

MOSES
AND
HIS RECENT CRITICS.

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THE VALIDITY AND BEARING OF THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

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THE topic assigned me in this collection of essays on the Pentateuchal question is the validity and bearing of the testimony of Christ and his apostles on the origin and authorship of the Pentateuch. To those who regard with reverence and receive with humility the teachings of Jesus and those who were inspired with his Spirit, testimony of this character will be of surpassing value in the controversies that traverse the broad field of Old Testament history, documents and institutions. Critical processes have their rightful place, and critical results are not to be despised, but I take it that the Lord Jesus and his apostles are of higher authority and sounder judgment than even the most acute and learned critics. It is matter of common knowledge that the majority of recognized experts in Biblical criticism reject the belief, traditional among Jews and Christians alike, that the Pentateuch is the production of Moses. Equally familiar to all is it that this traditional belief is generally supposed to have been the belief and the teaching of Jesus and his inspired disciples. In this state of case it becomes us, while vindicating the supremacy of Christ and the apostles, to be cautious in our induction and

careful in our interpretation lest a false issue be raised, and antagonism be created where none rightly exists. The history of theological controversy is often painful reading, because of the many instances in which a traditional accident of the truth has been mistaken for an integral element of the truth itself. Failing to distinguish things that differ, good men have sometimes ventured the Scriptures and Christianity upon a human tradition that comes in time to be proved no part of the divine teaching. In the variety, extent, and importance of the questions that emerge in the comparatively modern science of Biblical criticism there is danger that conservative scholars may repeat blunders of this kind, where, if anywhere, a blunder is worse than a crime. Admonished by such mistakes, it shall be my endeavor to free myself from bias or prejudice and be willing to follow whithersoever the truth may lead.

Clearly, this study is purely exegetical in character, and must be prosecuted under the acknowledged canons of interpretation. And as the essay is intended for popular reading, I shall not be blamed for adopting a simple method, and for relying on principles of reasoning that are none the less scientific for being familiar and easy of application.

I assume, of course, that the New Testament sets down the real opinions and records accurately the teaching of our Lord and his apostles. I assume, further, that the Pentateuch as we now have it existed in the same form in the times of

the New Testament, an assumption, I may add, the truth of which is admitted by all parties to the controversy respecting its origin.

The inquiry I have set out to make is best pursued along two distinct and yet related lines of investigation. In the one shall be traced the testimony of Jesus and the Apostles in its bearing on the historic character of the Pentateuch and by implication on its origin. In the other their language is to be submitted to critical analysis and interpretation wherever they have seemed to speak more or less definitely on the specific subject of the origin and authorship of the book.

I. The books of Moses, though marked by a certain unity, are constituted of distinct elements. History, legislation, poetry and prophecy combine to form this fundamental constitution of the life and religion of the Jews. Its narratives stretch back to the beginnings of our world and of our race, and cover hundreds of years. Through all this history runs the supernatural, and many of the narratives abound in miraculous stories. The poetry, the prophecy and the laws are inseparably associated by the book with the historical situation and incidents it describes, and, in consequence, the veracity of the history and the divine origin of the prophecy and the laws are dependent on each other.

What, then, have the apostles to say in regard to the claims of these narratives to be veritable history?

Peter and Paul may speak for the whole college.

In his epistles Peter makes quotation of several incidents:

1. The story of Noah and the flood: "In the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." 1 Pet. iii. 20; cf. 2 Pet. ii. 5.

2. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha: "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow . . .; And delivered just Lot." 2 Pet. ii. 6, 7.

3. The story of Abraham and Sarah. 1 Pet. iii. 6.

4. The story of Balaam. 2 Pet. ii. 15, 16.

Paul is fond of using the facts of the Pentateuch history, not only in illustration, but often in proof of his doctrines. His writings abound in citations from these old narratives:

1. The story of the creation of man and woman: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

2. The history of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it

was counted unto him for righteousness. . . . And he received the sign of circumcision." Romans iv. 1-3, 11. See also, in Romans ix. 7-13 and Galatians iv. 22-31, references to Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, the facts being cited as recorded in Genesis.

3. The story of the Exodus: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, even as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them: as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." 1 Cor. x. 1-10; cf. Acts xiii. 17, 18.

See also reference to writing of the ten commandments on stone, Moses' descent from the

Mount with shining face, and his veiling his face.
2 Cor. iii. 7-13.

Assuming that Paul was the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have before us a treatise whose very basis of argument is the historic character and veracity of the Pentateuch. Specific reference is made to Abraham, Melchisedec, Moses, Aaron, the Exodus, the forty years wandering, the construction of the tabernacle by Moses, the giving of the law, and many of the special laws relating to the priesthood and ritual. The eleventh chapter cites as history the narratives that tell of Abel and his sacrifice; Enoch and his translation; Abraham and his call, and God's covenant with him; Sarah and the birth of Isaac; the offering of Isaac; Isaac's blessing Jacob and Esau; Jacob blessing his sons; Joseph giving commandment concerning his bones; the birth of Moses, his exposure, rescue and adoption by Pharaoh's daughter; his casting in his lot with his people; his leading them out of Egypt; his institution of the passover; the passage of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptians. To the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews these marvellous narratives are true records of events that actually occurred.

The Lord Jesus was familiar with the history of Israel and their religion, and uses it for his purpose as occasion required. He refers:

1. To the story of creation.

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and

said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" Matt. xix. 4, 5.

2. To the story of Noah and the flood. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. xxiv. 37-39,

3. To the story of Sodom and Gomorrha. "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. . . . Remember Lot's wife." Luke xvii. 28, 29, 32,

4. To the story of the calling of Moses. "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" Mark xii. 26. See also references to the brazen serpent, John iii. 14; to the manna, John vi. 32; to several laws attributed by Christ to Moses, *e.g.*, law for purification of a leper, Matt. viii. 4; honoring father and mother, Mark vii. 10; circumcision, John vii. 22, 23; law of divorce, Matt. xix. 8.

Striking and impressive as these citations are, even when taken out of their context, the full

force they legitimately carry can only be received when they have the advantage of the original circumstances in which they were written or spoken. Turn, for example, to the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, and observe that Paul, addressing an audience of Jews in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, who firmly believed that the history of the Pentateuch was true in all its parts, places the facts of the Exodus and the wilderness wandering in the same category with those historic facts that lie at the very basis of Christianity—the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is clear to a demonstration that our Lord and the apostles relied upon the historic veracity of the Pentateuch narratives, and affirmed that the events and incidents that they embody, whether ordinary or extraordinary, took place at the time and in the manner described.

But what bearing, my readers are ready to ask, has the historical character of the Pentateuch on its origin and authorship? Are not these separate and altogether independent questions? I am well aware that it is often asserted that these questions do not involve each other. Let us inquire how far this is true.

It must be admitted that if the Pentateuch be historical in any adequate sense of the term, its own explicit or implicit claims as to origin and authorship must be accepted. A book whose distinct claims as to its own authorship and date have been overturned may still contain some historical facts, but it cannot be regarded as a vera-

cious history in the sense in which our Lord and the apostles certify the full and accurate historical character of the Pentateuch. Does, then, the book itself make any affirmation as to its origin and authorship? That it does seems clear from three considerations:

1. There is the positive statement in two documents that they were written by Moses. These are the list of the journeys of the children of Israel in the thirty-third chapter of the Book of Numbers, and the book of the covenant, which includes at least Exodus xx. 22-xxiii. In two other passages, Exod. xviii. 14 and xxxiv. 27, God commands Moses to write.

2. The reading of the middle books, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, shows that the writer claims to record numerous incidents in the history of Israel. The laws are set in this framework of history, and in many instances associated with minute description of the place and time. The name and work of Moses, what he said and did, make up much of the narrative. Moreover, in almost every chapter we meet with statements like these: "The Lord said unto Moses," "The Lord spake unto Moses," "Thus did Moses; according to all that the Lord had commanded him so did he." If these and like phrases represent what really occurred, if the whole setting of these laws, and the progress of events be as described in these books, then it is beyond question that all but the merest fraction of the contents of the middle books must have originated with Moses. If it be true

that he was the originator of those laws which profess to have been given by him, and which, by the way, the critics are most confident are of later date, few will care to discuss the quite secondary question of authorship. The most natural supposition, however, is that they were written by Moses.

3. The book of Deuteronomy makes undeniable claims to Mosaic origin and authorship. "It would surprise one unacquainted with the subject to know how large a portion of the book is put directly into the mouth of the lawgiver, and is represented to be spoken by him. By actual enumeration of verses it makes fifteen-sixteenths of the whole matter. Out of nearly a thousand verses there are but about sixty that are not in the form of direct address, that is, that do not purport to be the word-for-word utterances of Moses himself." Human language cannot be invented in which the writer of a book could affirm anything with more positiveness than does the writer of Deuteronomy that its matter originated with Moses at a certain time and under given circumstances. It is a mere war of words to discuss whether Moses was the author of this book if it be admitted that he was the originator of its contents. If the book be historical; if, in other phrase, it speak the truth, no ingenuity can avoid the conclusion that it claims to be Mosaic in origin, and, therefore, to all intents and purposes, Mosaic in authorship.

But this is not all, for the book itself contains

the direct assertion of its authorship by Moses: "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests." Deut. xxxi. 9. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in [at] the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God that it may be there for a witness against thee." Deut. xxxi. 24-26.

These passages must relate to the book of Deuteronomy at least, and there is reason to believe that they include the whole of the five books. At any rate there is here the positive assertion that Moses produced the contents of this book, and wrote them down, and then deposited the book as God had commanded him. These are either statements of fact, or they are not. If not, then we have the Lord Jesus and the apostles subscribing to the historical character of a book that relates in the most circumstantial manner events that never took place, and that lays claim to a date and an origin that are altogether false. If, however, these statements be true, it fixes the authorship of this the closing book of the whole. Taking this in connection with the claims of the middle books we have the definite affirmation of these four books that they are from Moses. If this be granted, I suppose there will be no disposition to deny that Genesis has the same origin. There is another aspect of the relation of the

historical character of the Pentateuch to its origin and authorship to which I would invite special attention. It is that most of the arguments against the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch assert or imply that the historical narratives are more or less fictitious. How few critics there are who deny Mosaic authorship and maintain, in any true sense, the veracity of the history. This, I believe, is no accident, but a logical necessity. And if we look into the arguments of these critics it will appear that they have little force except on the assumption that these narratives are not to be received as history. And the class of facts that are set aside as unhistorical are principally those that involve the supernatural factor. I ask the reader to recall that it is precisely this class of facts that are most frequently cited as historical by our Lord and his apostles. Every argument, therefore, against the Mosaic origin and authorship of the Pentateuch that derives its force from the denial of the veracity of the book as a whole or in any of its parts must be discredited by him who submits himself to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and the apostles. And so true is it that this hostile criticism is bound up with the unhistorical character of the Pentateuch that I am persuaded that the critic who believes that it is historical in the sense and to the extent accepted by our Saviour and the apostles will have little argument and less motive for denying its origin and authorship to Moses.

I have now completed the first line of investi-

gation along which I proposed to move, and have reached the conclusion: (*a*) that the historical character of the Pentateuch and the Mosaic origin and authorship are involved in each other; (*b*) that Jesus and the apostles certify the historical character of the book; and (*c*) that, therefore, they certify its Mosaic origin and authorship. The fact, moreover, is signalized, that the hostile criticism commonly rejects or ignores the full and true historic veracity of the Pentateuch, and thereby comes into fatal collision with our Lord and his apostles.

II. The second line of investigation is concerned with the more direct assertions and implications of the language of our Lord and his apostles.

We shall find them frequently referring to Moses, and speaking of the law, the law of Moses, the book of Moses, and his writings.

Some, at least, of these expressions are in themselves indeterminate so far as mere etymological analysis goes. How are you to know what is meant by "the law of Moses" and what constitute "his writings"? These terms clearly had some definite meaning among the contemporaries of Christ, and it is this meaning we must suppose to have been in the minds of Christ and the apostles. It is a first principle of all interpretation that a writer or speaker is to be understood to use words and phrases in the sense in which they are used by their contemporaries, unless there be in the context or in positive statement another and

a different meaning indicated. It becomes, therefore, of prime importance to know in what sense and with what implications these words and phrases were used in New Testament times.

I shall proceed to show that the contemporaries of Christ and the apostles understood by them :

(a) That Moses was the name of an historic person whose history and achievements were familiar to them, and not simply a convenient designation of a system of legislation.

(b) That Moses was a great lawgiver.

(c) That Moses was an author, and that Moses the author was identical with Moses the lawgiver.

(d) That Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, which went by the name of "the law," "the law of Moses," "the book of Moses," "Moses' writings."

The evidence to make good these propositions is ample and accessible, while not a piece of testimony can be produced to the contrary. The pages of Josephus, the historian of the Jews, yield abundant testimony for our purpose. Born in Jerusalem about 38 A.D., of priestly descent, carefully educated, an adherent of the Pharisees, but acquainted with the tenets of all the Jewish sects, a patriot and officer in the Jewish army, and closing his career in literary labors at Rome, we have in Josephus a thoroughly competent witness and a trustworthy exponent of the current views of the Palestinian Jews. The passage in his polemic against Apion is familiar to my readers: "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books

among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be divine ; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death." ("Against Apion," Bk. I. §8).

In the last section of his preface to the "Antiquities of the Jews" he refers to the position of Moses in relation to Jewish history: "But because almost all our constitution depends on the wisdom of Moses, our legislator, I cannot avoid saying somewhat concerning him beforehand. . . . The reader is therefore to know that Moses deemed it exceeding necessary that he who would conduct his own life well, and give laws to others, in the first place should consider the divine nature." In tracing the history from the creation onward Josephus repeatedly quotes what Moses says and does, following the narratives of the Pentateuch, and giving the details of the birth of Moses, his exposure and rescue, his training and education as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, his call to deliver Israel, and the miraculous events that accompanied the Exodus. The full force of the impression can only be felt by the reading of Josephus himself, but I will cite an additional passage, which, with those already given, seems sufficient to establish the propositions I set out to prove by this witness: "The writings left by Moses have so great a force that even those who hate us do confess that he who established this settlement was

God, and that it was by the means of Moses and his virtue " (*"Antiq.," Bk. III., chap. xv., §2*).

From the representative of the Palestinian tradition I turn to one who may justly be regarded as the representative of the tradition and belief of the Jews of the Dispersion. This is the voluminous author and philosopher, Philo. Born in Alexandria about 20 B.C., of an influential and wealthy family, and probably of priestly descent, Philo used his many advantages of position and leisure to acquaint himself with Jewish theology and Greek culture, and aspired to be the mediator between them. It is well known that in many respects the Jews of the Dispersion had modified the views of the Palestinian Jews. It becomes interesting to inquire whether, in this important question of the relation of Moses to their history and religion, they had departed from the doctrine of Palestine. To show from the works of Philo that there was no departure in this regard, and to justify the affirmations I have made respecting contemporary opinions of Moses and the Pentateuch, is an easy matter.

For example, in his "Life of Moses," section viii., p. 83, Vol. III. :

"Now what has been here said is quite sufficient for the abundant praise of Moses as a lawgiver. But there is another more extensive praise which his own holy writings themselves contain, and it is to them that we must now turn for the purpose of exhibiting the virtue of him who compiled them."

"Now, these writings of Moses may be divided

into several parts; one of which is the historical part, another is occupied with commands and prohibitions. . . ."

In closing the life of Moses, and after attributing to him the prophetic description of his death and the mourning that followed, he closes with these words: "Such was the life and such was the death of the king and lawgiver, and high priest and prophet, Moses, as it is recorded in the sacred Scriptures."

Philo begins his treatise on "Rewards and Punishments" with these words: "We find, then, that in the sacred oracles delivered by the prophet Moses, there are three separate characters: for a portion of them relates to the creation of the world, a portion is historical, and the third portion is legislative. Now the creation of the world is related throughout with exceeding beauty, and in a manner admirably suited to the dignity of God, taking its beginning in the account of the creation of the heaven, and ending with that of the formation of man. . . ."

"The historical part is a record of the lives of different wicked and virtuous men, and of the rewards and honors and punishments set apart for each class in each generation.

"The legislative part is subdivided into two sections, one of which has a more general object proposed to it, laying down accordingly a few general, comprehensive laws: the other part consists of special and particular ordinances."*

* Works, Vol. III., pp. 456, 467. Bohn's translation.

Within the New Testament we have expressions of belief from others than our Lord and His apostles, and the inspired writers, which constitute a factor of value in deciding what were the current views on the subject under discussion. The sacred writings were well known, as was the division into the Law and the Prophets, and the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. It is evident, and is universally admitted, that in this two-fold or three-fold division the law was the designation of our Pentateuch. As respects the relation of Moses to this law or Pentateuch, all the allusions and references we find in the New Testament go to establish what has been supported by Philo and Josephus. Philip, for example, before called as an apostle, "findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." John i. 45. When the Pharisees were endeavoring to entrap Christ on the points in dispute concerning the law of divorce, "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" Matt. xix. 7. Compare John viii. 5, ix. 28, 29; Acts xv. 5.

The Sadducees used language of like import when they came to him and put their question about the resurrection, saying, "Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed to his brother." Matt. xxii. 24.

To get at a glance the general view of the Jews as a people read this extract from Luke's account

of the attack on Stephen: "Then they suborned men, which said; We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." Acts vi. 11-14. Compare Stephen's speech which follows, and John i. 17, Acts xv. 1, xxi. 21-28.

It is needless to weary the reader with further citations.

It is enough to say that Rabbinic and early Christian tradition, and the scant allusions in Latin and Greek writers support the propositions I have affirmed. If there were need, the best and most recent authorities could be cited to sustain this view, while none can be produced for the assumption that such was not the current belief of the time of Christ.

To quote only one writer, when I might quote many, Rev. Dr. Toy, in his introduction to his "Quotations in the New Testament," p. xxix. says: "As to the critical opinions of the New Testament writers, there is no reason to doubt that they were those of the Jews of the time (nearly what is now known as the Christian traditional view). According to the Talmud the Pen-

tateuch was written by Moses (except the eight last verses, which were added by Joshua). . . . This, in general, was doubtless the received opinion in the first century, and must have been held by the New Testament writers. Nobody then doubted that Moses wrote the Pentateuch." The last trace of doubt should fade away in the light of the reflection that the cunning and relentless opponents of Christ never raised this question with Him. Jesus had enemies, able, acute, alert and unscrupulous, who would have seized on any opportunity to bring him into collision with any prevailing and popular national or religious idea. We see them setting traps for him by their questions, and endeavoring to compel him to commit himself to some one of the religious and political parties of the day. We know that on the vexed question of the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar they made the effort to range him on one side or the other, and thereby bring him into antagonism with Rome or with the feelings of the populace. The Sadducees set their trap with the doctrine of the resurrection. The Pharisees propounded points of dispute between different schools of their own party on the law of divorce and the order of the commandments. And we know that the purposes of these enemies were at last achieved by exciting the populace against Jesus. It is as plain as can be that if any difference of opinion had existed respecting Moses and his relation to the history and religion of the Jews, and the origin and authorship of the Penta-

teuch, these ingenious enemies would not have forgotten to frame a question on the subject for Christ to answer. But they ask no question of the kind, and while they charge him with hostility to Moses, they never so much as hint at what would have been the most damaging accusation of all, and never even insinuate the charge on which they could have inflamed against Him the deepest national and religious sentiments of the people.

I have been at pains to establish that such were the universally accepted beliefs, for the reason that they constitute the criterion by which to measure the contents of the language of our Lord and the apostles. We are obliged by every principle of interpretation to maintain that they, aware of these opinions and beliefs in their hearers and readers, used the same language in the same sense, and with the same general implications, unless they intimate the contrary,

The apostle Paul will fitly represent all the apostles, and this is the way in which he speaks:

“For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby,” (R. V.) Rom. x : 5. “First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people.” Rom. x. 19.

“For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.” 1 Cor. ix. 9.

“For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the

blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." Heb. ix. 19. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." Heb. x. 28; cf. Heb. vii. 14 and 2 Cor. iii. 15.

When Paul speaks of Moses saying, Moses writing, Moses speaking, the law of Moses, the book, who can avoid the conclusion that Paul held with everybody of his time that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch?

There is no lack of citations from the Gospels that put before us our Lord's method of handling this subject:

"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Luke xvi. 29, 31.

"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Luke xxiv: 44.

"The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." Matt. xxiii. 2.

"Offer the gift that Moses commanded." Matt. viii. 4.

"Moses said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.'" Mark vii. 10.

"For this cause hath Moses given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers). . . . If a man receives circumcision on the

Sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken." John vii. 22, 23.

"And the Pharisees came to him and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept." Mark x. 2-5.

"And there come unto him Sadduces, which say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us. . . ." "But as touching the dead," replies Jesus, "that they are raised: have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? (R. V.) Mark xii. 19, 26; cf. Matt. xxii. 23-32; Luke xx. 27-38.

Special pleading may evade the natural and legitimate conclusions from these words, but special pleading is not interpretation. When our Lord speaks of Moses, Moses saying, Moses commanding, Moses giving, Moses writing, Moses' seat, the law, the law of Moses, the book of Moses, we must suppose that he was not simply employing conventional modes of expression, but that he used these words and phrases in the sense in which he well knew they were received by his audience.

I invite special attention to a passage of signal importance preserved for us by the Apostle John in his Memorials of the Saviour. A vigorous controversy between Jesus and the Jews had grown out of his healing a man on the Sabbath day at the pool of Bethesda. Both parties relied on the Hebrew Scriptures, and particularly on Moses and his teachings. Jesus challenges them to search their Scriptures, and asserting for himself a peculiar relation to Moses and his venerable writings, summons the great law-giver as the chief witness in his behalf, and lodges against his opponents the charge of disbelieving the writings of the one on whom they had set their hope and whose champions they assumed to be. Before the mind of Jesus was the fundamental question of the relation of Moses and the religion he inculcated to the prevalent religious doctrines and practices of the Jews, as well as to Himself and the religious position and claims he was maintaining.

We have a right to believe that our Lord on such an occasion measures his words, and that his argument moves not on the plane of merely convicting his adversaries of an inconsistency, but is, in all its compass, a deliverance of the truth as it was imbedded in his consciousness. From this point of view, then, let us construe these words of our Lord: "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his

writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John v. 45-47.

Beyond a doubt Jesus here affirms that Moses was a historical person, not merely a name for a book or a system, and that this Moses wrote of him.*

It is equally clear that what Moses had written of Jesus was asserted by him to be accessible to his hearers in certain writings of Moses. The only point of difficulty with them or with us in understanding Jesus would lie in ascertaining what these writings of Moses are. The phrase, "his writings," is in itself indefinite, and there is nothing in the context to determine what are the writings of Moses. No one can for a moment suppose that our Lord would lay so grave an indictment and leave his adversaries in ignorance of its basis. We must, therefore, conclude that he and his auditors had a definite sense attached to the indefinite phrase. This sense has already been shown to be the Pentateuch. The "writings of Moses" were identical with the collection that still carries that title, and when the Saviour startled his opponents with the charge of disbelieving the writings of Moses there was not a man that heard him whose mind was in the least doubt what writings were in question. But a few moments before he had bidden them search the Scriptures, literally, "the writings." They well knew that he referred not to any or all "the

* The reader of the Greek will observe that "he" and "his" are so expressed as to emphasize the personality of Moses, and that "writings" is also contrasted with "words."

writings" to be found among themselves or other peoples, but to a specific collection which, from their peculiar character, passed current under the name of "the writings." They were accordingly by his own usage compelled to interpret him here as adopting the current limitations of a similar indefinite phrase, and to suppose Him to refer to what all the Jews called the writings of Moses, namely, the Pentateuch.

Support is found for this in an exposition of our Lord's meaning when he affirms that Moses wrote of him.

A brief, comprehensive, and sober interpretation of the passage is given by Dr. Schaff in his edition of the Lange Commentary:

"Moses wrote of Christ, as the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii.), as the seed of Abraham by which all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. xii. ff.), as the Shiloh unto whom shall be the gathering of the people (Gen. xlix.), as the Star out of Jacob, and the scepter that shall rise out of Israel (Numb. xxiv. 17), as the great Prophet whom God will raise up, and unto whom the Jews should hearken (Deut. xviii.). Moreover, the moral law of Moses, by revealing the holy will of God and setting up a standard of human righteousness in conformity with that will, awakens a knowledge of sin and guilt (Rom. iii. 20; vii. 7), and thus serves as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. iii. 24). Finally, the ritual law and all the ceremonies of Mosaic worship were typical

of the Christian dispensation (Col. ii. 17), as the healing serpent in the wilderness pointed to Christ on the cross (Numb. xxi. 9; John iii. 14). This is a most important testimony, from the unerring mouth of Christ, to the Messianic character and aim of the whole Mosaic dispensation, and to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch."

If this exposition be just, our Lord must have had in mind the body of writings known as the writings of Moses.

Should a doubt remain, it should be removed by the reflection that unless by "his writings" our Lord intended to name the Pentateuch there was to those who heard him no method of determining his meaning. If we give up the doctrine that Moses wrote the Pentateuch we are absolutely unable to discover what are the writings of Moses to which Jesus appealed. It is a notorious fact that while there is more or less agreement on the part of the critics in their general analysis of the Pentateuch, there is no approach to unanimity in the proportion ascribed to the date and authorship of Moses. This proportion ranges from zero through varying degrees, according to the fancy or preconceived notions or criteria of the critic. Denying, then, that our Lord referred the Jews to the Pentateuch, and the *whole* Pentateuch, when he spoke of their disbelief of the writings of Moses, we are compelled to say that he based a most solemn indictment against their most sacred beliefs and their religious life upon their great leader's writings, of which, like his sepulchre, "no man knoweth unto this day."

It is plain, therefore, that the writings of Moses were intended by Jesus to mean the Pentateuch. Substituting this term in the passage under consideration it reads in this way: Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If ye believed Moses ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, the Pentateuch, how will ye believe my words?"

The only other interpretation that seems possible is to suppose that our Saviour has in mind certain special utterances of Moses to be found in the Pentateuch; such, for example, as the Messianic predictions to be found in Genesis and elsewhere, and particularly the prediction of the great prophet in Deuteronomy. His meaning, then, would be: Moses wrote these predictions concerning me: these constitute his writings. Inasmuch as ye do not receive me as the Messiah in regard to whom Moses wrote these passages, ye disbelieve his writings, and therefore disbelieve Moses. On this it may be remarked:

1. How were the Jews to know that he was referring to these passages?

2. These Messianic predictions are found in parts of the Pentateuch most generally denied to Moses. If the methods of the critics have led them to deny in these instances what Christ ascribes to Moses, we may well be cautious in accepting their results elsewhere.

3. These passages are part and parcel of a body

of writings universally attributed at the time to Moses. If Christ affirms these passages as Mosaic, he must be held, by all the principles of literary criticism, to affirm the whole book from which they are taken as of the same authorship, unless he bar the inference by a distinct statement or otherwise. To deny this principle is to deny one of the most common and conclusive modes of tracing writings and books to their authors. Even on this interpretation, then, our Lord must have affirmed the Mosaic authorship, not of one or more passages simply, but of the whole Pentateuch.

I have now completed the second line of investigation that was proposed at the outset, and have reached the conclusion that a fair and legitimate interpretation of the language used by our Lord and the Apostles commits them to holding and teaching the current view of their time on the authorship of the Pentateuch.

This conclusion is further supported by three considerations:

1. By its consistency with the general posture of our Lord and the Apostles toward the Old Testament religion and its sacred documents. Jesus furnishes us a summary statement in his own words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matt. v. 17.

The Apostles are justly represented in Paul, when, in his defense before Agrippa, he vehemently denies the charge that he was an opponent

of the Jewish religion, and states his position in this form: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Acts xxvi. 22.

Beyond a doubt, in the estimation of Jesus and his Apostles the religion of the Old Testament was supernatural in its origin, and its documents were inspired and authoritative. Equally beyond controversy is the assertion that to their minds the Old Testament was incomplete, and the New Testament its complement: the Old a prophecy—not simply in specific predictions, but in its history and institutions—and the New its fulfilment: the Old Testament creating longings and expectations of a Messiah and a Messianic kingdom, and the New placing over against these the person and works of Jesus and the kingdom he preached. The bond, therefore, between the Old and the New is not one of mere historic succession, but is organic. It needs no proof to justify the statement that if Jesus and the Apostles attributed the Mosaic writings to the age and authorship of Moses, they would be in harmony with their attitude toward the religion and history of Israel. It is very doubtful whether any other view of the relation of Moses to Israel and these writings can be adjusted to the New Testament.

2. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that all parties within and without the early

church understood Christ and the Apostles to hold the common view of their day on the matter now before us. The struggle between Judaism and Christianity was long and bitter, and was carried on within the bosom of the church itself with such earnestness as to endanger the very life and prosperity of the church. Moses was the rallying-cry of the Jewish opponents of Christianity and of the Judaizing Christians. Yet not a whisper is heard, even against Paul, the most "advanced thinker" of them all, that he, or his Lord, or any of the preachers of the Gospel, questioned the Mosaic authorship of the writings whose meaning was most in dispute. It is clear, therefore, that our interpretation has the sanction of all the contemporaries of Christ and his acknowledged representatives.

3. This conclusion finds support in the difficulties that emerge on giving up this interpretation. One of these difficulties is that we shall then be at a loss to discover what was the opinion or teaching of Christ and the Apostles regarding Moses and his place in the history and religion of the Jews. If we explain away, by a minimizing exegesis, or by the supposition of ignorance or accommodation on their part, the utterances they make respecting Moses, the law of Moses, the writings of Moses, and similar expressions, then by the same methods and principles we may explain away all the contents of their language, and can deny that they make any affirmations whatever in regard to what is by common consent the

great problem of Israel's religion. It appears to the present writer that unless Christ and the Apostles affirm the authorship of the Pentateuch in the passages quoted from them, they affirm little or nothing upon the historic character and achievements of the man who, by the confession of all, is the central and dominant figure in Israel's history, and the accredited source of her religious doctrines and worship. To make such a conclusion as this consist with any just insight into the religion of Israel on the part of Jesus, not to speak of his honesty as a teacher or his Divinity, would be no easy task. These considerations conspire to create confidence in the legitimacy of the process by which the passages under review have been interpreted, and confirm the writer in the conviction that Christ and his Apostles have delivered a definite and to him decisive judgment on the burning question of Biblical criticism. This judgment, reached by two distinct lines of study, is in favor of the traditional view in its substantial claims. Without attempting to sum up the argument, the writer submits to the candor of his readers this humble contribution on a most vital theme.

S U M M A R Y.

1. Chaldea, Egypt, Syria, before 1300 B.C., according to the agreements of their scientific historians.
2. The naturalness and accuracy in the Pentateuch's narrative of beliefs, customs and geography, seal its date contemporaneous with the events described, and limit its authorship to one master hand.

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