance by the [Samaritans](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm), so that the work of combining must be placed in the fifth century. It is quite generally agreed that the last redactor of the Pentateuch completed his task with great adroitness. Without altering the text of the older sources, he did all within man's power to fuse the heterogeneous elements into one apparent (?) whole, with such success that not only the [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) after the fourth century B.C., but also the [Christians](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) for many centuries could maintain their conviction that the entire Pentateuch was written by Moses.

**Deficiencies of the critical hypothesis**

As several Pentateuchal critics have endeavoured to assign the last redaction of the Pentateuch to more recent dates, its placement in the fifth century may be regarded as rather favourable to conservative views. But it is hard to understand why the patrons of this opinion should not agree in considering Esdras as the last editor. Again, it is quite certain that the last editor of the Pentateuch must have notably preceded its acceptance on the part of the [Samaritans](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) as a sacred book; bit is it probably that the [Samaritans](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) would have accepted the Pentateuch as such in the fourth century B.C., when the national and religious opposition between them and [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) was well developed? Is it not more probable that the mixed nation of [Samaria](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) received the Pentateuch through the [priest](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) sent to them from [Assyria](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02007c.htm)? Cf. [2 Kings 17:27](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki017.htm). Or again, as this [priest](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) instructed the [Samaritan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) population in the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of the god of the country, is it not reasonable to suppose that he taught them the Pentateuchal law which the ten tribes carried with them when they separated from Juda? At any rate, the fact that the [Samaritans](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) accepted as sacred only the Pentateuch, but not the Prophets, leads us to infer that the Pentateuch existed among the [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) before a collection of the prophetic writings was made, and that [Samaria](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) chose its sacred book before even Juda placed the works of the Prophets on the same level with the work of Moses. But this natural inference finds no favour among the critics; for it implies that the historical and legal traditions codified in the Pentateuch, described the beginning, and not the end, of [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) religious development. The view of [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) religious development prevalent among the critics implies that the Pentateuch is later than the Prophets, and that the Psalms are later than both. After these general considerations, we shall briefly examine the main principles, the methods, the results, and the arguments of the critical theory.

*(a) Principles of the Critics*

Without pretending to review all the principles involved in the theories of the critics, we draw attention to two: the historical development of religion, and the comparative value of internal evidence and tradition.

(i) The theory of the historical evolution of [Israelitic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) [religions](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12738a.htm) leads us from [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) Yahwehism to the [ethical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05556a.htm) [monotheism](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10499a.htm) of the Prophets, from this to the universalist conception of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) developed during the Exile, and from this again to the ossified [Phariseeism](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11789b.htm) of later days. This religion of the [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm) is codified in our actual Pentateuch, but has been fictitiously projected backwards in the historical books into the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) and pre-prophetic times.

The [idea](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07630a.htm) of development is not a purely modern discovery. Meyer\* ("Der Entwicklungsgedanke bei Aristoteles", Bonn, 1909) shows that [Aristotle](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01713a.htm) was acquainted with it; Gunkel ("Weiterbildung der Religion", [Munich](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10631a.htm), 1905, 64) maintains that its application to religion is as old as [Christianity](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm), and that St. Paul has enunciated this principle; Diestel ("Geschichte des A.T. in der chrislichen Kirche", Jena, 1869, 56 sqq.), Willmann ("Geschichte des Idealismus", 2nd ed., II, 23 sqq.), and Schanz ("Apologie des Christentums", 3rd ed. II, 4 sqq., 376) find the same application in the writings of the Fathers, though Hoberg ("Die Forschritte der bibl. Wissenschaften", Freiburg, 1902, 10) grants that the patristic writers often neglect the external forms which influenced the [ideas](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07630a.htm) the Chosen People. The Fathers were not fully acquainted with profane history, and were more concerned about the contents of Revelation than about its historical development. Pesch ("Glaube, Dogmen und geschichtliche Thatsachen" in "Theol. Zeitfragen", IV, Freiburg, 1908, 183) discovers that St. Thomas, too, admits the principle of development in his "Summa" (II-II, Q. i, a. 9, 10; Q. ii, a. 3; etc.). But the [Catholic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm) conception of this principle avoids two extremes:

* the theory of degeneracy, based on the teaching of the early [Lutheran](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09438b.htm) [theologians](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14580a.htm) (cf. Giesebrecht, "Die Degradationshypothese und die altl. Geschichte", Leipzig, 1905; Steude, "Entwicklung und Offenbarung", Stuttgart, 1905, 18 sqq.);
* the theory of evolution which dissolves all [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) and history into purely natural development to the exclusion of everything [supernatural](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14336b.htm).

It is this latter extreme that is advocated by the Biblical critics. Their description of the early religion of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) is contradicted by the testimony of the oldest Prophets whose authority is not questioned by them. These inspired seers [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) of the fall of Adam ([Hosea 6:7](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos006.htm#vrs7)), the call of Abraham ([Isaiah 29:23](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa029.htm#vrs23); [Micah 7:20](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mic007.htm#vrs20)), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha ([Hosea 11:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos011.htm#vrs8); [Isaiah 1:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa001.htm#vrs9); [Amos 4:11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/amo004.htm#vrs11)), the history of Jacob and his struggle with the [angel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01476d.htm) ([Hosea 12:2 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos012.htm#vrs2)), [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) exodus from [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) and dwelling in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) ([Hosea 2:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos002.htm#vrs14); [7:16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos007.htm#vrs16); [11:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos011.htm#vrs1); [12:9, 13](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos012.htm#vrs9); [13:4, 5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos013.htm#vrs4); [Amos 2:10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/amo002.htm#vrs10); [3:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/amo003.htm#vrs1); [9:7](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/amo009.htm#vrs7)), the activity of Moses ([Hosea 12:13](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos012.htm#vrs13); [Micah 6:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mic006.htm#vrs4); [Isaiah 63:11-12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa063.htm#vrs11)), a written legislation ([Hosea 8:12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos008.htm#vrs12)), and a number of particular [statutes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) (cf. Kley, "Die Pentateuchfrage", Munster, 1903, 223 sqq.). Again, the theory of development is more and more contradicted by the results of historical investigation. Weber ("Theologie und Assyriologie im Streit um Babel und Bibel", Leipzig, 1904, 17) points out that the recent historical results imply decadence rather than development in ancient oriental art, [science](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13598b.htm), and religion; Winckler ("Religionsgeschichtler und geschichtl. Orient", Leipzig, 1906, 33) considers the evolutionary view of the primitive state of man as [false](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05781a.htm), and believes that the development theory has, at least, been badly shaken, if not actually destroyed by recent Oriental research (cf. Bantsch, "Altorientalischer und israelitischer Monothesismus", Tübingen, 1906). Köberle ("Die Theologie der Gegenwart", Leipzig, 1907, I, 2) says that the development theory has exhausted itself, reproducing only the thoughts of Wellhausen, and deciding particular questions not in the light of facts, but according to the postulates of the theory. Finally, even the [rationalistic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12652a.htm) writers have thought it [necessary](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10733a.htm) to replace the development theory by another more in agreement with historical facts. Hence Winckler ("Ex Oriente lux", Leipzig, 1905- 6; Idem, "Der Alte Orient", III, 2-3; Idem, "Die babylonische Geisteskultur in ihren Beziehungen zur Kulturentwicklung der Menschheit" in "Wissenschaft und Bildung", Leipzig, 1907; cf. Landersdorfer in "Historisch-Politische Blatter", 1909, 144) has originated the theory of pan-Babelism according to which Biblical religion is conceived as a conscious and express reaction against the [Babylonian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02179b.htm) [polytheistic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12223b.htm) state religion. It was not the common [property](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12462a.htm) of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm), but of a [religious](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12738a.htm) [sect](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13674a.htm) which was supported in Babylon by certain [monotheistic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10499a.htm) circles irrespective of nationality. This theory has found powerful opponents in Budde, Stade, Bezold, Köberle, Kugler, Wilke, and others; but it has also a number of adherents. Though wholly untenable from a [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) point of view, it shows at least the weakness of the historical development theory.

(ii) Another principle involved in the critical theory of the Pentateuch supposes that the internal evidence of literary criticism is of higher value than the evidence of tradition. But thus far the results of excavations and historical research have been favourable to tradition rather than to internal evidence. Let the reader only remember the case of Troy, Tiryns, Mycenae, and Orchomenos (in Greece); the excavations of the English explorer Evans in Crete have shown the historical character of King Minos and his [labyrinth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08728b.htm); Assyrian inscriptions have re-established the historical credit of King Midas of Phrygia; similarly, Menes of [Thebes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14562b.htm) and Sargon of Agade have been shown to belong to history; in general, the more accurate have been the scientific investigations, the more clearly have they shown the reliability of even the most slender traditions. In the field of New-Testament criticism the call "back to tradition" has begun to be heeded, and has been endorsed by such authorities as Harnack and Deissmann. In the study of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) too there are unmistakable signs of a coming change. Hommel ("Die altisrealitische Überlieferung in inschriftlicher Beleuchtung", Munich, 1897) maintains that [Old-Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) tradition, both as a whole and in its details, proves to be reliable, even in the light of critical research. Meyer\* ("Die Entstehung des Judentums", Halle, 1896) comes to the conclusion that the foundations of the critical Pentateuchal theory are destroyed, if it can be [proved](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454c.htm) that even part of the impugned Hebrew tradition is reliable; the same writer proves the credibility of the sources of the Books of Esdras (cf. "Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orientes", [Munich](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10631a.htm), 1904, 167 sqq.). S.A. Fries has been led by his critical studies, and without being influenced by dogmatic bias, to accept the whole traditional view of the history of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm). Cornill and Oettli express the conviction that [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) traditions concerning even its earliest history are reliable and will withstand the bitterest attacks of criticism; Dawson (cf. Fonck, "Kritik und Tradition im A.T." in "Zeitschrift fur katholische Theologie", 1899, 262-81) and others apply to tradition the old principle which has been so frequently misapplied, "magna est veritas, et praevalebit"; Gunkel ("Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbucher", II, Tübingen, 1906, 8) grants that [Old-Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) criticism has gone a little too far, and that many Biblical traditions now rejected will be re-established.

*(b) Critical Method*

The falsehood of the critical method does not consist in the use of criticism as such, but in its illegitimate use. Criticism became more common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; at the end of the eighteenth it was applied to classical antiquity. Bernheim ("Lehrbuch der historischen Methode", Leipzig, 1903, 296) believes that by this means alone history first became a [science](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13598b.htm). In the application of criticism to the [Bible](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) was are limited, indeed, by the inspiration and the canonicity of its books; but there is an ample field left for our critical investigations ([Pesch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11739b.htm), "Theol. Zeitfragen", III, 48).

Some of the principal [sins](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm) of the critics in their treatment of [Sacred Scripture](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) are the following:

* They deny everything [supernatural](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14336b.htm), so that they reject not merely inspiration and canonicity, but also prophecy and [miracle](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.htm) a priori (cf. Metzler, "Das Wunder vor dem Forum der modernen Geschichtswissenschaft" in "Katholik", 1908, II, 241 sqq.).
* They seem to be convinced *a priori* of the credibility of non-Biblical historical documents, while they are prejudiced against the truthfulness of Biblical accounts. (Cf. Stade, "Geschichte Israel's", I, 86 seq., 88, 101.)
* Depreciating external evidence almost entirely, they consider the questions of the origin, the integrity, and the authenticity of the sacred books in the light of internal evidence (Encycl. Prov. Deus, 52).
* They overestimate the critical analysis of the sources, without considering the chief point, i.e., the credibility of the sources (Lorenz, "Die Geschichtswissenschaft in ihren Hauptrichtungen und Aufgaben", ii, 329 sqq.). Recent documents may contain reliable reports of ancient history. Some of the critics begin to acknowledge that the historical credibility of the sources is of greater importance than their division and dating (Stark, "Die Entstehung des A.T.", Leipzig, 1905, 29; cf. Vetter, "Tübinger theologische Quartalschrift", 1899, 552).
* The critical division of sources is based on the Hebrew text, though it is not certain how far the present [Massoretic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10035a.htm) text differs from that, for instance, followed by the [Septuagint](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) translators, and how far the latter differed form the Hebrew text before its redaction in the fifth century B.C. Dahse ("Textkritische Bedenken gegen den Ausgangspunkt der heutigen Pentateuchkritik" in "Archiv fur Religionsgeschichte", VI, 1903, 305 sqq.) shows that the Divine names in the Greek translation of the Pentateuch differ in about 180 cases from those of the Hebrew text (cf. Hoberg, "Die Genesis", 2nd ed., p. xxii sqq.); in other words and phrases the changes may be fewer, but it would be unreasonable to deny the existence of any. Again, it is antecedently probable that the [Septuagint](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) text differs less from the [Massoretic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10035a.htm) than from the ante-Esdrine text, which must have been closer to the original. The starting point of literary criticism is therefore uncertain.
* It is not an inherent fault of literary criticism that it was applied to the Pentateuch after it had become practically antiquated in the study of Homer and the Nibelungenlied (cf. Katholik, 1896, I, 303, 306 sqq.), nor that [Reuss](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12799b.htm) considered it as more productive of difference of opinion than of results (cf. Katholik, 1896, I, 304 seq.), nor again that Wellhausen thought it had degenerated into childish play. Among Bible students, Klostermann ("Der Pentateuch", Leipzig, 1893), Konig ("Falsche Extreme im Gebiete der neueren Kritik des A.T.", Leipzig, 1885; "Neueste Prinzipien der alt. Kritik", [Berlin](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02493b.htm), 1902; "Im Kampfe um das A.T.", Berlin, 1903), Bugge ("Die Hauptparabeln Jesu", Giessen, 1903) are sceptical as to the results of literary criticism, while Orelli ("Der Prophet Jesaja", 1904, V), Jeremias ("Das alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients", 1906, VIII), and Oettli ("Geschichte Israels", V) wish to insist more on the [exegesis](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05692b.htm) of the text than on the criss-cross roads of criticism. G. Jacob ("Der Pentateuch", Göttingen, 1905) thinks that the past Pentateuchal criticism needs a thorough revision; Eerdmans ("Die Komposition der Genesis", Giessen, 1908) feels convinced that criticism has been misled into wrong paths by Astrue. Merx expresses the opinion that the next generation will have to revise backwards many of the present historico-literary views of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) ("Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbucher", II, 1907, 3, 132 sqq.).

*(c) Critical Results*

Here we must distinguish between the principles of criticism and its results; the principles of the historical development of religion, for instance, and of the inferiority of tradition to internal evidence, are not the outcome of literary analysis, but are its partial basis. Again, we must distinguish between those results of literary criticism which are compatible with the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch and those that contradict it. The patrons of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch, and even the [ecclesiastical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) [Decree](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04670a.htm) relating to this subject, plainly admit that Moses or his secretaries may have utilized sources or documents in the composition of the Pentateuch; both admit also that the [sacred text](http://www.newadvent.org/bible) has suffered in its transmission and may have received additions, in the form of either inspired appendices or [exegetical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05692b.htm) glosses. If the critics, therefore, can succeed in determining the number and the limits of the documentary sources, and of the post-Mosaic additions, whether inspired or profane, they render an important service to the traditional tenet of Pentateuchal authenticity. The same must be said with regard to the successive [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) established by Moses, and the gradual fidelity of the Jewish people to the Mosaic law. Here again the certain or even probable results of sane literary and historical criticism will aid greatly the conservative commentator of the Pentateuch. We do not quarrel with the legitimate conclusions of the critics, if the critics do not quarrel with each other. But they do quarrel with each other. According to Merx (loc. cit.) there is nothing certain in the field of criticism except its uncertainty; each critic proclaims his views with the greatest self-reliance, but without any regard to the consistency of the whole. Former views are simply killed by silence; even Reuss and Dillmann are junk-iron, and there is a noticeable lack of judgment as to what can or cannot be [known](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm).

Hence the critical results, in as far as they consist merely in the distinction of documentary sources, in the determination of post-Mosaic materials, e.g., textual changes, and profane or inspired additions, in the description of various legal codes, are not at variance with the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authenticity of the Pentateuch. Nor can an anti-Mosaic character be pointed out in the facts or phenomena from which criticism legitimately infers the foregoing conclusions; such facts or phenomena are, for instance, the change of the Divine names in the text, the use of certain words, the difference of style, the so-called double accounts of really, not merely apparently, identical events; the [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) of falsehood of these and similar details does not directly affect the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch. In which results then does criticism clash with tradition? Criticism and tradition are incompatible in their views as to the age and sequence of the documentary sources, as to the origin of the various legal codes, and as to the time and manner of the redaction of the Pentateuch.

(i) Pentateuchal Documents.-As to the age and sequence of the various documents, the critics do not agree. Dillmann, Kittel, Konig, and Winckler place the Elohist, who is subdivided by several writers into the first, second, and third Elohist, before the Yahwist, who also is divided into the first and second Yahwist; but Wellhausen and most critics believe that the Elohist is about a century younger than the Yahwist. At any rate, both are assigned to about the ninth and eight centuries B.C.; both too incorporate earlier traditions or even documents.

All critics appear to agree as to the composite character of Deuteronomy; they admit rather a Deuteronomist [school](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13554b.htm) than single writers. Still, the successive layers composing the whole book are briefly designated by D1, D2, D3, etc. As to the character of these layers, the critics do not agree: Montet and Driver, for instance, assigned to the first Deuteronomist cc. i-xxi; Kuenen, Konig, [Reuss](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12799b.htm), Renan, Westphal ascribe to DN, iv, 45-9, and v-xxvi; a third class of critics reduce D1 to xii, 1-xxvi, 19, allowing it a double edition: according to Wellhausen, the first edition contained i, 1-iv, 44; xii-xxvi; xxvii, while the second comprised iv, 45-xi, 39; xii-xxvi; xxviii-xxx; both editions were combined by the redactor who inserted Deuteronomy into the [Hexateuch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07318a.htm). Cornill arranges the two editions somewhat differently. Horst considers even cc. xii-xxvi as a compilation of pre-existing elements, gathered together without order and often by chance. Wellhausen and his adherents do not wish to assign to D1 a higher age than 621 B.C., Cornill and Bertholet consider the document as a summary of the prophetic teaching, Colenso and Renan ascribe it to Jeremias, others place its origin in the reign of Ezechias or Manasses, Klostermann identifies the document with the book read before the people in the time of Josaphat, while Kleinert refers it back to the end of the time of the Judges. The Deuteronomist depends on the two preceding documents, J and E, both for his history land his [legislation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm); the historical details not found in these may have been derived from other sources not known to us, and the [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) not contained in the Sinaitic legislation and the [decalogue](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04664a.htm) are either pure fiction or a crystallization of the prophetic teaching.

Finally, the Priestly Code, P, is also a compilation: the first stratum of the book, both historical and legal in its character, is designated by P1 or P2; the second stratum is the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of [holiness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm), H or Lev., xvii-xxvi, and is the work of a contemporary of Ezechiel, or perhaps of the Prophet himself (H, P2, Ph); besides, there are additional elements springing rather from a [school](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13554b.htm) than from any single writer, and designated by Kunen as P3, P4, P5, but by other critics as Ps. and Px. Bertholet and Bantsch speak of two other collections of [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm): the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm), Lev., i-vii, designated as Po; and the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of purity ([Leviticus 11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/lev011.htm)-[15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/lev015.htm)) designated as Pr. The first documentary hypothesis considered PN as the oldest part of the Pentateuch; Duston and Dillmann place it before the Deuteronomic code, but most recent critics regard it as more recent than the other documents of the Pentateuch, and even later than [Ezekiel 44:10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/eze044.htm#vrs10)-[46:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/eze046.htm#vrs15) (573-2 B.C.); the followers of Wellhausen date the Priestly Code after the return from the [Babylonian Captivity](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03315a.htm), while Wildeboer places it either after or towards the end of the captivity. The historical parts of the Priestly Code depend on the Yahwistic and the Elohistic documents, but Wellhausen's adherents believe that the material of these documents has been manipulated so as to fit it for the special purpose of the Priestly Code; Dillmann and Drive maintain that facts have not been invented or falsified by P, but that the latter had at hand other historical documents besides J and E. As to the legal part of P, Wellhausen considers it as an a priori programme for the Jewish [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) after the return from the captivity, projected backwards into the past, and attributed to Moses; but other critics believe that P has systematized the pre-exilic customs of worship, developing then, and adapting them to the new circumstances.

What has been said clearly shows that the critics are at variance in many respects, but they are at one in maintaining the post- [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) origin of the Pentateuchal documents. What is the weight of the reasons on which they base their opinion?

* The conditions laid down by the critics as prerequisites to literature do not prove that the sources of the Pentateuch must be post-Mosaic. The Hebrew people had lived for, at least, two hundred years in [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm); besides, most of the forty years spent in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) were passed in the neighbourhood of Cades, so that the [Israelites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) were not longer a nomadic people. Whatever may be said of their material prosperity, or of their proficiency in writing and reading, the above-mentioned researches of Flinders Petrie show that they kept records of their national traditions at the time of Moses.
* If the Hebrew contemporaries of Moses kept written records, why should not the Pentateuchal sources be among these documents? It is [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) that in our actual Pentateuch we find non-Mosaic and post- [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) indications; but, then, the non-Mosaic, impersonal style may be due to a literary device, or to the pen of secretaries; the post-Mosaic geographical and historical indications may have crept into the text by way of glosses, or [errors](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm) of the transcribers, or even inspired additions. The critics cannot reject these suggestions as mere subterfuges; for they should have to grant a continuous [miracle](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.htm) in the preservation of the Pentateuchal text, if they were to deny the moral [certainty](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03539b.htm) of the presence of such textual changes.
* But would not the Pentateuch have been known to the earlier Prophets, if it had been handed down from the time of Moses? This critical exception is really an argument e silentio which is very apt to be fallacious, unless it be most carefully handled. Besides, if we keep in mind the labour involved in multiplying copies of the Pentateuch, we cannot be wrong in assuming that they were very rare in the interval between Moses and the Prophets, so that few were able to read the actual text. Again, it has been pointed out that at least one of the earlier Prophets appeals to a written [mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10584a.htm) law, and that all appeal to such a national [conscience](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04268a.htm) as presupposes the Pentateuchal history and law. Finally, some of the critics maintain the J views the history of man and of [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) according to the religious and the moral [ideas](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07630a.htm) of the Prophets; if there be such an agreement, why not say that the Prophets write according to the religious and moral [ideas](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07630a.htm) of the Pentateuch?
* The critics urge the fact that the Pentateuchal [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) concerning the sanctuary, the [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm), the feasts, and the [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) agree with different stages of post-Mosaic historical development; that the second stage agrees with the reform of Josias, and the third with the enactments enforced after the time of the [Babylonian Exile](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03315a.htm). But it must be kept in mind that the Mosaic law was intended for [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) as the [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) law is intended for the whole world; if then 1900 years after Christ the greater part of the world is still un-Christian, it is not astonishing that the Mosaic law required centuries before it penetrated the whole nation. Besides, there were, no doubt, many violations of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), just as the [Ten Commandments](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04153a.htm) are violated today without detriment to their legal [promulgation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm). Again there were times of religious reforms and disasters as there are periods of [religious fervour](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15753a.htm) and coldness in the history of the [Christian Church](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm); but such human frailties do not imply the non-existence of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), either [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) or [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm). As to the particular [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) in question, it will be found more satisfactory to examine them more in detail.

(ii) Pentateuchal Codes.-The critics endeavour to establish a triple Pentateuchal code: the Book of the Covenant, Deuteronomy, and the Priestly Code. Instead of regarding this [legislation](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) as applying to different phases in the forty years' wandering in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm), they consider it as agreeing with three historical stages in the national history. As stated above, the main objects of this triple legislation are the sanctuary, the feast, and the [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm).

*(a) The Sanctuary*

At first, so the critics say, [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm) were allowed to be offered in any place where the Lord had manifested his name ([Exodus 20:24-6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo020.htm#vrs24)); then the sanctuary was limited to the one place chosen by [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) ([Deuteronomy 12:5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu012.htm#vrs5)); thirdly, the Priestly Code supposes the unity of sanctuary, and prescribes the proper religious rites to be observed. Moreover, the critics point out historical incidents showing that before the enforcement of the Deuteronomic law [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm) were offered in various places quite distinct from the resting place of the ark. What do the defenders of the [Mosaic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10596a.htm) authorship of the Pentateuch answer? First, as to the triple law, it points to three different stages in [Israel's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm) [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm) life: before the erection of the tabernacle at the foot of [Mt. Sinai](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14011a.htm), the people were allowed to erect altars and to offer [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm) everywhere provided the name of the Lord had been manifested; next, after the people had adored the [golden calf](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06628b.htm), and the tabernacle had been erected, sacrifice could be offered only before the tabernacle, and even the cattle killed for consumption had to be slaughtered in the same place, in order to prevent a relapse into [idolatry](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07636a.htm); finally, when the people were about to enter the promised land, the last law was abolished, being then quite impossible, but the unity of sanctuary was kept in the place which [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) would choose. Secondly, as to the historical facts urged by the critics, some of them are caused by direct Divine intervention, [miracle](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.htm) or prophetic inspiration, and as such are fully legitimate; others are evidently violations of the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm), and are not sanctioned by the inspired writers; a third class of facts may be explained in one of three ways:

* Poels ("Le sanctuaire de Kirjath Jeraim", Louvain, 1894; "Examen critique de l'histoire du sanctuaire de l'arche", Louvain, 1897) endeavours to prove that Gabaon, Masphath, and Kiriath-Jarim denote the same place, so that the multiplicity of sanctuaries is only apparent, not real.
* Van Hoonacker ("Le Lieu du culte dans la legislation rituelle des Hebreux" in "Musceeon", April-Oct., 1894, XIII, 195-204, 299- 320, 533-41; XIV, 17-38) distinguishes between private and public altars; the public and national worship is legally centralized in one sanctuary and around one altar, while private altars may be had for domestic worship.
* But more commonly it is admitted that before [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) had chosen the site of national sanctuary, it was not forbidden by law to sacrifice anywhere, even away from the place of the ark. After the building of the temple the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) was not considered so stringent as to bind under all circumstances. Thus far then the argument of the critics is not conclusive.

*(b) The Sacrifices*

According to the critics, the Book of the Covenant enjoined only the offering of the [first-fruits](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06082a.htm) and the [first-born](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06081a.htm) of animals, the [redemption](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12677d.htm) of the [first-born](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06081a.htm) of men, and a [free-will](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06259a.htm) offering on visiting the sanctuary (Ex., xxii, 28-9; xxiii, 15]); Deuteronomy more clearly defines some of these [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) (xv, 19-23; xxvi, 1-11), and imposes the [law](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of [tithes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14741b.htm) for the benefit of the [poor](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12327a.htm), the [widows](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15617c.htm), the [orphans](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11322b.htm), and the [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) (xxvi, 12-5); the Priestly Code distinguishes different kinds of [sacrifices](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm), determines their rites, and introduces also [incense](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07716a.htm) offering. But history hardly bears out this view: as there existed a permanent [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) in Silo, and later on in [Jerusalem](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08344a.htm), we may safely infer that there existed a permanent sacrifice. The earliest [prophets](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12477a.htm) are acquainted with an excess of care bestowed on the sacrificial rites (cf. [Amos 4:4, 5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/amo004.htm#vrs4); [5:21-22, 25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/amo005.htm#vrs21); [Hosea](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/hos000.htm) passim). The expressions of Jeremias (vii, 21-3) may be explained in the same sense. Sin offering was known long before the critics introduce their Priestly Code (Osee, iv, 8; Mich., vi, 7; Ps., xxxix [xl], 7; 1 Kings, iii, 14). Trespass offering is formally distinguished from [sin](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm) offering in [2 Kings 13:16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki013.htm#vrs16) (cf. [1 Samuel 6:3-15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa006.htm#vrs3); [Isaiah 53:10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa053.htm#vrs10)). Hence the distinction between the different kinds of sacrifice is due neither to [Ezekiel 45:22-5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/eze045.htm#vrs22), nor to the Priestly Code.

*(c) The Feasts*

The Book of the Covenant, so the critics tell us, knows only three feasts: the seven-days feast of the [azymes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02171a.htm) in memory of the exodus form [Egypt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm), the feast of the harvest, and that of the end of the harvest ([Exodus 23:14-7](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo023.htm#vrs14)); Deuteronomy ordains the keeping of the feasts at the central sanctuary adds to [Pasch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11512b.htm) to the feast of the [azymes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02171a.htm), places the second feast seven weeks after the first, and calls the third, "feast of tabernacles", extending its duration to seven days ([Deuteronomy 16:1-17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu016.htm#vrs1)); the Priestly Code prescribes the exact ritual for five feasts, adding the feast of trumpets and of atonement, all of which must be kept at the central sanctuary. Moreover, history appears to endorse the contention of the critics: [Judges 21:19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg021.htm#vrs19) knows of only one annual feast in Silo; [1 Samuel 1:3, 7, 21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa001.htm#vrs3) testifies that the [parents](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11478c.htm) of Samuel went every year to Silo to the sanctuary; Jeroboam I established in his kingdom one annual feast similar to that celebrated in [Jerusalem](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08344a.htm) ([1 Kings 12:32-3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki012.htm#vrs32)); the earliest Prophets do not mention the names of the religious feasts; the [Pasch](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11512b.htm) is celebrated for the first time after the discovery of Deuteronomy ([2 Kings 23:21-3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ki023.htm#vrs21)); Ezechiel knows only three feasts and a [sin](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm) offering on the first day of the first and the seventh month. But here again, the critics use the argument e silentio which is not conclusive in this case. The feast of atonement, for instance, is not mentioned in the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) outside the Pentateuch; only [Josephus](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08522a.htm) refers to its celebration in the time of John Hyrcanus or [Herod](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07289c.htm). Will the critics infer from this, that the feast was not kept throughout the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm)? History does not record facts generally known. As to the one annual feast mentioned in the early records, weighty commentators are of opinion that after the settlement of the people in the promised land, the custom was gradually introduced of going to the central sanctuary only once a year. This custom prevailed before the critics allow the existence of the Deuteronomic law ([1 Kings 12:26-31](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki012.htm#vrs26)), so that the latter cannot have introduced it. [Isaias](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08179b.htm) ([29:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa029.htm#vrs1) and [30:29](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa030.htm#vrs29)) speaks of a cycle of feasts, but Osee, xii, 9 alludes already to the feast of tabernacles, so that its establishment cannot be due to the Priestly Code as the critics describe it. Ezechiel (xlv, 18-25) speaks only of the three feasts which had to be kept at the central sanctuary.

*(d) The Priesthood*

The critics contend that the Book of the Covenant knows nothing of an Aaronitic [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) ([Exodus 24:5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo024.htm#vrs5)); that Deuteronomy mentions [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) and [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) without any hierarchical distinction and without any [high priest](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12407b.htm), determines their [rights](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13055c.htm), and distinguishes only between the [Levite](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) living in the country and the [Levite](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) attached to the central sanctuary; finally, that the Priestly Code represents the [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) as a social and hierarchical institution, with legally determined [duties](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05215a.htm), [rights](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13055c.htm), and revenues. This theory is said to be borne out by the evidence of history. But the testimony of history points in the opposite direction. At the time of Josue and the early Judges, Eleazar and Phinees, the son and nephew of Aaron, were [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) ([Numbers 26:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num026.htm#vrs1); [Deuteronomy 10:6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu010.htm#vrs6); [Joshua 14:1 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos014.htm#vrs1); [22:13, 21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos022.htm#vrs13); [24:33](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos024.htm#vrs33); [Judges 20:28](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jdg020.htm#vrs28)). From the end of the time of Judges to Solomon, the [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) was in the hands of Heli and his descendants ([1 Samuel 1:3 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa001.htm#vrs3); [14:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa014.htm#vrs3); [21:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa021.htm#vrs1); [22:1](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa022.htm#vrs1)) who sprang from Ithamar the younger son of Aaron ([1 Chronicles 24:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ch024.htm#vrs3); cf. [1 Samuel 22:29](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa022.htm#vrs29); [14:3](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa014.htm#vrs3); [2:7 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa002.htm#vrs7)). Solomon raised Sadoc, the son of Achitob, to the dignity of the [high priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12407b.htm), and his descendants held the office down to the time of the [Babylonian Captivity](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03315a.htm) ([2 Samuel 8:17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa008.htm#vrs17); [15:24 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa015.htm#vrs24); [20:25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa020.htm#vrs25); [1 Kings 2:26, 27, 35](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki002.htm#vrs26); [Ezekiel 44:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/eze044.htm#vrs15)); that Sadoc too was of Aaronic descent is attested by [1 Chronicles 6:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ch006.htm#vrs8). Besides the Books of Josue and Paralipomenon acknowledge the distinction between [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) and [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm); according to [1 Samuel 6:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa006.htm#vrs15), the [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm) handled the ark, but the Bethsamites, the inhabitants of a [priestly](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) city ([Joshua 21:13-6](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/jos021.htm#vrs13)), offered sacrifice.

A similar distinction is made in [2 Samuel 15:24](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa015.htm#vrs24); [1 Kings 8:3 sq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki008.htm#vrs3); [Isaiah 66:21](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa066.htm#vrs21). Van Hoonacker ("Les pretres et les levites dans le livre d'Ezechiel" in "Revue biblique", 1899, VIII, 180-189, 192-194) shows that Ezechiel did not create the distinction between [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) and [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm), but that supposing the traditional distinction in existence, he suggested a divisions in to these classes according to merit, and not according to birth (xliv, 15-xlv, 5). Unless the critics simply set aside all this historical evidence, they must grant the existence of an Aaronitic [priesthood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12409a.htm) in [Israel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08193a.htm), and its division into [priests](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) and [Levites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09206a.htm), long before the D and P codes were [promulgated](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm) according to the critical theory. It is [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) that in a number of passages [persons](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11726a.htm) are said to offer sacrifice who are not of Aaronitic descent: Judges, vi, 25 sqq.; xiii, 9; [1 Samuel 7:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa007.htm#vrs9); [10:8](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa010.htm#vrs8); [13:9](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1sa013.htm#vrs9); [2 Samuel 6:17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa006.htm#vrs17); [24:25](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2sa024.htm#vrs25); [1 Kings 8:5, 62](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ki008.htm#vrs5); etc. But in the first place, the phrase "to offer sacrifice" means either to furnish the victim ([Leviticus 1:2, 5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/lev001.htm#vrs2)) or to perform the sacrificial rite; the victim might be furnished by any devout [layman](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08748a.htm); secondly, it would be hard to prove that [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) committed the [priestly](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) office in such a way to Aaron and his sons as not to reserve to himself the liberty of delegating in extraordinary cases a non-Aaronite to perform the [priestly](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) functions.

(iii) Pentateuchal Redaction.-The four documentary sources of the Pentateuch thus far descried were combined not by any one individual; critics require rather three different stages of combination: first, a Yahwistic redactor RXX or RX combined J and E with a view of harmonizing them, and adapting them to Deuteronomic [ideas](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07630a.htm); this happened either before or after the redaction of D. Secondly, after D had been completed in the sixth century B.C., a redactor, or perhaps a [school](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13554b.htm) of redactors, imbued with the spirit of D combined the documents JE into JED, introducing however the modifications [necessary](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10733a.htm) to secure consistency. Thirdly, a last redactor RX imbued with the letter and the spirit of P, combined this document with JED, introducing again the [necessary](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10733a.htm) changes. The table of nations in [Genesis 11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen011.htm) was according to Kunen added by this last redactor.

At first sight, one is struck by the complex character of this theory; as a rule, [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) is of a more simple texture. Secondly, one is impressed by the unique nature of the hypothesis; antiquity has nothing to equal it. Thirdly, if one reads or studies the Pentateuch in the light of this theory, one is impressed by the whimsical character of the redactor; he often retained what should have been omitted, and omitted what should have been retained. The critics themselves have to take refuge, time and time again, in the work of the redactor, in order save their own views of the Pentateuch. A recent writer does not hesitate to call the complex redactor *ein genialer Esel.* Fourthly, a truth-loving, straightforward reader is naturally shocked by the literary fictions and forgeries, the editorial changes and subterfuges implied in the critical theory of the Pentateuchal documents and redaction. The more moderate critics endeavour to escape this inconvenience: some appeal to the difference between the ancient and the modern standard of literary [property](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12462a.htm) and editorial accuracy; others practically sanctify the means by the end. Oettli considers the dilemma "either the work of Moses or the work of a deceiver" as the expression of sheer imprudence; Kautzsch unctuously points to the depth of the wisdom and [knowledge](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) whose ways we cannot fathom, but must admire. The left wing of criticism openly acknowledges that there is no use in hushing up matters; it actually is the result of scientific research that both form and contents of a great part of the [Old Testament](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14526a.htm) are based on conscious fiction and [forgery](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06135b.htm).

**Style of the Pentateuch**

In some general introductions to the Pentateuch its [messianic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10212c.htm) prophecies are specially considered, i.e., the so-called proto-evangelium, [Genesis 3:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen003.htm#vrs15); the blessing of Sem, [Genesis 9:26-27](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen009.htm#vrs26); the patriarchal promises, [Genesis 12:2](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen012.htm#vrs2); [13:16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen013.htm#vrs); [15:5](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen015.htm#vrs); [17:4-16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen017.htm#vrs); [18:10-15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen018.htm#vrs); [22:17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen022.htm#vrs); [26:4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen026.htm#vrs); [28:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen028.htm#vrs); the blessing of the dying Jacob, [Genesis 49:8-10](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen049.htm#vrs8); the Prophecy of [Balaam](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02214b.htm), [Numbers 24:15 sqq.](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/num024.htm#vrs15); and the great Prophet announced by Moses, [Deuteronomy 18:15-19](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu018.htm#vrs15). But these prophecies belong rather to the province of [exegesis](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05692b.htm) than introduction. Again, the text of the Pentateuch has been considered in some general introductions to the work. We have seen already that besides the [Massoretic Text](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10035a.htm) we have to take into account the earlier text followed by the [Septuagint](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm) translators, and the still earlier readings of the [Samaritan](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13416a.htm) Pentateuch; a detailed investigation of this subject belongs to the field of textual or lower criticism. But the style of the Pentateuch can hardly be referred to any other department of Pentateuchal study.

As Moses employed no [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm) pre-existent documents in the composition of his work, and as he must have made use too of the aid of secretaries, we expect antecedently a variety of style in the Pentateuch. It is no [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm) due to the presence of this literary phenomenon that the critics have found so many points of support in their minute analysis. But in general, the style of the work is in keeping with its contents. There are three kinds of material in the Pentateuch: first, there are statistics, genealogies, and legal formularies; secondly, there are narrative portions; thirdly, there are parenthetic sections.

No reader will find fault with the writer's dry and simple style in his genealogical and ethnographic lists, in his table of encampments in the [desert](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04749a.htm), or his legal enactments. Any other literary expression would be out of place in records of this kind. The narrative style of the Pentateuch is simple and natural, but also lively and picturesque. It abounds in simple character sketches, dialogues, and anecdotes. The accounts of Abraham's purchase of a burying-ground, of the history of Joseph, and of the [Egyptian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05329b.htm) plagues are also dramatic. Deuteronomy has its peculiar style on account of the exhortations it contains. Moses explains the [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) he [promulgates](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12454b.htm), but urges also, and mainly, their practice. As an orator, he shows a great deal of unction and persuasiveness, but is not destitute of the earnestness of the Prophets. His long sentences remain at times incomplete, thus giving rise to so-called anacolutha (cf. [Deuteronomy 6:10-12](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu006.htm#vrs10); [8:11-17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu008.htm#vrs11); [9:9-11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu009.htm#vrs9); [11:2-7](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu011.htm#vrs2); [24:1-4](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/deu024.htm#vrs1)). Being necessarily a popular preacher, he is not lacking in repetitions. But his earnestness, persuasiveness, and unction do not interfere with the clearness of his statements. He is not merely a rigid legislator, but he shows his [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) for the people, and in turn wins their [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) and confidence.

**Decisions of the biblical commission**

Some decisions of the [Biblical Commission](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02557a.htm) in regards to the chief subject of this article, viz., Genesis, are as follows: The various [exegetical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05692b.htm) systems which exclude the literal and historical sense of the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis are not based on solid foundation. It should not be taught that these three chapters do not contain [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) narrations of facts, but only fables derived from the mythologies and [cosmogonies](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04405c.htm) of earlier peoples, purged of the [polytheistic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12223b.htm) [errors](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm) and accommodated to [monotheism](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10499a.htm); or allegories and symbols, with no objective reality, set forth in the guise of history to inculcate religious and [philosophical](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12025c.htm) [truths](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm); or, finally, legends partly historical and partly fictitious put together for instruction and edification. In particular, [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm) should not be cast on the literal and historical sense of passages which touch on the foundations of the [Christian religion](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm), as, for instance, the creation of the [universe](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15183a.htm) by [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) at the beginning of time; the special creation of man; the formation of the first woman from the [first man](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01129a.htm); the unity of the [human race](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09580c.htm); the original [happiness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07131b.htm), integrity, and [immortality](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07687a.htm) of our [first parents](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01129a.htm) in the state of [justice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm); the precept given by [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) to man to try his obedience; the transgression of the Divine precept, at the suggestion of the Devil, under the form of a serpent; the fall of our [first parents](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01129a.htm) from their original state of [justice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm); the promise of a future Redeemer.

In explaining such passages in these chapters as the Fathers and Doctors interpreted differently, one may follow and defend the opinion which meets his approval. Not every word or phrase in these chapters is always necessarily to be taken in its literal sense so that it may never have another, as when it is manifestly used metaphorically or [anthropomorphically](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01558c.htm). The literal and historical meaning of some passages in these chapters presupposed, an allegorical and prophetical meaning may wisely and usefully be employed. As in writing the first chapter of Genesis the purpose of the sacred author was not to expound in a scientific manner the constitution of the [universe](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15183a.htm) or the complete order of creation, but rather to give to the people popular information in the ordinary language of the day, adapted to the intelligence of all, the strict propriety of scientific language is not always to be looked for in their terminology. The expression *six days* and their division may be taken in the ordinary sense of a natural day, or for a certain period of [time](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14726a.htm), and [exegetes](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05692b.htm) may dispute about this question.

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