

Charles R. Hemphill

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Christ's Testimony to the Mosaic Authorship  
of the Pentateuch

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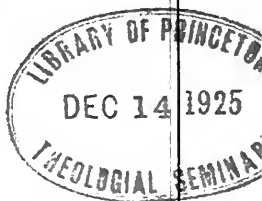
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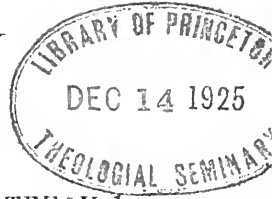




*From the Southern Presbyterian Review, January, 1884.*

# CHRIST'S TESTIMONY

TO THE



# MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.<sup>1</sup>

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In being formally inducted into the Professorship of Biblical Literature in this Seminary, it is but natural that I should find my thoughts recurring to the veteran scholar who for so many years adorned this chair by his learning and piety. A student from his earliest years, and coming to his work with ample furniture in Oriental scholarship, attained under the stimulating instruction of the famous Moses Stuart, Dr. Howe, for more than fifty years, devoted his energies to enlarging his knowledge and broadening his views of Biblical Literature. To recount Dr. Howe's toils and sacrifices for the Seminary, would be to tell a familiar story. To him I believe we owe its survival to this good hour, pressed, as it has several times been, by dangers that threatened its destruction. Laborious to a fault, and faithful to duty, he wrought his very life into these walls and into the hearts of the hundreds of students who here listened to his voice. Profound learning was veiled by a rare modesty, and transfused with a deep personal love for the Saviour. The simplicity of his nature, the depth of his piety, the kindness of his heart, are the traits which we who knew him associate most of all with his memory. To have been a pupil of Dr. Howe is a blessing to any man! It is a high privilege that I was not only his

<sup>1</sup>Inaugural Address delivered on September 19, 1883, before the Board of Directors of Columbia Seminary, by Rev. C. R. Hemphill, Professor of Biblical Literature, and published at the request of the Board.

pupil, but associated with him for several years in the teaching of his department. The reflection that I succeed Dr. Howe and hold the chair which binds his name to the institution he loved even unto death, enhances the feeling of responsibility inevitable to me under these circumstances.

It is not out of place to assure the Directors and friends of the Seminary that I take up these duties with some adequate conception of what lies before me. To exaggerate the importance of the studies embraced within the scope of Biblical Literature, would scarcely be possible. It deals with the foundations and gives the principles of any Christian theology which has a right to the name. The Canon, Biblical Criticism, Exegesis, with all that these imply, are the subjects of this chair. In accordance with the Protestant principle of the absolute dependence of theology, in all its phases, on the Scriptures, these studies are, at any time, essential, but they now have a special importance. It is well known that controversies of vast import to the Christian religion now traverse the field of this department, and it is probable that conflicts, of which only faint echoes have heretofore reached us, will rage for some time within the English, Scotch, and American Churches. Dr. Green of Princeton, who is by no means an alarmist, has recently said "that all the signs of the times indicate that the American Church, and, in fact, the whole of English-speaking Christendom, is upon the eve of an agitation upon the vital and fundamental question of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, such as it has never known before." Every one may detect symptoms of this agitation in books recently published, and in articles in reviews and newspapers, dealing with the critical study of the Scriptures. To meet the exigencies of this critical study of the Bible calls for such scholarship, such piety, such judgment, that I may be pardoned for expressing my own sense of deficiencies for the work intrusted to me.

With God's help I shall earnestly and faithfully seek to instruct my pupils in the truth, and provide them with the means of defending the word of God.

In thinking of a suitable topic for this occasion, it was but natural that the stirring question of the authorship of the Penta-

teuch should suggest itself. The Pentateuch has engaged the earnest attention of distinguished scholars for many years, and it is unnecessary to rehearse the history of the rise and progress of the various critical views. A clear and accurate account of these may be found in an article in the *Presbyterian Review*, for January, 1883, from the pen of Dr. Briggs. It is enough to say that the latest hypothesis, known as the Reuss-Graf theory, completely revolutionises the common view of Jewish history, and, by consequence, the common view among Christians of the nature of revelation and inspiration. It is my belief that here we have the logical outcome of the methods of treating the Scriptures which have prevailed among rationalistic and semi-rationalistic scholars. The prominent advocates of this hypothesis do not hesitate to say that they proceed on the naturalistic basis, and on this basis it might have some claim to consideration; but the effort to combine evangelical views with this hypothesis must be pronounced a signal failure.

The authorship of the Pentateuch is too large a question to be handled in more than one of its phases in this Address. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the literature of this subject constitutes a library in itself. Nor do I think it at all needful that a man acquaint himself with these minute investigations and discussions of critics, in order to reach a perfectly satisfactory and rational belief. If the New Testament writers have uttered a decisive opinion, then most biblical students will rest their belief on this basis, rather than on the shifting sands of opposing schools of criticism. This, we may be confident, will commend itself to the common sense and practical character of American Christians. If it can be shown that the New Testament renders no decision in the premises, then we are thrown back on the results of the Higher Criticism. And I may be allowed to say that I have no fears of the ultimate findings of the Higher Criticism. It is unfortunate that the most conspicuous students of this science have been more or less rationalistic in their views. On this account the science itself has fallen into reproach among Christian people, and is regarded by many as necessarily sceptical in its tendencies. The truth is, that it is by the Higher

Criticism that we settle the literary claims of all books, the Bible among them, and it is our duty to show that the rationalistic critics have employed false principles, or made a wrong application of true principles. We need more of such work in this direction as has been done in this country by Dr. Green in his relentless tracking of Colenso, Kuenen, and Robertson Smith; by Dr. Willis J. Beecher, in his admirable exposure of the logical methods of Kuenen; and by Dr. Rufus P. Stebbins, in his valuable study of the Pentateuch.

But while I would give free course to this method of settling the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch, I desire to see what light is thrown on the matter by the New Testament. This method is not adopted for the purpose of stifling discussion or forestalling critical investigation, but in the belief that this is the safest method possible by which to reach the truth, if it be found that the New Testament writers have delivered an explicit testimony. To narrow the question, and to present the investigation in the most simple and intelligible manner, I shall exclude all testimony but that of our Lord, and shall ask you to follow me in an effort to sift his testimony, and to discover what opinion, if any, he held and taught. But before undertaking this, it may be well to meet certain objections that are offered to our accepting his decision as final, even if it should be found that he delivered a definite opinion.

It is objected that he was ignorant of some things, and that this may have been included in that category. There is no need to discuss what is implied in our Lord's increasing in knowledge and in his being ignorant of one fact at least, viz., the day of final judgment. It is sufficient to say that, however limited his knowledge was beyond the sphere of religious truth (and of these limits we can assert nothing), it has never been shown that he taught an error as true. It is one thing to be ignorant of a subject, and to keep silence; it is a very different thing to be ignorant of a subject, and yet presume to teach it. Undoubtedly, the pretence to knowledge where there is ignorance, is not merely a weakness, but a sin; and giving a definite opinion on a matter of which one is ignorant is sinful. This objection, therefore,



strikes at the centre of Christ's claims, which are based on his sinlessness, in imputing to him that he taught a definite view on a point of which he knew nothing.

It is objected, again, that even if our Lord does seem to have delivered a positive opinion, we are not compelled to accept it, for the reason that he did not come to settle the questions of Biblical Criticism, any more than he undertook to teach us physical science. The plausibility of this idea is removed by the reflection that we are to decide what he intended to teach, not by some criterion of our own, but by what he really taught. It must be admitted that Christ vouches for the historical character of the Pentateuch. This is one of the topics of Biblical Criticism. He therefore taught this part of Biblical Criticism: and if this, why not the one under discussion? It is easy to see that the objection is akin to the one first mentioned; and we would be shut up to the admission that our Lord entered a sphere in which he had no right to speak, and uttered himself, it may be, erroneously, where he ought to have kept silence.

The most formidable objection is put in this shape: Granted that our Lord does seem to teach the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, yet in this he may have accommodated himself to current views, without endorsing them as true. To have opposed the Jewish belief in the authorship by Moses, would have excited their prejudice against the higher truth he wished to impress. The subject of accommodation in the Scriptures is confessedly difficult. In any communication from the Infinite to the finite, the form of the revelation must be accommodated to the language and mental constitution of the creature. It is clear, however, that there is no accommodation in the sense that the Scriptures teach error on any subject. By the abuse of this principle there are men who maintain that our Lord teaches nothing as to the personality of Satan and the existence of evil spirits: nothing as to the atonement and other vital doctrines. Now, whatever else may be true, and whether we can always formulate the limitations of this principle or not, it seems certain that we must stop at the point where by this principle Christ or an inspired writer would be made to teach positive error. In other words, while Christ

may have been under no obligation to correct current erroneous views on the authorship of the Pentateuch, if such there were, yet he was under an obligation not to teach an erroneous view by explicit statement, or by good and necessary consequence from his explicit statements. The same argument that prevents us from denying that he taught the personality of Satan and the possession of men by demons, would prevent our explaining away his positive teaching on this subject.

It is apparent, then, that if Christ did teach that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, the loyal believer in him must accept this teaching. At the name of Jesus, every knee must bow and every tongue confess—the Higher Critic as well as the illiterate peasant.

Since this inquiry is a matter of exegesis, I now proceed to lay down certain principles of interpretation by which it is to be conducted, and which are such as to commend themselves to your acceptance. I shall make some extracts from the standard treatise on Hermeneutics by Dr. Francis Lieber. Though the treatise is intended to give the rules for legal interpretation especially, yet the author gives the following rules as applicable to all interpretation :

“Interpretation,” he says, “is the art of finding out the true sense of any form of words : that is, the sense which their author intended to convey, and of enabling others to derive from them the same idea which the author intended them to convey.”<sup>1</sup>

1. “A sentence or form of words can have but one true meaning.”

2. “There can be no sound interpretation without good faith and common sense.”

3. “Words are, therefore, to be taken as the utterer probably meant them to be taken. In doubtful cases, therefore, we take the customary signification, rather than the grammatical or classical ; the technical, rather than the etymological.”

4. “That which is probable, fair, and customary, is preferable to the improbable, unfair, and unusual.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lieber's Hermeneutics, edited by Prof. W. G. Hammond. St. Louis: 1880. P. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pp. 108, 109.

I shall also cite a general principle of great importance from Dr. Planck's Sacred Philology and Interpretation:

"The second general law of interpretation is this: always to explain with a view to the spirit and mode of thinking of the age for which a writing was immediately intended: or to express this in clearer and more general terms, that may always be considered as the true sense of the writer, which, either alone, or at least as the most natural sense, could be suggested by his expressions to the men to whom and for whom he wrote. When, therefore, a reader meets in a work with ideas which he knows were in circulation among those for whom the work was intended, and were circulated in a certain definite form; when he finds there not only particular words and phrases, but entire representations and series of representations characteristic of the age in which the work originated, he may confidently presume that the writer whom he would explain connected therewith the same sense which they must first present to his readers, even if grammatical exposition could discover in his expressions another sense."<sup>1</sup>

To get this more clearly before us, let me add this from Whately:

"There is a maxim relative to the right interpretation of any passage of Scripture, so obvious when stated, that it seems strange it should be so often overlooked, viz., to consider in what sense the words were understood by the generality of the persons they were addressed to; and to keep in mind that the presumption is in favor of that, as the true sense, unless reasons to the contrary shall appear. Some are accustomed to consider what sense such and such words can be *brought to bear*, or how *we* should be most naturally inclined to understand them; but it is evident that the point we have to consider is the sense (as far as we can ascertain it) which the very hearers of Christ and his apostles did actually attach to their words."<sup>2</sup>

I may add a note appended to Lieber's Hermeneutics by the editor, Prof. W. G. Hammond: "It is not always necessary or

<sup>1</sup> Planck's Sacred Philology and Interpretation. Ed. by Turner. Edinburgh: 1834. Pp. 142, 143.

<sup>2</sup> Essay on Christ and his Kingdom, § 4.

desirable to begin interpretation with the meaning of each separate word. An entire phrase often has a definite and well-settled meaning, quite independent of the usual meanings of its component words. In such cases it would confuse, rather than explain, to attempt analysing the sense into as many parts as there are words to utter it. The phrase or sentence is, in such cases, itself a unit—the equivalent of a single word—as may often be clearly seen by translating into a foreign language, or even finding a synonym in the same.”<sup>1</sup>

Having laid down the exegetical canons by which I expect to be governed in this inquiry, I shall next state certain facts in the light of which we will be prepared to apply these principles and render a proper interpretation.

The first is that the Pentateuch, as we have it, existed in the same form in the days of our Lord. This needs no proof.

The second is, that while the division into five books was known, yet the Pentateuch was regarded as one book; just as the History of Herodotus is one book, though divided into nine books.

The third fact is, that this one book claims to have been written by Moses. This is proved in different ways.

Without stopping to mention passages in Exodus and Numbers, which state that Moses wrote down particular transactions: passing by, also, statements in Deuteronomy which may most naturally refer to the writing of that special book, I call attention to the assertion in Dent. xxxi. 9–11: “And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.” The expression, “this law,” here appears to me to denote the Pentateuch. At verse 24 of the same chapter, we have what is probably an appendix by some contemporary of Moses: “And it came to pass,

<sup>1</sup> Lieber's Herm., p. 106.

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 (or at) the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee " To my mind there is here a direct testimony to the whole Pentateuch's having been written by Moses. Remembering that it is one book, and that here, near the close of the book, we have this direct assertion, I do not see what right we have to limit it to one particular part of the book.

Again, though we should admit, for the sake of argument, that Deuteronomy alone is included in these assertions of Mosaic authorship, we must conclude that Moses was the author of the preceding books, for the reason that Deuteronomy presupposes their existence, and his authorship of Deuteronomy carries with it the authorship of the Pentateuch.

To give a list of the references in Deuteronomy to the preceding parts of the Pentateuch, especially the middle books, would consume pages. There is scarcely a chapter in Deuteronomy that does not abound in these allusions, of which any one can satisfy himself by the use of a reference Bible; so that until the rise of the Reuss-Graf hypothesis, Deuteronomy was for this reason classed by nearly all critics as the latest book. To say that the facts referred to in Deuteronomy, and which we now find in these preceding books, may have existed in oral tradition, or be drawn from some other writings, is a gratuitous supposition, for which there is not a particle of evidence. I believe with Dr. Stebbins, in his "Study of the Pentateuch," that the author of Deuteronomy was familiar with the preceding books, or historical questions are incapable of settlement.

Again, if we examine the middle books of the Pentateuch, we meet in almost every chapter with these and like phrases: "The Lord said unto Moses;" "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying;" "Moses said unto the people;" "Moses commanded," etc. If these statements be historically true, then the only natural supposition is that Moses wrote these numerous details of revelations which God made to him, and which he gave to the people. Other-

wise we must conceive a miracle of greater magnitude in their reproduction than those which usually cause our critics to be offended. These are some of the most obvious facts which lead us to believe that the book, as a whole, claims to be of Mosaic authorship. To cite all such facts, is unnecessary to my argument. I conclude, then, that the Pentateuch cannot be acquitted of the charge of claiming that its author was Moses.

A fourth fact is, that in the time of Christ the current view was that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. This is the traditional view, and is thus set forth by Bleek, one of the most learned of the critics who wrest the honor of authorship from Moses: "The prevalent view in ancient times, both among the Jews and in the Christian Church, was that the whole work was written by Moses, the principal actor in the events related in the four last books. We can safely assume that this was the view at the time of Christ and his apostles, and we find it expressly stated in Philo and Josephus. In the Talmud we read that Moses wrote his book (*i. e.*, the Pentateuch), with the exception of only eight *pesukim* (the eight last, the writing of which is ascribed to Joshua). This was also the view of the later Jews, and of all the fathers of the Church; yet we find, even in the first century of our era, some differing opinions among small parties in the Church, principally Gnostics, who were opponents of Judaism and the Jewish law."<sup>1</sup>

Bleek is certainly correct in stating thus broadly that it was the current view of the time of Christ, that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. I have met with no other opinion among writers on this subject until recently, when the intimation has been made that it is by no means so sure that this was the usual, or at least the universal, view. Now it would not be necessary for my purpose to show that every man in the time of Christ had this belief; it is only necessary to prove that the majority of his contemporaries among the Jews, who had any opinion on the subject, and whom he addressed, held this view. I may add that not a single piece of evidence has been produced to maintain

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Introd. to O. T.*, Vol. I., p. 192. London, 1875.

this intimation. Still it may be well to glance at the proof that no other view was known among the Jews. Josephus, who was born four years after the ascension of our Saviour, gives abundant evidence of his belief in the premises. He was of a priestly family, and had every means of knowing the prevalent opinion, and no reason for concealing it. It is unnecessary to burden these pages with quotations from his writings. From the reading of a few pages of the first four books of his Antiquities or the sections referring to Moses in his polemic against Apion, any one can certify himself of these facts, viz., that Josephus identifies the law or laws of Moses with the Pentateuch; that Moses is a person, not a system; that Moses, as a lawgiver, is identical with Moses as an author. There is no hint that any other view had ever been entertained.

The same affirmations can be confidently made in regard to the opinion of Philo, the learned Alexandrian Jew, born about 20 B. C. A brief examination of his life of Moses is sufficient to show that he considered Moses to be the author of the whole Pentateuch, even of that part of it which gives an account of his death. There is not the most remote suggestion of the existence of a contrary opinion.

If we consult the Apocrypha of the dates nearest the Christian era, we find their writers speaking of Moses as the Lawgiver, of "the Law," "the Law of Moses," the "Book of Moses." Now, while these expressions might be consistent with the supposition that Moses gave the laws which were recorded by other, and perhaps later, hands, yet their most natural reference is to Moses as the author as well as lawgiver. The views of the Talmudists are expressed in one of the most ancient tracts, the well-known Baba Bathra, where the Mosaic authorship is directly asserted. The same mode of representation occurs throughout the New Testament. The familiar division into Moses and the Prophets, or the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, or the other writings, had been current for years. All the testimony accessible to us proves that the current and only view in the time of Christ was that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. The first questioning of this, of which we have any record, was

made by representatives of heretical parties in the Church, who based their objections, as every one knows who examines their statements, on dogmatic and not on critical grounds. It is not until the time of Aben Ezra, in the twelfth century, that we hear of any critical doubts on this subject, and these extended only to a few passages which Aben Ezra supposed to be interpolations or additions.

If the principles of interpretation I have laid down are correct, and if the facts are as I have stated, there will be little difficulty, I imagine, in reaching a conclusion as to what view our Lord held and taught.

To aid us in getting Christ's general point of view, I call your attention to the way in which Christ alludes to the Pentateuch, without mentioning the book or the author. In his temptation, he makes three quotations from Deuteronomy, under the general reference, "it is written." He treats it as the acknowledged law of the Jews. When the lawyer came to him, tempting him, and said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? he said unto him, What is written in the law; how readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." This was not simply an argument *ad hominem*; but Christ endorsed the truth of the quotation from the Pentateuch. All the allusions, direct and indirect, made by Christ to different parts of the Pentateuch, produce the impression that he adopted and taught the current opinion that it was inspired and authoritative, and that he believed it to be, in its origin and authorship and authenticity, what the Jews believed it to be. Moreover, his references to Moses suggest that he regarded him as a real historical person, and that he did not use the name as a convenient designation for a system, or as a pseudonym. These two illustrations are sufficient: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."



It is admitted by evangelical critics that these and similar allusions of Christ teach the historic character of the Pentateuch. If by this is meant, what certainly must be intended, that the claims of the Pentateuch itself, as to its authorship, must be allowed, then I believe we are compelled to say that Christ testified that Moses was the author. And for this reason, that the Pentateuch, rationally interpreted, makes this claim; and if it be historical, *i. e.*, trustworthy as to what it asserts, most of all must it be so in the matter of its teaching as to its own origin. I cannot therefore agree with the statement frequently made now-a-days, that since Christ asserted the divine authority and historical character of the book, we need not be troubled about the matter of its human authorship. It is said that there are several books of the Old Testament whose authors are unknown, and yet this does not affect their historical character or divine authority. It ought to be remembered by those who advance this argument, that these anonymous books make no claims or assertions as to authorship; whereas the Pentateuch, for what I conceive valid reasons, does set up a positive claim, which must stand or fall with its historical character.

But the testimony of Christ is even more direct than this, and I shall now consider some of his more specific references bearing on my subject. I shall proceed from the clearer to the less clear, and quote first from the Gospel of John, where Christ is in controversy with the Jews. "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John v. 45-47.

Now what is the true sense of this passage? First, observe that Moses is referred to as a person just as Christ refers to himself as a person. Observe, again, that Christ affirms that Moses *wrote*, and speaks of his *writings* as well-known to his hearers. Observe, again, that the Pentateuch was a book well-known to the Jews, and firmly believed by them to have been written by Moses. How would they necessarily construe Christ's language? Necessarily as endorsing their belief about the authorship of the

Pentateuch. Putting it in another form : *Moses wrote*. What ? His writings. What are his writings ? By universal consent, the Pentateuch. Therefore, Moses wrote the Pentateuch. This is clearly the opinion of Christ. Dean Alford draws the only possible inference, that this "is a testimony to *the fact* of Moses having written those books which were then and are still known by his name."

Let us look for a moment at these statements of our Lord : "For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother." Mark vii. 10. To the leper he had healed, Christ says : "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded." Matt. viii. 4. Where is this saying ? Where this command of Moses ? In the Pentateuch, a well-known book, believed to claim Moses as its author, and believed by the hearers of Christ to have been written by Moses. Could they doubt that Christ agreed with them in this opinion ?

Let me now group several expressions of Christ, which are equally as decisive : "And as touching the dead, that they rise ; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him ?" Mark xii. 26. "They have Moses and the prophets." Luke xvi. 29. "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. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law ?" John vii. 19. It is useless to multiply quotations of the same character. Here Christ employs the phrases, "the law," "the law of Moses," "the book of Moses." According to the note I quoted from the editor of Lieber's *Hermeneutics*, we are to interpret phrases as well as words by the *usus loquendi*, not by mere grammatical and etymological analysis. What did these phrases and expressions mean to the hearers of Christ ? I have shown that they meant not simply that Moses was the originator of the law, but the writer of the Pentateuch ; and I maintain that unless something in the context or in Christ's other teaching on this subject be brought forward to modify these expressions, Christ must be held responsible for using and in-

tending to use these expressions as they were understood by his hearers : and as they must have understood them to mean that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, we are obliged to conclude that our Lord held and taught the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

This conclusion derives fresh support from the fact that it harmonises with Christ's conception of the origin and history of the Old Testament religion and Sacred Scriptures, and especially with his conception of the relation of Moses to the religion and history of Israel. It is a leading principle of exégesis that the results of the special interpretation of a passage or series of passages must be tested by comparison with the general interpretation of all passages relating to the subject. I submit that it is evident to any student of the Bible, that it is easier to give a consistent representation of Christ's attitude towards the Old Testament Scriptures on the supposition that he believed that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, than on any other supposition. In many things respecting these Scriptures, our Lord took occasion to differ with his contemporaries, and it was this utter diversity of views that intensified the hostility of the Jews towards him. But in regard to this fundamental tenet of the origin of the Jewish religion, there is nowhere a hint that Christ thought the Jews to be in error. He knew that they believed Moses to be the writer of their most sacred book, which lay at the basis of their system. He challenged their many perversions of this book and the religion it inculcated, yet he never corrects their opinion on this essential point of origin. Not only so, but he uses the very language that he would have used if he had wished them to believe that he agreed with them in their views of Moses and his relation to their religion.

It is evident, furthermore, that if we suppose Christ to have been in ignorance of the true authorship of this book, it will require much special pleading to explain his language in consistency with his general position towards the Old Testament. On the more extravagant supposition that he knew that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, we have a problem which I fear no ingenuity can solve, in explaining his direct references to the

subject, and in saving him from inconsistency, not to say contradiction, in his conception of the whole movement of the religious history of the Jewish people.

As it is clear that our conclusion falls in with all that Christ taught concerning the religion of Israel, so it is also clear that it is in complete harmony with the point of view assumed by all the New Testament writers in their allusions to Moses, the Pentateuch, and the Mosaic economy. This assertion I must leave to be verified by your own knowledge in the premises.

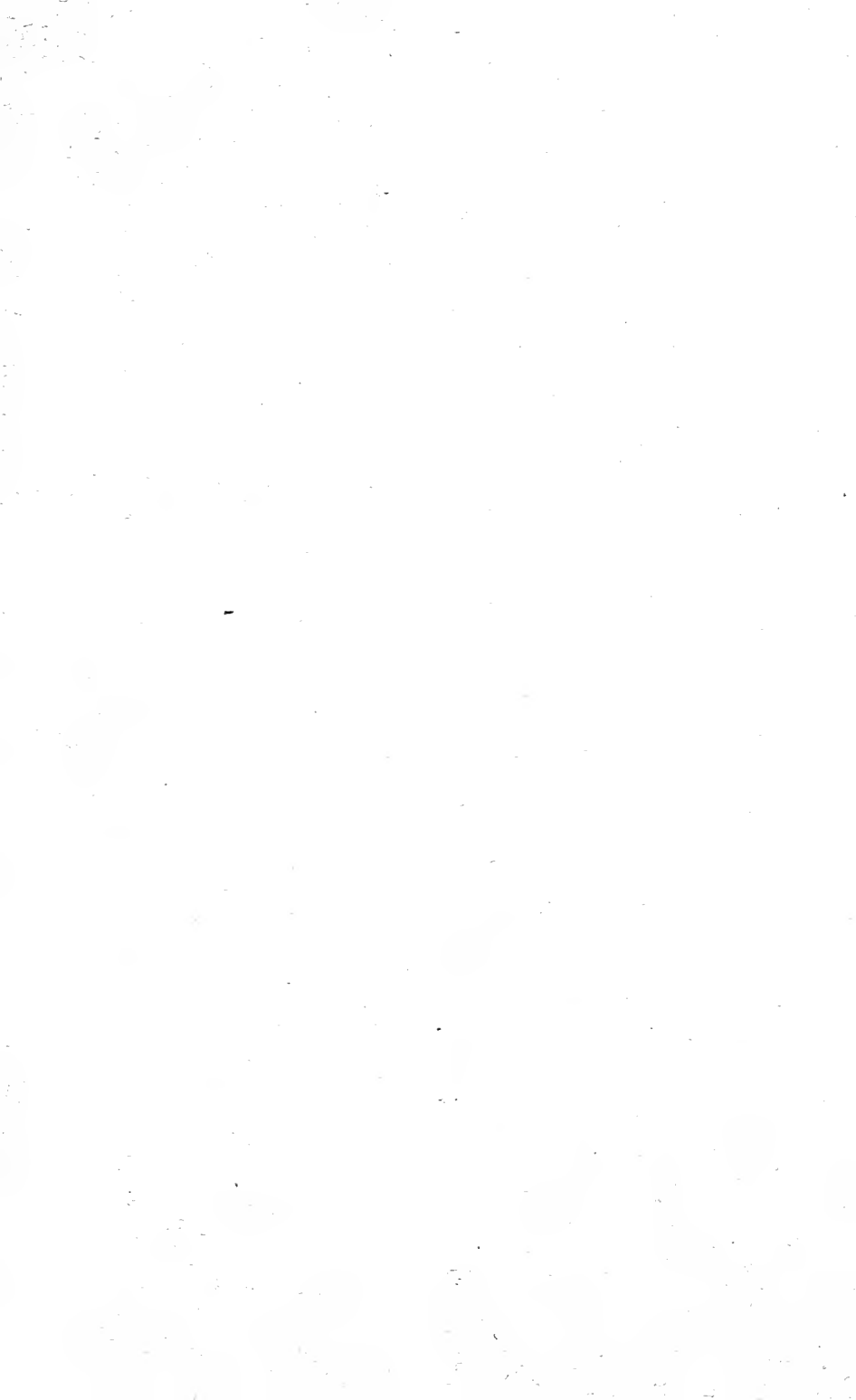
It affords additional ground for confidence in the interpretation I have reached, to notice that if the principles of exegesis upon which I have conducted this inquiry be repudiated, or the facts I have cited be denied or disregarded, we shall be shut up to drawing from the language of Christ only so much as is yielded by the most rigid grammatical and verbal analysis. The results of this process would give us a few and generally unimportant enactments as the legacy of the great lawgiver and most heroic figure in Jewish history. Such a wretched conclusion is a sufficient refutation of the methods by which it is reached.

Having now prosecuted the study involved in the title of this address by a purely exegetical process, and having found the results to be natural and legitimate, and having tested these by a reference to the general attitude of Christ and the New Testament towards the subject, I am prepared to affirm as my judgment in the case, that Christ must be held responsible, not only for the historic character and inspiration and divine authority of the Pentateuch, but also for the Mosaic authorship of the book. If this be a just exposition, it must be acknowledged that the question which more than any single question absorbs attention among Old Testament scholars to-day, is not left to be decided by purely scientific inquiry, but has been settled for the loyal believer in Christ by the great Teacher himself. The believer is not at liberty to reject the Saviour's teaching, and base his judgment merely on the results of literary and historical criticism. He is not prevented from pursuing the critical method; but in this matter as in all others on which Christ speaks, he is to subordinate the results reached by his criticism to the affirmations of

him who is "the truth." If what purport to be the ascertained conclusions of criticism are antagonistic to the utterances of Christ, we must make our choice and abide by one or the other. We cannot serve two masters. And this is no hardship. We hold the philosophic inquirer subject to the decisions of the word of God. If he claims that the result of philosophic inquiry is materialism, we do not wait to prove that his method or principles are at fault, and that a true philosophy proves the opposite: we do not hesitate to affirm, on the authority of God's word, that his supposed result is false. In the same way, we hold the Biblical critic to the teachings of the Scriptures, in matters included in his science. If this principle were more fully recognised, there would be less prejudice against Biblical Criticism, before which there is such a wide and inviting field for legitimate investigation. By the results of this science we have been brought to a clearer apprehension of the wonderful Book, and in many things we shall look to it for further aid.

C. R. HEMPHILL.









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