

Introduction by Prof. Robert H. Pfeiffer in Growth of the Pentateuch
by Immanuel Lewy

It is a pleasure for the present writer, who for more than thirty-five years has been interested in the origin of the Pentateuch, to commend to the reader the volume of a fellow worker in this arduous field of Biblical research. And this writer, filled as he is with admiration for the immense learning and uncommon originality of Dr. Immanuel Lewy, is particularly eager to have Biblical scholars make a careful, critical study of the conclusions reached by the author of this important book because they are so radically different from his own views.

While it was noticed long ago that Moses could hardly have written every word of the Pentateuch, the identification of the materials, or sources, or traditions- whether written or oral- collected by the final compiler of the Mosaic Torah, has proved to be a most baffling and bewildering task. Different results are reached in accordance with the clues utilized, such as divine names, literary style, religious ideas, historical background, and so forth.

The standard analysis of the Pentateuch into four basic documents, as presented by Julius Wellhausen, has been attacked in recent years both in toto and in various parts. It may be said that after more than a century of critical investigation the work is still in progress and- who can tell?- may never be completed to the satisfaction of all scholars. For we lack all direct information on the growth of the Pentateuch and we must rely merely on its text for more or less accidental marks of diversity of sources- if any.

The reader is urged to approach these pages with an open mind. At the beginning he may be disturbed by the small part of the Pentateuch which is traced back to Moses, while most of it is ascribed to later writers. But such is the verdict of modern historical scholarship, which does not in the least minimize the gigantic figure of Moses, who, as Dr. Lewy agrees, created a nation out of Egyptian slaves and desert nomads, and gave them an imperishable religion in the worship of Jehovah (YHWH).

Readers of detective stories do not wish to know the solution of the murder case at the beginning: the mystery holds their attention to the end, when the denouement is reached. Since this book leads up to the solution of a mystery, this foreword must keep the reader in suspense and merely assure him that he will be thrilled by the search and discovery on the following pages.