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By Whom, all things; for Whom, all things.

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GENUINENESS OF THE PENTATEUCH.

THEY who deny the reality of supernatural religion are under an antecedent necessity of denying the genuineness and truth of the Pentateuch. If it be, as it claims and has always been believed to be, the work of Moses, the stupendous miracles which it recounts were recorded by a contemporary and eyewitness, and its prophecies were uttered and reduced to writing ages before their fulfilment. Unbelieving critics are here constrained either to desert their principles or in some way to set this formidable antagonist aside. The attempt has been made to do this without invalidating the stringent considerations which connect the Pentateuch with the great lawgiver, by explaining away its miracles and prophecies or reducing them to the level of marvellous occurrences and strange coincidences, which, however unique and unaccountable, are nevertheless not absolutely supernatural. But this requires such evident forcing of the language and perverting it from its plain intent, that this method of escape, once so popular, is now rarely resorted to. It seems easier to deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and to allege that, instead of being the genuine production of Moses or of his age, its histories were not written for many centuries after his death, when legends that are wholly untrustworthy and fictitious had gathered about the facts related, even if any historic base is to be assumed whatever; and the alleged prophecies are affirmed to be either sanguine anticipations which were never realized, or history clothed in the garb of prediction after the events had actually taken place.

But this is, after all, not so easy a task as it might appear. All

the subsequent history of Israel, all their poetic and prophetic scriptures, are full of incidental confirmations of the Pentateuch, and necessarily imply or presuppose its truth and its Mosaic origin, even where they do not expressly refer to it. There is an unbroken chain of evidence reaching back to the very days of Moses ; this must be severed or pronounced untrustworthy. To maintain his point with any show of plausibility, the critic must reconstruct the whole history of the people of Israel from the beginning, and he must declare a large portion of their well-accredited writings to be spurious and untrustworthy. He cannot rid himself of Moses without at the same time making havoc of Joshua, and Samuel, and David, and Solomon, and later kings and prophets. If Moses did not do and teach what is recorded of him, the accounts which we have of subsequent times must be similarly untrue. The historians, and prophets, and sacred writers among the Jews must have been deliberate falsifiers from first to last ; not only when they record the miraculous, but in narratives in which there is no trace of the supernatural, and where the most obstinate prejudice can suggest no motive for misrepresentation.

But if the critics are successful in proving the Hebrew records to be as untrustworthy and misleading as they would have us believe, the result is as fatal to themselves as to their antagonists. In undermining accredited beliefs they have left no ground for their own card structures to stand upon, which they are at such pains to build. They propose to set aside the history consistently taught in the sacred writings for an entirely new conception of the matter presented by themselves. No two of the critics are agreed, to be sure, in what shall be substituted for old opinions ; they concur only in this, that the old must be abandoned ; as to the rest, each is sublimely satisfied with his own infallible dictum, and can afford to look down superciliously on all the rest. He discredits every thing in the gross that does not accord with his theory ; he suffers that only to stand which can be so wrested or garbled as to lend it a seeming support. But their alleged foundations are, after all, found in the records which have been pronounced untrustworthy and unhistorical. And if the torture might be overlooked,

to which they are put to wring deductions from them that they do not sanction, there is nothing but the unsupported word of the critic to show that these passages are any more trustworthy than the rest which he has summarily swept away.

But, even thus, when the Hebrew history and the Hebrew writings have been tinkered without stint to suit themselves, the critics can still find no place for the introduction of the Pentateuch at any one time, or in any one age, and its imposition on the people as the work of Moses. They can only insinuate it piecemeal. It is accordingly broken up into parts and parcelled amongst different imaginary writers belonging to distinct ages. The work of each is supposed to have been taken up by his successor and altered, interpolated or added to, *ad libitum*, until finally, by a process of successive accretions which confessedly has no parallel in all literary history, the work was evolved. We are here in a region of unlimited and baseless conjecture, with nothing to rest upon but the good pleasure of the critic, and no external authority whatever to verify or check his hypothesis. Here, again, there is no agreement among the critics, who affect an independence of thought; and no one succeeds even in framing a hypothesis that proves to be throughout consistent with itself, and that does not impinge against that modicum of facts which he has suffered to remain amidst the general wreck or has conjured into being as necessary to his scheme.

In these card structures, which the critics rear and overthrow at will, a conspicuous place is of course assigned to those difficulties and seeming discrepancies of a superficial nature which are to be expected in a work of such high antiquity as the Pentateuch, belonging to a period with which we are so imperfectly acquainted and which is in many respects so foreign to our habits of thought and action. These have always been recognized by believers in its Mosaic origin, and attempts have been made, with more or less success, to account for and explain them. Every conscientious student of writings that have come down to us from a remote period has a similar task to perform in regard to them. Adjustments are necessary to bring into harmony statements that, at first view, seem discrepant and conflicting. And when such reconciliation can be

effected by any fair dealing, an apparent diversity with a real substantial agreement is by candid minds reckoned as lending confirmation to the truth of a narrative. Not so the critics of the Pentateuch. They make it their deliberate aim to hunt up and exaggerate difficulties and create apparent discrepancies by a perverted ingenuity where none exist. The books of Moses have been searched over with microscopic minuteness and with an immense expenditure of philological and varied learning; points hitherto unobserved have been raised and familiar matters have been put into ingenious and unexpected relations and a clamor created, as though the old traditional notion that Moses wrote them must be given up before advanced thought and progressive ideas.

This aspect of affairs has created very needless alarm in some of the friends of the Bible, as though its defence were really in straits, and there were much in it for which no successful stand could be made. But in truth there is no occasion for any unseemly agitation. This reckless and presumptuous criticism is in fact but the scourge of a tardy and inadequate Biblical scholarship, and a stinging but effective stimulus to thorough and exhaustive investigation on the part of those who would defend and maintain sound views. Enigmas carelessly left unsolved, and difficulties not sifted to the bottom, or which are slurred over by plausible but inadequate explanations, are thus avenged. Hurts healed slightly, instead of being faithfully probed to the quick by skilful and tender hands, and thus brought to a perfect cure, are detected by the rudeness of unfriendly handling. Artillery left unguarded, that should have been stored in our own arsenals, or put in position on our own defences, is turned against us, compelling us to retake it from the foe. The temptation to rest content with superficial solutions when no danger is apprehended, or to put down an adversary by inconclusive arguments when the sympathy of the public can be relied upon to overlook the deficiency, or to sit at ease in insecure entrenchments so long as the roar of the conflict is away beyond the seas, is summarily dispelled when, by some turn of affairs, the neglected point is found to involve important issues; or a less reverent spirit is abroad which looks serenely upon the upheaving of the old founda-

tions ; or the legions of doubt and critical excesses with which Germany has been swarming, pour in upon our own shores and are gaining victories with weapons long since discredited at home. This is but the providential method of compelling the lovers of God's word to a deeper and more careful study of its contents. They must spoil the Egyptians. They must take the learning of their foes and their results elaborated with hostile intent, and build them into secure defences, or gather from them what shall contribute to a more complete elucidation or a more vivid presentation of heavenly truth.

"Deuteronomy, the People's Book, its Origin and Nature," is one of the welcome fruits of the conflict thus thrust upon those who mean to stand by the Bible. It is a vigorous and able defence of the genuineness of Deuteronomy, written in lucid style, and well calculated for popular effect. While evincing profound scholarship and a mastery of the whole subject, it does not pursue the controversy into all its details, but skillfully selects a few leading points which are decisive of the whole question, and presents them with a force and directness which must work conviction in candid minds.

There are two principal sources of attack upon the genuineness of Deuteronomy ; one is drawn from its relation to the other books of Moses, the other from its relation to subsequent books of the Bible. It is a repetition of the law by Moses in the plains of Moab, under new circumstances, as the people were about to enter the land of Canaan. In his oral recapitulation of the facts of their past experience, made with the definite purpose of impressing the minds of the people and engaging them to steadfastness in the service of God, it is altogether natural that some things should be passed over in silence which are recorded in the more detailed histories of Exodus and Numbers, while others are stated with greater fulness or with the addition of particulars not before mentioned ; or that the order of narration should be varied or facts set in different relations ; or that motives or results of actions should be brought into view which had not been so distinctly stated before. So in regard to the recapitulation of the Mosaic enactments ; in this final review some are not explicitly mentioned because taken for granted and needing no change ; others are

altered or added to as occasion had required in the interval, or are modified with a view to the change then imminent from wandering in the wilderness to settled abodes in Canaan.

These differences of law or fact as presented in Deuteronomy, as compared with the statements of the three preceding books, clearly grow out of the circumstances of the case, and are really an argument of genuineness and identity of authorship; since a later writer, designing to impose his work on Israel and the world as the genuine production of Moses, would have been solicitous to guard against any appearance of discrepancy. And yet these have been eagerly seized upon by the critics and magnified into inconsistencies, and made a pretext for assigning Deuteronomy to a different author and a different date from the rest of the Pentateuch. The thorough correction of these misrepresentations would involve an amount of detail that could not well be attempted in a volume of the size and with the aim of that before us. Except as these points are incidentally involved in other parts of the discussion, they are touched lightly; only there is a very telling chapter on the style of Deuteronomy as compared with that of the other books of Moses.

The line of defence pursued in this volume relates chiefly to the other branch of the subject, viz., disposing of the objections to the antiquity and Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy which have been drawn from the later books of the Bible. The finding of the copy of the law in the temple, in the time of Josiah, long since furnished occasion for the shameless allegation that the high priest and others had themselves concocted the book that they pretended to find, which was no other than Deuteronomy, and which they now imposed on the unsuspecting king and people. But if Deuteronomy, why not the whole Pentateuch, which has been one work from the beginning, and of whose prior existence there are numerous and manifest proofs? The fraud alleged is directly in the face of the narrative; its admission would so far undermine the authority of the books of Kings as to destroy all credit for the incident itself. Such a fraud is insupportable in the case of a work which breathes such a spirit of purity, integrity, and devout fear of God; and it could never have been successfully perpetrated on the nation at

large, who certainly knew whether such a book of laws had previously existed and formed the code under which they had been living. The suggestion that such frauds were at that time thought to be consistent with honesty and piety, and that history as written in Israel was not a record of facts but a series of romances designed to incorporate or give currency to certain ideas, is not only a baseless and unproved slander, but an outrageous absurdity.

Instances in which the law of Moses was neglected, or in which particular statutes were transgressed, have also been fastened upon as indicating that those laws did not then exist. And, by a most extraordinary perversion, these violations of law are held to set forth the true and normal condition of things in the periods when they occurred; and it is insisted that all the representations of the Hebrew historians must be revolutionized accordingly. Cavils from these sources, as well as those based upon the Mosaic regulations respecting the future king, the central sanctuary, and the priests and Levites, are considered at some length, and shown to be devoid of force. On the other hand, the positive testimony not only of the Old Testament but of the New, is presented and shown to be unequivocally on the side of the Mosaic authorship; and this with those who reverence our Lord as a divine teacher must be conclusive of the question.

Apart from all argument, there is in most minds a spontaneous and irresistible conviction that the purest religion, and the only one really worthy of God in the whole world, cannot have sprung from a series of forgeries. Whence came these elevated views of truth and duty, so unique in the whole ancient world? How came they to spring up amongst a people not distinguished for learning and philosophy, and whose very institutions secluded them from free intercourse with other nations? a people charged with narrowness and bigotry, and yet whose views were broad enough to make their God the God of the whole human race, to teach them the original brotherhood of all mankind, and to create the expectation that all should ultimately share the richest blessings of God's grace?

WILLIAM HENRY GREEN.