

*The Growth of the Pentateuch.* By IMMANUEL LEWY. New York: Bookman Associates, 1955. 288 pages. \$4.50.

This book is an expansion and elaboration of the author's study which appeared under the title *The Birth of the Bible—a New Approach* in 1950. It represents a radical and thoroughgoing rejection of the traditional approach to the history of the Pentateuch which is usually associated with the name of Wellhausen. Obviously, the author has studied the biblical text exhaustively in supporting his thesis. The volume is carefully planned, well documented, as far as the biblical sources are concerned, and clearly written. For this reason its view of the origin and history of the Pentateuch must receive serious and critical attention. Dr. Lewy's position is so clearly and concisely stated that its general features may be identified readily.

Originally, according to the author, there was one primary document, the subsequent annotation of which resulted in the Pentateuch. The original form of this document, which is essentially the so-called J source, was written in the time of David by one who possessed the qualities of humaneness, love of peace, devotion to God as Creator and Ruler of the world, and skill in the use of a vivid narrative style. The only individual in David's day who had these qualities was Nathan. He wrote N (or J) in order to provide a book of instruction for young Solomon and other members of the royal family. His book was used by the priests after being revised to fit their interests and needs. This revision was done by Abiathar and Zadok around 970 B.C. In the following century Elisha (E) in the north and Jehoiada in the south further revised the material in order to emphasize their fervent nationalism. A century later (ca. 720 B.C.) editors in the period of Hezekiah combined the northern and southern revisions which had thus been made and included the northern and southern versions of Deuteronomy. Then in the time of Josiah, the high priest Hilkiah, adviser to the king, compiled the Priestly Code and included it in the Pentateuch. Thus the Pentateuch did not result from the combination of various documents, such as J, E, D, and P. Rather, it grew into its final form through several annotations and revisions of one basic document, the so-called J source, the original version of which was written by Nathan.

What is the basis of this highly original and remarkable theory? Does the author support the position which he holds with adequate proof?

The question of supporting evidence is, of course, paramount. The weight of this evidence must be impressive if traditional views which have been held by biblical scholars for many years are to be set aside in favor of the one submitted here. These traditional views must be examined and scrutinized constantly, because none of them is entirely satisfactory. The fragmentation of the Pentateuch whereby the sources which are identified are divided and subdivided to such an extent that much of the alphabet must be drawn upon to label the fragments is the result of one approach. The development of this literature as its stories, liturgies, codes, and myths take shape under the influence of the community's need for worship, instruction, and social control reflects still another view of its history. Consequently, the state of Pentateuchal studies justifies the re-examination of existing conceptions and a thoughtful consideration of new approaches which may be advanced.

Unfortunately, as stimulating as Dr. Lewy's book is, its reconstruction of the history of the text is supported by insufficient evidence. This can be concluded simply by examining the information in the Bible relative to the persons who are named by Lewy as authors or editors of the Pentateuchal material—Nathan, Abiathar, Zadok, Elisha, Jehoiada, and Hilkiah. This information must be gleaned from the legends, chronicles, and court records which have been included in the Bible for reasons other than that of preserving accurate biographies of these individuals. Even though we accept the biblical evidence at its face value, it tells us nothing at all about the writing of books by any of the persons named as authors. We learn something about the character and activities of these persons, but that is all. It is extremely hazardous, under these circumstances, to conclude from a comparison of the text of the Pentateuch with those portions of the Bible which allude to these individuals that they are its authors. In spite of any similarities which such a comparison may reveal, these can hardly determine the question of authorship. Nathan's reaction to David's treatment of Bathsheba may show compassion and insight, but it hardly proves that he wrote the sensitive and moving stories in the J document.

Even though this reviewer is convinced that the thesis of this book is not proved, he appreciates the author's honest effort to relate the literature in question to the dramatic ongoing history of Israel and to this people's changing religious needs. He demonstrates that there is

correlation between biblical literary history and that the latter tensions and problems which gave form. And when this history can be traced through the identification of specific authors, this correlation becomes meaningful. It is unfortunate that this has not been done for the literary materials which are mentioned.

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*Man and His World.* By ROBERT H. GORDIS. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955. 404 pages. \$5.00.

It is twenty years since its first publication, and the study of Ecclesiastes has established within the first rank of importance. This is a famous but very difficult book. The scope of his treatment, his qualifications, and his incisive analysis have combined to make this an indispensable equipment for the serious student of the Bible. Now in this "second edition" the worth of the book is enhanced. The author has added two compact volumes of "Additional Notes on the Text" and "Supplementary Notes" in which his rejection of the theory of an Aramaean origin for the book, answers the question of the Aramaean background, and presents his principles for "Scientific Method in Koine Greek." His final page brings the book up to date.

The author's principles for scientific research are aimed at certain aspects of recent scholarship. They are sound, although they must be employed with caution; he has shown that postbiblical Hebrew has a lexical richness Old Testament comparable with modern Semitic dialects and languages. But there are a few instances where biblical scholarship has passed into later usage with values which are not sound linguistic science but popular exegesis.

It is regrettable that Gordis did not seize the opportunity of this reprinting to give his thoughtful re-examination. Scholarly and excellent, is never final and always subject to reconsideration, the author's; if not, then by a less

In my review of the first edition I drew attention to some of the difficult passages of Ecclesiastes where it was desirable that Gordis would reconsider his rendering. Here I amplify only one of them, the contrast in 4:13-16 between the wise youth and the foolish old king. Gordis interprets it as meaning that the youth rose from prison to the throne, supplanting the old king, yet "great as is the present fame enjoyed by the new, young king (vs. 15) there is an endless number of men who lived before them both . . . and who therefore never knew his fame, and future generations likewise" (p. 236). But surely Koheleth was not so ponderous as this would imply. And where is the contrast that he announces at the beginning of his brief parable, for instead this merely says that the wise youth is not one whit better than the foolish, old king. Strangely it is on linguistic usage that Gordis has slipped up. He says on verse 16: "This verse is taken to refer to the throngs whom the king rules. But the king is usually described as being 'before his people' . . . not the people before the king. Besides the plural suffix cannot refer to the young ruler." The latter comment is quite right; besides there was no "young ruler." *Liphne* is a very common term for courtiers and others being in the presence of the king; and, by the familiar structure of the Hebrew relative clause, "the plural suffix" refers to these. The youth never ascended the throne; that is the point of the comparison: a wise youth who stays poor is better than a king of the sort described who remains king to the end. The passage says:

Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to take care of himself, even though he came from prison to the throne, and though in his own kingdom he was born poor. I saw all the living who move about under the sun, together with the forementioned youth who continued in his station in life; there was no end to all the people, to all before whom he was. Yet those who come later will never give him a happy thought.

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*Teaching the Bible.* By A. VICTOR MURRAY. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. xii + 232 pages. \$3.50.

There has long been a felt need among the teachers of the Bible for a book that correlates