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DEUTERONOMY

THE PEOPLE'S BOOK

DEUTERONOMY

THE PEOPLE'S BOOK

Its Origin and Nature

James[✓] Sime

A DEFENCE

LONDON
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P R E F A C E.



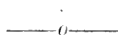
THE more recent origin of the Book of Deuteronomy has become an article of faith with many thinking men. Its Mosaic authorship is treated as an old world idea, entertained only by those "who ignore history." What Dean Milman described as an arbitrary and "extraordinary" theory, the product of "peremptory—almost arrogant confidence," is now received so widely, that men's minds are disturbed by an inner conflict between the faith they were taught, and the new influence that is felt to be at work around them. It was this uneasiness of doubt that led to the writing of the following pages.

It would serve no purpose to refer to many books and many writers in this inquiry. Ewald and Kuenen may be taken to represent the two poles, round which the moderate and the

extreme assailants cluster. References to their works really exhaust all that can be said on the general question.

It is a great mistake to suppose that none but those who are well read in Hebrew, have either the right or the ability to judge of the evidence advanced for and against the genuineness of Deuteronomy. Any intelligent reader of the Scriptures may, with a little trouble, speedily master most of the arguments, and form his own judgment on their value. It is well that it should be so, for the Bible is the heritage of all men without exception, not a battle-ground for a few scholars.

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CHAPTER I.

THE NEW THEORY.

Origin of Modern Criticism : Bentley—Spread of the method to Books of the Bible—Our borrowing from Germany—Main positions only to be discussed, not a multitude of details—Invention of “Programme”—Statement of the “Programme,” or Theory—Disagreements among its supporters—Great faith required—Finding of “a” or “the Book of the Law”—Reasons for considering it to have been Deuteronomy—Difficulties of the “Programme” theory—Its two main supports in history—Forging of Books.

NO one who has watched the ebb and flow of opinion in our country regarding the origin of the Five Books of Moses can fail to see that, among thinking men, there is less than ever of a disposition to rely on the views and traditions of the past. Whether justly or unjustly, the attacks of many modern critics on the revered ideas of former ages respecting the writer of these books have shaken the confidence of readers and believers alike. A feeling is abroad that there must be something in what is said by so many men, and said after so much laborious investigation. And the more closely the great truths unfolded in these writings come home to our hearts, the more readily does the slightest throwing of doubt,

especially when done by learned and seemingly fair-minded inquirers, loosen the strong attachment that binds us to the old-fashioned theories of our fathers. This loosening of ancient ties is unavoidable. It may be regretted, but it cannot be helped, for it is the direction in which what is called the thought of our age and country is now running with a steady and a growing current. Whether the real fountain-head of the stream be England or Germany—and most probably it was Bentley's work on the Epistles of Phalaris—there is no doubt that the upbreak in opinion, which is startling our age and country, owes its rise to a not very creditable borrowing from German sources. Unquestionably Bentley's wealth of learning and his singular success in proof first dazzled our neighbours on the Continent into attempting with other books, what he not only attempted but did with the forgeries called the Epistles of Phalaris. Where he struck a vein of gold, many of them, in looking for the same metal, discovered nothing better than such golden rubbish as Elizabeth's navigators brought home in their ships, to cheat their mistress and themselves into the hope that the New World's richest treasures were buried in Labrador, not in Mexico and Peru. What looks like gold is not at once discovered to be useless dirt, when spade and pickaxe have thrown it out of the mine. Equally true is it that the upturnings of those who dig among the learning of past ages may bring to light far more

rubbish than gold. Because Bentley found wealth that made others envious of his greatness, it does not follow that those who wield a like spade and pickaxe must use them with the same success. An assay of the ore found by him shewed a large percentage of pure gold ; an assay of the discoveries of his followers in the same field of research is known to shew a vast preponderance of rubbish. Of the remainder of the ore they have brought to light, it is hard to say whether the gold it contains is even a fair recompense for the labour and the blundering spent in the search.

So long as the upturnings of the critics were confined to the literature of Greece and Rome, the world at large cared little whether gold were found or not. But when the spirit, that made them call in question almost everything that passed under the names of heathen writers, soared so high as to handle with like roughness the holiest books of Zion, men were shocked and afraid, for they wondered what this new thing would grow to. Forgetting that if these sacred writings cannot stand rougher handling than any received by those of Homer and Cicero, they would be the work of men inferior in power to heathen poets and philosophers, they may sometimes have bestowed upon the critics abuse instead of argument, or shrunk from them as from the profane, whose very words were a dread and a loathing. But whoever believes that these books are built on a rock-foundation, such as

Athens and Rome never knew in the days of their literary greatness, will both give to the assailing critics, and look for in return, the courtesies of a fair literary war. If a man fights honestly, not twisting facts, honourably avowing the side he is on, not pretending to do battle under a banner which it is clear as noonday he is endeavouring to hurl to the ground, he is a combatant worthy of respect, however sharp his weapons, or however heavy his blows. Should the friends of these holy books of Zion be unable to give blow for blow, and to blunt the sharpest point thrust against their armour, their cause cannot be defended by abuse or reproaches. Truth is the prize at stake, and the end of strife can only be truth's triumph.

The points in dispute are so many that it would be waste of time to attempt a discussion of them in detail. No great controversy is ever settled by wrangling over the petty smallnesses into which, somehow, man's weakness always breaks it up. There is one key of the position which, if wrested from the opposing side or unsuccessfully assailed, determines the fortune of its defenders. As in a great battle so in a great controversy, the moment this key of the position is lost or won, the struggle is virtually over; the effort of the losers is to save all they can, and of the winners to reap the full fruits of their gain. A clump of trees in one place, a farm-house or two in another, a battery here, and a hillock there, may all be of the highest value so long as the main key of the ground is safe; but

as soon as the latter is lost, the former, so far from being good to hold, may be but a source of greater harm if they are not left at once. Critics have to recognise the same rule of battle as soldiers. A multitude of details may prove very cumbrous—more awkward than uselessly heavy baggage to a beaten army—if the leading position cannot be held. They may turn out to be nothing better than blunders of ignorance or prejudice, arising from the mistake the mind is driven into, when compelled to map out all its knowledge and fancies by reference to a leading position which it has once seized. Nothing can happen more fatal to a critic's success than, by taking hold of a false general idea, to be constrained to view the multitude of details which it masters, not as they are presented in nature, but as they seem to be presented from his position. He thinks he is right because he is led astray by the ground he is standing on. Fancies are mistaken for facts, illusions for truth. With misleading lights of this nature the history of all criticism is full; and from them the life of no critic, however great, ever has been or ever will be free. The lesson of humility they teach is seldom learned; or if learned one day, may be forgotten the next.

Among these smaller matters that have no bearing on the general result may be mentioned Ewald's sneer, "how
" it could be possible for the composer of Deut. xxviii. to
" conclude a long enumeration of the most various evils
" with the conveyance of the people back to Egypt in ships

“ (ver. 68)! . . . so completely unique an idea could only
 “ have been suggested by experience, and it was evidently
 “ the latest and the worst which floated in the author’s
 “ mind.”¹ This is ignorance, not criticism. Egyptian
 kings, who lived in the days of Moses, did not look on
 the idea as a bad one—that is one side of it. The people
 of Taha, or Northern Palestine, shrank with horror from
 it as from a “middle passage” in ancient slavery—that
 is the other side. “I made thee,” says Rameses III.,
 “gallies, transports, and ships of war, with soldiers
 “equipped with their arms, on the Great Sea or Medi-
 “terranean. I gave them captains of the bowmen and
 “captains of gallies, provided with numerous crews with-
 “out number, to bring the things of the land of Taha and
 “the hinder parts of the earth to thy great treasuries.”²
 Kuenen’s sneers at the absurdity of Levitical cities with
 fields around them are equally misplaced, for they had
 their parallels in the ancient worship of Egypt: “Given
 “to the temple of Amen Ra, orchards and gardens, 433;
 “fields, arouras 868,168 $\frac{1}{4}$; towns of Egypt, 56.”³

Of the main positions seized by the critics who reject
 the traditional view of the authorship of the five books,

¹ Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. iv. p. 221, Note. See also Davidson, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 382.

² *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 31.

³ *Ibid*, vol. vi. p. 36. There seems no reason to doubt that Moses, though he never set foot on the land, was well acquainted with the geography of Canaan from Egyptian sources alone.

there are perhaps none that have a wider bearing than their ideas of the origin and nature of the book of Deuteronomy. Most readers of the Bible regard it as the last speech, the dying legacy of Moses to the people whom he loved, and for whose welfare his life was spent. This is so clearly written on the face of the book itself, that only the strongest proof could satisfy an unbiassed reader of his error in entertaining that opinion. The writing professes to be the work of Moses; it was received as such for at least twenty-five centuries; and if this view of more than seventy generations of men be wrong, the arguments by which it is overthrown must be both ample and without dispute. Mist and probabilities can have no place in the settlement of a matter so important. Nothing but the clearest and the fullest evidence ought to be put before the world if men are to throw aside as a useless thing, what all these generations of learned and unlearned cherished as a most precious heirloom. Past ages may have been guilty of weakness in the childish simplicity of their faith, while the present age may shew the strength of the world's manhood by cutting away the foundation, by boasting of its power to inhabit the unfounded temple of sacred truth. But the matter is one to be discussed without passion and without prejudice. Great interests are at stake in the settlement of this piece of antiquity, while the question itself is almost wholly one of historical criticism. That it has a vastly wider bearing than on mere history or anti-

quity is clear to every one who approaches the subject. But the ordinary weapons of the critic are those that must be used in settling the point in dispute. And the most attached friend to the traditional view may be assured that, if the book of Deuteronomy cannot stand against these weapons, the sooner it is set aside from the path of man's progress the better will the removal of it be for the world.

The proof then must come from the attacking party. A reason must be rendered for refusing to believe what is written, as men have believed for at least five-and-twenty centuries. But the difficulty of grasping this reason is greater than might be at first supposed, for the assailants are not agreed among themselves. On the fact of the origin of the book about 650 B.C. they are agreed; but on the proofs and surroundings of their position they are sometimes more at variance with one another than with those who maintain the old-fashioned view. However, their disagreement must be left out of account, for it makes no difference to the defence whether the attacks come from the same or from opposing foes.

That a great body of writers accept the new view of the origin of the book is a fact not to be denied or undervalued, but it is of small weight as an argument. Had each of them come to the same conclusion as the fruit of his own unaided studies, their learning and their agreement would have carried an authority far greater than they do. But this is not the case. A new and startling

theory is proposed, borrowed, we shall say, from profane history ; it takes the fancy of a few ; the field is so fresh and untrodden that the circle widens till a larger body of partisans is drawn within its influence. Recently it has become fashionable to speak of the theory as a fruit of the higher or advanced criticism, a monument of the liberality of view that has at length begun to leaven the narrow conservatism of the Church. All this is wholly beside the question. The point really before the world is the truth of the historical statements made in the book of Deuteronomy, not liberality of sentiment or novelty in criticism. Words too are used with a meaning they cannot and ought not to bear. According to the new view the book of Deuteronomy is a clumsy, easily-discovered forgery, imposed on the world with remarkable skill. But forgery is an ugly word to use, whether in the courts of literature or in those of law, in the things of earth or in the things of heaven. It must be avoided at all hazards, for people like it so ill that something more agreeable must be devised instead. Accordingly "programme"¹ is put in its place, a word which may mean anything the coiner of it chooses, while it avoids the harsh ring of the base metal in "forgery." The first coinage then was "programme." But no sooner is a good thing like this set on foot than others must put in

¹ "Accommodation" used to be the word, and is still sometimes used. But in a commercial country like England "an accommodation" is so suggestive of business difficulties, leading sooner or later to bankruptcy, that it is well for the critics' credit to substitute another word.

claims to a share of the spoil, though they are only borrowers of another's discovery. "Programme" is too bald for the purpose; but "legislative programme" and "prophetic programme," divide the complex idea so well, that they form a second step at the crossing place, much broader and more massive than the grand first. Only it has always to be borne in mind that "programme" in this sense is a decent word for "forgery," the homage, in short, that criticism is compelled to pay to the respect entertained by the unlearned crowd for truth and fairplay. We shall find that all or nearly all the five books are reckoned "programmes." Borrowing another's ideas or even improving on them does not add to the weight of the argument advanced. It is thus not numbers that have to be looked at, but proofs.

Generally, then, it is held by the new critics that the book of Deuteronomy is the same, or almost the same, as the Book of the Law found by Hilkiah, the high priest, in the Temple, in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. They regard it as the work of a prophet of Jehovah, who lived, some think, in Egypt,¹ and whose heart was wrung with sorrow at the impieties that had reigned in Jerusalem for sixty years before. With an imagination²

¹ The allusions to Egyptian manners and customs in Deuteronomy are so manifold that this supposition seems almost indispensable to the theory.

² Speaking of the author of the *Book of Origins*, that is, part of the conglomerate series which the ignorant crowd call "The Five Books," Kuenen says:—"We must at once add that the historical reality has

touched by the dangers that seemed to overhang his native land, he pictured to himself the sins that had brought her to the brink of the abyss, and the safeguards that might have warded off, or might even still ward off, her ruin. These sins and safeguards he mapped out or "programmed," the latter as what might have been laid down in the far-off past, the former as what were known to have been done for ages. Had Moses, the fabled lawgiver of the Hebrew race, the mighty deliverer from bondage, the shadowy shape that filled the whole background of their heroic age, forewarned them of these sins and ordained these safeguards eight centuries earlier, the whole course of their history might have been changed. A happy inspiration—some say as lofty as David's or Paul's—suggested to this dreamer the duty of putting in written words the fancies that floated through his brain. But poetic fire carried him a step farther. He wrote as he believed Moses would have written, or ought to have written; he forewarned, he entreated, he reproached, he prophesied as he thought Moses would have done, or ought to have done. And when his book was finished, he named Moses as the speaker, and the plains of Moab as the scene of his oration to the people.¹ By means alto-

"but little value in his eyes. He sacrifices it without hesitation to his need for a minute and tangible representation of the past. In doing so, therefore, he gives rein to his imagination, and is more a poet than an historian."—*Religion of Israel*, ii. p. 158.

¹ "At a time when notions about literary property were yet in their

gether unknown this romance was conveyed from Egypt to Zion—supposing Egypt was its birthplace—perhaps several years after the poet's death, perhaps while he was still alive. The book fell into the hands of some worshippers of Jehovah, perhaps the high priest and the chief scribe, perhaps not. It was such a writing as they wished, if the half-heathen Jews were ever to be frightened out of their evil ways. A convenient time was chosen for hiding the romance in the Temple. Of course it was picked up during the cleaning, probably by preconcerted arrangement. It was found by Hilkiah and read by Shaphan, which seems to prove that Shaphan at least had no hand in the plot. It was then taken to the king; it was read, to the thorough terror of both court and people, and from that time to this an Egyptian romance has passed current among the most enlightened nations of the world, and in its most enlightened ages, as a book specially written by God's inspiration to shew men the way to everlasting life.

What eight centuries of revelation and teaching by priests and prophets failed to do in Israel, a dreamer is thus thought to have done at once by the publication of a "programme;" he confirmed the wavering attachment of the nation to the truth for all time. His very name is

"infancy, an action of this kind was not regarded as at all unlawful. "Men used to perpetrate such fictions as these without any qualms of conscience."—Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 18.

unknown, though he was a greater man than Moses; for he succeeded where Moses is allowed to have failed. Elijah, the next greatest prophet of ancient times, was baffled in his effort to turn the heart of the people back again. His life seemed wasted, his labours thrown away; but the happy thought of a romancer, aided by the pardonable trickery of a few priests,¹ turned the hearts of the people back again with a power that has never ceased to work from that day to this. What "had already been attempted by Hezekiah before the Deuteronomist made it a law," the king failed to do, while a prophet-priest, though not a "practical statesman," an exile perhaps, unfriended and unknown, actually did. It is a marvellous theory, a strange result of historical criticism, the one outstanding instance in history of a lie having succeeded in permanently establishing truth, when truth had made the attempt to secure its hold, and had signally failed. Still, we live in a world of surprises and wonders; the theory may be true!

It will not be denied that the outline thus drawn of the

¹ "This provision for the delivery of the programme to the king was of a piece with the composition of the programme itself. It is true, this deception is much more unjustifiable still than the introduction of Moses as speaking. But we must reflect here, also, that the ideas of those days were not the same as ours, but considerably less strict . . . the victory of the Mosaic party, although gained by cunning, must not be attributed to the stratagem of which they made use, but to the good cause which they upheld, and to the weapons with which they defended it."—Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 19.

origin and nature of the book of Deuteronomy approaches nearly to the ideas entertained by critics who have ceased to regard it as a work of Moses. If these writers were themselves at one on all points, the outline might have been made more full and more accurate. But they are far from being agreed. Some of them maintain that the book is inspired, the utterance of God himself, in an unspeakably higher degree than Homer or Shakespeare was inspired; others do not shrink from calling the work unhistorical, a pious fraud, a writing of which this is the best that can be said, the end justifies the means. One party again holds that Hilkiah, Shaphan, Josiah, and other leading men, were ignorant of the plot so successfully carried out; another believes that they lent themselves to the deception. Most justly then might these assailants of the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy be asked to come to an agreement respecting what they affirm, before they puzzle the world with their discordant views. But this is past hoping for.

On one thing all writers seem to be agreed; Deuteronomy is a people's book. It is not scientific, nor is it technical. Weighty thoughts, clothed in words as weighty, flow from the speaker's lips. Sometimes, as becomes a speech delivered to a whole people, words are heaped on words to shew the speaker's earnestness, and to impress his hearers with the gravity of the thoughts conveyed. No speech could win its way to the hearts of a popular audience—the peasantry, the farmers, the workers, as well

as the learned men of the nation—that was constructed on a different plan. Moses was a statesman skilled in dealing with great masses of men, and knew how to reach their hearts. But this, which is the highest art of a speaker, one modern writer chooses to call “feeble wordiness.”¹

It is farther plain that the new theory requires us to take a great deal on trust, far more perhaps than most people are disposed for. A few of the gulfs that thinking, though mayhap uncritical, men see no bottom to must be filled up before the world can be expected to allow its truth. The place of composition, the author, the age, the conveyer to Palestine, the concealer in the Temple, the silence of multitudes who knew of the fraud—round these points an endless war of words might be waged. But it could serve no good purpose. Whoever believes the theory may see no difficulty in accepting these first steps in the process. Manifestly the reliance of the critics is placed on other foundations. The only fact that is beyond dispute is the discovery of a book called “A” or “The Book of the Law,” during the repairing of the Temple in the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign (B.C. 623). Over everything else advanced by the critics rests a mist so dark, that it needs eyes of more than ordinary keenness to discover the shapes they pretend to see. It is pardonable to be slow in accepting the statements made. There is a risk

of the alleged facts turning out fancies, without foundation or substance.

The book of the law discovered in the Temple may not have been the book of Deuteronomy. It is as vain to think of proving that it was as to think of proving it was not. Evidence is wanting, whatever those who have committed themselves to a theory may hold. Of the finding of a book there is no doubt; and the arguments, such as they are, which prove, or are thought to prove, that it was Deuteronomy, a part of the five books, are equally valid to prove that it was the whole five books.

But it will be advisable to set down in this place all the information we have on the finding of the scroll:—

2 KINGS XXII. 8-11, 15, 16.

8 And Hilkiâh the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiâh gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiâh the priest hath delivered me a

book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

—

2 KINGS XXIII. 1-3.

1 And the king sent, and they

gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great : and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

2 CHRONICLES XXXIV. 14-19,
23, 24, 29-31.

14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiab the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses.

15 And Hilkiab answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiab delivered the book to Shaphan.

16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying,

All that was committed to thy servants, they do *it*.

17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiab the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

.
23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah :

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29 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small : and he read in their ears all the words of the

book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments,

and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

The reasons for regarding the scroll found in the Temple as the Book of Deuteronomy are thus stated:—"The only quotation in the narrative from the contents of the book of the law does not, in fact, point to anything more than Deuteronomy. The terrifying threats of the divine anger, especially the threat that the sacred land, with its inhabitants, should become a thing of horror and a curse, refer to nothing so forcibly as to the concluding discourses of Deuteronomy; and the name of a covenant book, which is here interchanged with that of a book of law, may fairly apply to Deuteronomy."¹ Another writer on the same side supplies arguments equally forcible!—"The writing found by Hilkiyah is called 'the book of the law,' and 'the book of the covenant,' and cannot have been of any great length, if we may believe the statement that it was read by Shaphan, and then read before Josiah in one day, and was subsequently read out from beginning to end to the people in the Temple."² These arguments for identifying the scroll found by Hilkiyah with the Book of Deuteronomy are three in number:—

¹ Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. iv. p. 234.

² Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 15.

First, The only quotation made from the book found is clearly taken from Deuteronomy.

Second, The length of the writing can be estimated from the fact, that it was read twice by Shaphan in one day.

Third, It must have been brief, for it was read from beginning to end to the people in the Temple.

There is no meaning in the third reason, except it be supposed that the third reading took place on the same day with the two readings mentioned already. A long document could have been as easily read "from beginning to end" to the people, if sufficient time were given, as a short one. But it is clearly assumed that the third reading took place on the same day as the other two.

These reasons are of very little worth. It is of small consequence whether the book found in the Temple were Deuteronomy or not. But it is of the highest consequence not to allow that to be described as fair and forcible in literature, which is really an unlawful torturing of witnesses in its courts. The poorest wretch of an author could not be worse treated than are the writers of Kings and Chronicles in the case under review. Of the first reason we can say, there is no quotation made from the book found by the high priest. There is only a reference to some threatenings it contained, and the reference may have been to another book than Deuteronomy. This distinction between a reference and a quotation lies at

the root of all accurate criticism. None insist on it more strongly than do the believers in the "programme," as soon as they begin to write about the four gospels.¹ One rule for the New Testament, and another for the Old, is neither fair nor forcible. But this distinction Ewald deliberately sets aside. There is no quotation; there is only a brief reference in the history, and that reference may not be to Deuteronomy at all. To gain an end, Ewald sets aside a chief rule of his own art. The second reason is even more unjust than the first. A reference does not differ so much from a quotation as the assertion of two or three readings of the long lost scroll on one and the same day differs from truth. That Shaphan himself first read the book he got from Hilkiyah, and that he then read it to the king, are facts no one disputes. But every reader will see there is no ground for believing that the two readings took place on one and the same day, much less that they were followed by a third public reading before sunset. A thing small in itself becomes great,

¹ We need not do more than refer to the words of the author of *Supernatural Religion*, vol. i. p. 213:—"When, therefore, in early writings, we meet with quotations closely resembling, or we may add, even identical with passages which are found in our gospels, the source of which, however, is not mentioned, nor is any author's name indicated, the similarity or even identity cannot by any means be admitted as evidence that the quotation is necessarily from our gospels, and not from some other similar work now no longer extant, and more especially not when in the same writings there are other quotations from apocryphal sources different from our gospels."

when to gain his end a writer turns what is not recorded into a historical fact. Both readings may have taken place on one and the same day. It does not affect the matter in dispute though they did, for we are then driven to ask what a reading means. But one and the same day is an addition no critic had a right to make to the story. Can any one compare these reasons and the story of the finding of the book without feeling that the cause must be hopeless, in which the ablest counsel, at the beginning of their pleadings, commit blunders in the simplest matters of fact? Is not a prejudice raised, by their own putting of the case, against their fairness or their ability to handle the question? By stumbling at the first and easiest step, they do not impart confidence that their going will be safe when they come to the rocks and thorns, the precipices and torrents, in their way.

The third reason is the worst of the three. Because "all the words of the book of the covenant" found in the Temple were read before "all the people, great and small," it does not follow that the book was read "from beginning to end." Even though it had been so read, the admission would prove nothing. But the phrase that is used, "all the words of the book of the covenant," proves no such thing, any more than "all the people, great and small," proves that not a soul was absent from the meeting. This use of the word "all" is common in every language: it does not mean "all without exception," and whoever insists

that it must be thus understood, is guilty of torturing the word till life and meaning are wrung out of it. "All the words of the book" may justly be taken to mean, in accordance with Hebrew language, "all the things in the book that had alarmed the king." It was these only that he had to read, for the laws contained in Deuteronomy were otherwise well known to prince and people. "From beginning to end" is thus a meaning which no critic ought to wring out of the word "all," unless he can defend his rendering of it by an appeal to the context.

The three reasons are thus of little worth. We return to the words, "Shaphan read it before the king." Suppose the scroll found to have contained the whole five books, to have been, in fact, the Pentateuch, or "book of Moses" mentioned in the same reign by the Chronicles,¹ would not he, who should deny this, from the length of time required to read it through, be as wise as the man would be who should imagine that one, who says he reads the Bible every day, means he reads it every day "from beginning to end"? To read a book need not mean to read the whole of it; oftener it means to read only a part; and in this sense Shaphan may have read the five books to the king. Critics say that Shaphan evidently read from the book of Deuteronomy. Allowing that their view is correct, which it may or may not be, manifestly then he read from the whole five books. The main argument of

¹ 2 Chron. xxxv. 12, 13.

the critic is therefore utterly pointless. Whoever holds that Shaphan read a portion out of Deuteronomy, holds also that he read a portion out of the whole scroll found by Hilkiah. How, then, can it ever be proved, and how dare it ever be asserted, that the scroll contained Deuteronomy only, and not the other four books as well? We have a case in point in the story told by Jeremiah of the burning of his book by King Jehoiakim.¹ Jehudi, like Shaphan, is said to have *read it*, but immediately after, the reading is found to have extended over only "three or four leaves." Believers in the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy may allow at once that Shaphan read part of the book to the king, without letting go their conviction that the whole five books were contained on the scroll found by Hilkiah.

It is necessary, then, to be cautious, for it is not the first time that the critic has made discoveries which men of affairs have set aside as dreams, or shewn to be proofs of a view the very opposite of that which they were brought forward to support. The historian and the politician, in reviewing the poems of Homer from the ground of our common humanity, have rejected as untenable the theories of critics who, regarding them more from the narrow field of words and phrases, made discoveries which for a season startled the world. It is equally possible that when men of wide sympathies examine the book of Deuteronomy, and see the terrible gaps which the critic steps over with-

¹ Jer. xxxvi. 21-23.

out a thought of their breadth, they may pay as small regard to his views of its origin as they are doing in the case of Homer's poems. But it is not by demurring to the large demands made on our faith by the new theory of Deuteronomy that we can ever hope to drive the critic from his stronghold. We simply put them forward as a body of difficulties more formidable than any that can be urged against the Mosaic authorship of the book. They are of use, in the meantime, for shewing that he labours under a grievous mistake who thinks that the new theory clears away all difficulties. On the contrary, before the real grounds on which it rests are examined, it heaps up doubts and fears to a height at least as great as the old-fashioned view. It begins badly, and does not deserve to fare better for making demands so large on its followers.

But while these large demands are thus made on our faith, or our credulity, it may be allowed that there are difficulties on the side of the Mosaic authorship, which modern critics were entitled to seize hold of as weaknesses in the traditional view, or as openings through which the light of truth was allowed to shine, that it might lead them to realities beyond. To lay hold of these difficulties, and to cross-question them thoroughly, are proceedings no one can find fault with ; but to break the words on the wheel, till they are driven to say what was never thought or meant, can only shew the absurdity of the torturers. Difficulties are unavoidable in all ancient books ; much

more may they be looked for in a book which claims to be a revelation from God. Were everything so plain and easy in a revelation of divine truth as to give rise to neither doubts nor fears in a reader's mind, most justly would he suspect it of not being a revelation at all. Could the vastness of heaven be thus made level to the littleness of earth, the inevitable inference would be that there was nothing of heaven in it whatever. On the other hand, should the ideas of some critics be correct, that the book of Deuteronomy is inspired of God, though planned and palmed off on the world by men, then it may be most truly said that never was there such a mingling of the incomprehensible vastness of heaven with the pitiful smallness of earth.

Evidence for the new views need not then be looked for in the story of the finding of the Book of the Law. The real evidence lies elsewhere. Some of it is so shadowy as clearly to be tied on as an appendage to other and stronger proof. Critics cannot be expected to make this confession in as many words; nor do we ask them: but the strong evidence is manifestly that which they put in the forefront for popular apprehension. Two of its outstanding pieces—it is almost right to say the only outstanding pieces—are so manifestly proofs of the Mosaic authorship, that it requires boldness or temerity beyond what is common to wrest them from their proper use. Moses' prophecy of a king, and the appointment of a

central altar in a chosen place, are appealed to as indisputable proofs of the origin of the book of Deuteronomy in Josiah's time. We hope to shew that the contrary meaning ought to be drawn from them. On other points it is felt, sometimes it is even allowed by deniers of the Mosaic authorship, that the evidence on their side is not of much weight. If these two chief pillars of their faith and hope be knocked from under them, they will have little else to lean their theory on. And it is possible that this may be the result of a careful investigation, for there is no reason to think that any of them has ever dreamed of their two great buttresses being really buttresses of the view they think has been demolished. Let us assume the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, and then ascertain what relation these two points stand in to the age of the great lawgiver. All who deny the Mosaic authorship hold that, as these two points were not thought of till long after his days, the book could not have been written by him. We refuse to recognise the critical accuracy of their position; we feel that they have overlooked the plainest facts of history, and added another chapter to the curiosities of critical blunders.

It would seem to be a duty, incumbent on all who believe in the "programme" theory, to prove from history that, in an age so remote as the seventh century before our era, books were palmed off on the world as the works of men who had been dead for many generations, and had

left no such writings behind them. Was Deuteronomy the only example of this literary artifice? Or was it an outstanding example among a host of others? Every scholar is aware that, three or four centuries after Josiah's time, the chances of making money by forging books led to a deluge of manuscripts flooding the libraries of those kings, who were then the great patrons of literature. "For to forge and counterfeit books," says Bentley, with reference to Greek literature, "and father them upon great names, has been a practice almost as old as letters. But it was then most of all in fashion when the kings of Pergamus and Alexandria,¹ rivalling one another in the magnificence and copiousness of their libraries, gave great rates for any treatises that carried the names of celebrated authors, which was an invitation to the scribes and copyers of those times to enhance the price of their wares, by ascribing them to men of fame and reputation, and to suppress the true names that would have yielded less money."² Consistently with this view of matters, the apocryphal books of the Old Testament are justly imagined to have been written after the third century before Christ. There were then Jews in Alexandria and in every city of note, who might not hesitate to resort to so easy a means of making money, or of imitating a custom, in writing not

¹ Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, who was born 309 B.C., began to reign 283 B.C., and died 247 B.C. The kings of Pergamus flourished about a century later.

² *Dissertation upon the Epistle of Phalaris* (1699), p. 9.

a few of these books, that had then become general in the feeble circles of literature. But we have no reason for believing from Hebrew history, that the custom of fathering counterfeit books on great names prevailed among the Jews as far back as Josiah's reign. It may have so prevailed, but there is no proof that it did. And this want of proof is only another gap in the evidence, which believers in the "programme" theory may reasonably be asked to fill up.

CHAPTER II.

BREACHES OF CONTINUITY IN PRIESTLY TRADITION.

Ebb and flow of thought in the Hebrew priesthood—Parallel from the Christian Church—Springs of sudden upheavals in Hebrew society—Effects of destruction of Shiloh—Further effects of massacre at Nob—Exile of Abiathar—Example of breach of continuity—The ark, “a new cart,” “the bearers”—Characteristics of writer of “Samuel”—Stagnation of religious life, 880-742—Hezekiah’s revival based on the Five Books—“A central altar,” “Passover in the second month”—Josiah’s revival based on the Five Books—The Five Books occupy the first place in revivals—Prophets occupy the second—Proof from observance of “year of release” by Zedekiah—Injustice done to Jeremiah’s preaching and acts—Ezra’s revival a prophet’s, based on the Five Books—Absurdity of the critics’ view—Ezra’s revival succeeded by same events as Josiah’s—Depression of the Levites before and after the captivity—Revival under the Maccabees—The two halves of Hebrew history.

IF we assume that the Five Books were written by Moses, and that those of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel followed in order as we now have them, it is open to us to discover from their statements what indications they give of quickening or of death in the regard shewn by the Hebrews to the statutes laid down by the lawgiver. No one, at all acquainted with human life, will hold that an even flow of thought and feeling must have run through

all the ages of their history from Moses to Samuel, and thence to Elijah and Jeremiah. At times the current would be deep and strong ; soon it would become sluggish or shallow ; and again it would be noisy and without depth. The tide of popular opinion in a nation or a caste is subject to all these changes as years roll on. It is the lot of humanity, it is the law of action and reaction in man's life. Among the Aaronic priesthood this ebb and flow would be ceaselessly at work. We assume that its chiefs were the depositaries of the five books, that they read them, copied them, and used them. What we have to ascertain is, would they ever neglect their trust ; would tradition among them ever take the place of history ; would they ever be content to do by rote what they ought to have done from knowledge ; would "the Law and the "Testimony" ever come to mean with them nothing nobler than their ideas of what they were, even when they had the books themselves to appeal to for the literal truth ? May it not have happened again and again that a true knowledge of the law was banished to a few unknown or disregarded members of the priestly order, while the chiefs, with the great body of the clan, remained deplorably ignorant of law and history alike ?

The state of the Christian Church for eight or ten centuries before Luther's time will enable all students of history and of human life to form a juster idea of what may have been the state of the Hebrew priesthood between

the Exodus and Josiah's reformation. Popes and cardinals, bishops and abbots, were as ignorant of Scripture in Western Europe as kings and priests had been in Judah. But in neither country was the Bible an unstudied, or, in Europe at least, an unprinted, book during those ages of ignorance. A few faithful teachers kept alive the lamp of truth. Although powerless to sway public opinion at the time, although their names were never heard in courts or consistories, they watched over manuscripts of the Bible, they made copies, they taught friends and pupils the priceless value of their treasures, and at last they saw them safely committed to print. It is not more surprising that Hilki'ah is said to have found the book of the law, than that Luther is said to have found the lost and forgotten Bible. It was a printed copy he discovered, neglected and unread. Luther did not write the Bible, although the ignorance of that age attributed it to his pen. In like manner criticism has attributed to Hilki'ah almost the writing of a book which he may have simply brought to light, though it was really known to a very few, and known to him by name, and by name only. Pope Leo would have been as ignorant of the Bible as Hilki'ah and Josiah were of the five books, had Luther taken to him the dust-covered volume which he found lying on the library shelf at Erfurt. How absurd it now sounds to accuse Luther of having written the book, when it is well known that the Bible was then loved and studied and

printed, by many in his own and other countries. But how profoundly wise it is reckoned in our day to hold that Hilkiah's predecessors or friends wrote the book of the law, and instead of being considered students of the ancient records of their race, amused themselves with writing "programmes" of what might be, but never had been!

We do not believe that the priestly caste among the Hebrews was either better or worse, in attachment to their sacred books, than other bodies of learned men in any age of the world. When knowledge is confined to one set of teachers, into whose ranks the outside laity have no chance of penetrating, the same thing takes place as with standing water in small pools, it tends to become corrupt. Even when the corporation trusted with the guardianship of truth is not a close body, this very result has been known to happen. It is incredible, and yet it is a well-known historical fact, that in an assembly of Protestant clergymen, who read the Bible, or at least preached from it every week, one of them had the hardihood to avow his belief that Christ never meant his people to spread the gospel among the heathen till a previous course of enlightenment had prepared them to receive its truths. "To spread abroad the knowledge of the gospel among barbarous and heathen nations seems to me highly preposterous, in so far as it anticipates, nay, as it even reverses the order of nature. Men must be polished and refined in their manners before they can be properly enlightened

“in religious truths.”¹ If we had not overwhelming evidence to the contrary, it might be allowable, in the face of the speech he then delivered, to doubt whether the Bible he used was the same as we now read. But traditions, unrecorded though deeply felt, had overgrown recorded but unfelt truth. The atmosphere, that slowly and surely gathers round every set of men, tells sooner or later on their ways of regarding not only the world outside of them, but even the narrow circle of their own daily routine. Its breath seems to change thought and feeling so strangely, that what one generation believed, another professing the same principles and acknowledging the same law books, may deny. Did this ever happen with the Hebrew priesthood? Did a growth of dead traditional thought and feeling, though unrecorded, overspread the written and living law of Moses? And the corruptions which one age got accustomed to, would the blast of a living power suddenly springing up, or the healthy influence of adversity sweep away in the following? It is not difficult to answer these questions.

The history of Judah is made up of periods of religious death, followed by brief periods of quickening. Sometimes the ancient faith seemed wholly lost, or remained stagnant for generations. But the revival always came with a suddenness and a fury, that shewed forces at

¹ Hugh Miller, *Headship of Christ*, p. 152.

work within the nation, which a superficial observer might disregard or undervalue. On the nature of these hidden forces, the whole battle between the two schools of thinkers in modern times has always turned. One school believes that the personal might of prophets or priests, or both, speaking as they believed in the name and by the inspiration of heaven, upheaved the nation and wrought reform. As the force was sudden and transient, so the upheaval was sudden and brief; death speedily followed the quickening. But the other school denies the justice of this view, and points to the necessity of something more widespread and far-reaching in its action than a prophet's preaching. That "something" was the five books, imbedded from the most ancient times in the nation's heart, and played on by inspired prophets and pastors when revival or quickening came. Here is the whole battle. Were the hidden springs that caused revivals in the nation's faith these five books, or were they not? One school says, No, these books had no existence. The other says, Yes, prophets and priests, by touching these springs of life, caused the upheavals in Hebrew life that are the outstanding features of its history.

We assume, in the meantime, that the priesthood had the five books, from the days of Moses downwards. It is allowable to disregard the wisdom of the critic, whose labours have been directed towards the discovery of what was old and what new, what original and what added, in

these books. A method so untrustworthy as that which has failed to convince men of affairs that Homer was a fable, and his great poems a growth of circumstances, has not convinced, and never will convince, the world that Moses was a name, and the five books a patchwork, put together mostly during the times of the exile. It is not without reason, therefore, that we assume for the present the reality of the lawgiver and his writings. But though the priesthood had these precious heirlooms in their keeping, is it in agreement with what we know of the ups and downs of human life, that they always diligently studied them, squared the routine of daily duty by their precepts, and scrupulously forbade the smallest turning aside from the cherished customs of the past? To answer "yes" would be chimerical; it is easy to shew what reply Hebrew history returns to these questions.

If the state of the priesthood immediately after the death of Eli and the destruction of Shiloh be considered, it will be seen that a great break probably took place in the continuity of their traditional observance of the law. The destruction of Shiloh was so overwhelming, that at a distance of five or six centuries, it was still referred to as a fearful example of vengeance on wickedness: "Go ye now unto my place, which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."¹ Although the priests

¹ Jer. vii. 12.

possessed the written statutes of the legislator, still custom had or at least would reconcile them to the habit of discharging daily duty without a constant reference to their books. And many parts of these books, because they did not directly refer to daily routine, would be imperfectly studied by the priests, if they were ever studied at all, save by a few. There is no reason to believe that the five books were carefully and diligently studied by members of the priesthood at Shiloh. Even in our own country, how indifferent is the acquaintance shewn by many preachers of the gospel with the facts of Scripture history, outside of their own immediate range of thought, although they have printed books in their hands, and read them every day! Much more would this be the case in that far off age, when printing was unknown, and badly written or defective manuscripts were often all that a reader could get. Accuracy in the discharge of daily duty might fairly be expected from the priests, whether it was acquired from the routine taught them by their fathers, or from reading the statutes of Moses for themselves. But an accurate knowledge of past events outside of this routine was not to be looked for from them, any more than from the generality of Christian ministers in our own day. If this were true, while Shiloh still continued to be the central place of worship for the Hebrews—we assume, for argument's sake, that such it was—how much more true would it become when Shiloh

had been destroyed, when the ark was separated from the tabernacle, and the heirs to the priesthood had fallen in battle, or were under age? A more serious break in the continuity of the traditional worship of the Hebrews can scarcely be imagined. The five books were in the hands of the priests, it may be said. Very true, but what are law books and literature without the living power of an uninterrupted interpretation? If that power be once lost or dulled, generations may pass before it regain its former force. An overgrowth of superstition—the weed that is always threatening to choke the truth—may quickly spring up, but be slowly rooted out. Or, with the very books in their hands, there may have been a want of will on the part of the priests to study their contents, and to master their meaning. The pride of a caste is always favourable to laziness among its members.

If the utter destruction of Shiloh caused a break in the continuity of Hebrew worship, much more serious results would flow from the massacre of the priests by order of Saul, perhaps two or three generations afterwards.¹ With

¹ The time that elapsed was not less than sixty years, and may have been more. The high priests' line was—Eli, Phinehas, Ahitub, and Ichabod (1 Sam. xiv. 3), Ahiah, Ahimelech, Abiathar. Of these it is known that Phinehas fell in battle a few days before the birth of Ichabod. But Ahitub was Ichabod's brother. Allow that he was fifteen at his father's death. Other fifteen years elapsed before he could enter on his duties as priest. Ahiah and his son, Ahimelech, both of whom, according to Hebrew custom, are called Ahitub's sons (1 Sam. xxii. 20), succeeded. Even though Ahitub did not reach the priestly

the exception of Abiathar, the ruling family in the priesthood became extinct. Eighty-five priests of Ahimelech's father's house were butchered in the king's presence, and their wives and children shared the same fate shortly after. Most justly therefore might the chronicler say that, about fifty years later, David "found more chief men of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar," for it was on the latter that this terrible calamity fell.¹ In one day the traditional observances of the sanctuary were blotted out, and recourse required to be had to the five books for their renewal. The magnitude of the disaster to the family and the kingdom is now beyond our calculation. Nor did the evil wrought stop there. Abiathar had no chance of at once restoring what Saul had thus ruthlessly destroyed. In banishment and in exile he followed for years the fortunes of the outlawed David, in the wilderness, in Ziklag, in Hebron. The traditional lore of the priests was thus wholly, or almost wholly, lost. A break in its continuity more thorough and more serious had not taken place. A regency, so to speak, a massacre, and an exile during a troublous period that may have lasted for a half, perhaps

age, his son Ahiah, his grandson, Ahimelech, and his great-grandson, Abiathar, all had on their first appearance in the history. If, then, Abiathar was thirty years of age when he escaped Saul's vengeance (1 Sam. xxii. 20; xxiii. 6), an easy calculation will shew that sixty or seventy years elapsed between the destruction of Shiloh and the massacre of Nob. But a century seems nearer the interval than sixty or seventy years. Some consider Ahimelech a brother of Ahiah.

¹ 1 Chron. xxiv. 4.

for a whole century, effectually broke the continuity of traditional routine among the Hebrew priests. Nor do these seem to have been all the blows that shattered this continuity. Saul is known to have slain some of the Gibeonites; the Mosaic tabernacle is also known to have been transferred to their city from the blood-stained soil of Nob. Is it not reasonable to suppose that Saul's madness had turned from the slaughtered priests to those who seemed to befriend them in Gibeon?

It fortunately happens that the proof of these views is not left to the general considerations which affect all ranks and classes of men. Of the break in the continuity of priestly worship, we have one clear and decisive example. When the ark of God was following the little army of Saul during the war of independence against the Philistines, Ahiah the high-priest, and great-grandfather of Abiathar, was in charge. No one reading the story will imagine that either cart or ox was then used by the priests in conveying the ark from place to place. "Bring hither the ark of God," said Saul to Ahiah. But the words had scarcely been uttered when he added, "Withdraw thine hand."¹ Apparently the priests in charge bore the ark by the well-known staves, through rings at its four corners. But a number of years, perhaps twenty or thirty, passed away. The massacre at Nob, the exile of Abiathar, had done their work. The continuity of priestly worship was

¹ 1 Sam. xiv. 18, 19.

broken; the living power of a speaking interpreter was dead for the time. What was the result? When David wished the ark conveyed to Zion, neither he nor Abiathar knew the proper means to employ. They had recourse to the traditions of the district in which the ark was housed, traditions that had no better inspiration than that of Philistine soothsayers. It came to Bethshemesh from the land of the Philistines on a "new cart"; it was resolved to remove it from Kirjath-jearim, a neighbouring town, on a similar conveyance. The Philistine lords, knowing no better mode of conveyance, set the oxen off to take whatever road they chose; the Hebrew king and priest followed mainly the example set them by the heathen. The former acted on the best advice they could get; the latter, in sheer and unpardonable ignorance, followed the tradition of the district, because the tradition of the priests had been buried in the graves of Ahimelech's father's house. We cannot imagine that all the priests were as ignorant as Abiathar, for history soon reveals the contrary. But it is clear that the leading men of the Hebrews knew no better, until the check their ignorance received forced them to consult their law-books. At the second attempt, three months after, the staves were used, and the ark was brought in safety to its new home. But the chronicler adds that David then gave orders, not to Abiathar only, but to "Zadok and Abiathar the priests."¹ The change is almost enough to

¹ 1 Chron. xv. 11.

justify the inference that Zadok had shewn himself to be the rightful heir to the priesthood, by pointing out the mistake committed in using a "new cart."

The writer of Second Samuel is silent on this mistake and discovery. He gives no reason for David's failure at first, other than the dread of a holiness so pure that even the staying up of the ark by Uzzah was a sin. The Chronicler alone mentions this breach of ancient law as the occasion of Uzzah's death. Hence it may be held, after the modern fashion, that, since the older writer is silent, the more recent, that is, the Chronicler, either invented the reason he gives, or adopted as his own a reason that had grown up long after David's time. To views like these, founded as they are on nothing more solid than a critic's fancy, it is not easy to reply. There is really nothing to take hold of in this and in many similar cases. With writers so determined to give the reins to fancy, the best thing to do is to hope that the mist will be driven away at some turning on their road through life, where a strong enough breeze from the great ocean of truth begins to blow about them.

However, there is reason to think that the Chronicler is right. In Samuel, the imitation by the priests of the Philistines' plan of conveying the ark is unmistakable; a "a new cart" drawn by oxen was used in both cases. But the writer of Second Samuel gives us distinctly to understand that another mode of conveyance was had recourse

to by the king three months after. Cart and oxen were discarded. In their stead appear "they that bare the ark of the Lord";¹ nor does it require a knowledge of Hebrew to see that these are the very words used in describing the mode of conveyance laid down in the five books, and practised in the wilderness. The older writer does not say that David and his priests sinned in using a cart; but he goes so near to saying it that, even if the Chronicler had not made his comment on the affair, few would have failed to see that it was the only just comment to make.

But it is possible to go farther than this, and to maintain that no careful reader would expect to get from the author of the Second Book of Samuel the reason given by the Chronicler. That ancient writer did not ask modern critics on what plan they would like him to write his history. He had a will of his own, and a way of his own, which those, who are not disposed to cavil or find fault, may discover for themselves. He set out with resolving to narrate facts, not to render reasons. Keeping himself far in the back-ground, and never thrusting his own views on a reader's notice, he passes kings and priests, men and women, Hebrews and heathen across the stage, without ever letting his hand be seen or his own voice be heard. By his silence he says as plainly as if he spoke the words, "I give the facts, find out the reasons,

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 13. Compare also 2 Sam. xv. 24; 1 Kings viii. 4.

“judge for yourselves.” He supposes his readers to be men of sound judgment, or at least of common sense; he certainly never imagines that they will blacken his good name, or call in question his very existence, because he has left us a puzzle or two to fight about, as if similar puzzles had not been handed down to posterity by every historian worthy of the name. All this is clear enough to an ordinary reader of the books of Samuel. But the love of making discoveries is running with a strong current towards finding fault, in the hope of thereby finding truth. Still, whatever discoveries may be made in this field, it is manifest that in the failure of David’s first attempt to convey the ark to Zion, we have a proof of that break in the continuity of priestly routine, which might be expected after the almost total ruin of Abimelech’s father’s house at Nob.¹

But other and nearly as serious breaks in the continuity of worship took place in after ages. If the temple was in disrepair after Athaliah’s usurpation (B.C. 880), it is probable that the priests’ knowledge of the written law had also suffered somewhat of eclipse. A period of stagnation in Hebrew faith and worship followed, lasting for nearly 140 years to the death of Jotham (B.C. 742). During the next sixteen years, Ahaz led the way in open revolt from the statutes of the five books, or from such

¹ For other examples of what was manifestly a renewed study of the “Law of Moses” in the reign of David, see chapters iii. and iv.

regard for them as was entertained in his day. The reign of his son Hezekiah witnessed a bright revival of the nation's faith, so bright that even modern critics allow he was the first who attempted to force on the people one holy place and one central altar for all to worship at. But instead of the king forcing something new on the people, it may and probably rather was king and people combined forcing something old, lying deep in the nation's heart, on an unwilling priesthood and nobility. In other words, again was recourse had to the ancient law books of Moses for guidance. It is allowed by modern writers that Hezekiah attempted to make the altar on Moriah the only altar in the land. This throws us back on the five books: Nor is the same view without confirmation from another quarter. After counsel taken with his princes, the king resolved to keep his great Passover in the second month, because, according to the law, it could not be rightly kept in the first. No one can read the story without at once recalling the permission given to do this in like circumstances by the lawgiver himself, when some of the people, who had been defiled through handling a dead body, asked and got leave to keep the feast a month after the usual time.¹ To deny the reality of this bit of legislation, as may be done, adds to, instead of lessening the difficulties of history. But there is one thing clear. No sooner is an effort made to repair a breach in the

¹ Num. ix. 6-14.

continuity of Hebrew ritual and worship, than reference is made to the ancient law books of the people as the real source of renewed life. Our modern inquirers say, that the broken threads were joined, or rather that they were respun by prophets with or apart from priests. It is not the case. The only facts we have, bearing on these revivals, point to a renewed study of the five books for the restoration of the Hebrew ritual, and the quickening of the faith. Prophets helped forward the good work by building on the foundation of these books, without which their efforts would have been meaningless and vain. Had not these books been rooted deep in the people's hearts, a revival so sudden and so complete as Hezekiah's would seem almost impossible. But in the face of the facts adduced, to assert that the prophets built on the promptings of their own hearts, or merely on some bits of old tradition, and not on these ancient books, is at least not borne out by the history we have, nor are we likely now to get any other more reliable.

Nearly sixty years of cloud and darkness followed the sunshine of Hezekiah's reign. Manasseh undid the good his father wrought, so far at least as the mere surface of history and that which first meets the eye is concerned. Perhaps he caused the most serious of all breaks in the continuity of the Hebrew ritual. Open revolt from ancient truth for nearly sixty years was a far heavier strain on the continuity of priestly worship than even a

century of such stagnation as followed Eli's death or Athaliah's tyranny. But, again, the sunshine that bursts through and scatters these clouds is attributed directly to the five books. There is not a single fact to shew that prophets had any share whatever in the great change that took place for the better under his grandson Josiah. The book of the law was then found in the Temple. It was read by the king, the high priest, and the chief scribe. Huldah, the prophetess, was consulted, but only for the purpose of ascertaining whether the threats uttered in the book would be fulfilled. A return to the ancient ritual was the result. But Huldah was powerless to attain this end by herself, or with the help of Jeremiah and other prophets who may then have flourished. The whole change came directly from an appeal to the book of the law. This is a fact that cannot be got rid of; the writer, and the finding of the supposed "programme," as Deuteronomy is called, may be a mistake or a delusion of the nineteenth century after Christ.

Although, then, it is the custom with many writers to attribute the ebb and flow of religious life among the Hebrews to the teaching of the prophets, it is clear that that teaching was subordinate to the power of the five books. So far as the statements of history furnish a clue to guide us through the ill-lighted past, there is no room for doubt that these books produced the change, regulated the return to old arrangements, and infused new life into

all ranks of the people. Nowhere is the appeal made to prophets, whose influence many writers too often consider to be paramount. Invariably is the return to an ancient routine founded on an appeal to the writings of Moses. By his statutes men are guided into right ways, and priests revert to the ritual of former times. No facts can be plainer than these, so far at least as the brief history of long ages has given us facts at all. From the massacre at Nob to the reign of Josiah about 450 years elapsed. The history of that long period is comprised in 170 pages of an ordinary Hebrew Bible, and of these, 100 pages are devoted to the lives of David and Solomon alone. The few facts we have gathered bearing on breaks in the continuity of Hebrew worship thus cease to be few, in comparison with the whole range of that history. They are openings in the clouds that rest on the past, which unmistakably reveal how men thought and acted, to what they appealed, and on what they relied at the great turning points of Hebrew life. If those who maintain the paramount influence of the prophets, apart from the five books, could produce as many facts in support of their theory, success would have long ago crowned their many and laborious efforts; but their case is supposition from beginning to end. The prophets occupy a second place, the value of which is wholly dependent on the five books. The law is the foundation of all things, the source of all changes for the better in Hebrew history,

the only court of appeal for priests, prophets, and people alike.

It is evident, then, that at the root of every revival of the Hebrew faith lay a quickened study of the overlooked or forgotten five books. From them came the impulse that bore the nation onward to a purer worship; with neglect of them that impulse slackened or died. It may be said that we are assuming, what the critics deny, the existence of the writings of Moses as we now have them, in those far-times. True enough, but we are shewing that their theory is built on an overlooking or a setting aside of the known facts of history, and that a chain of consistency runs through all the ages of the Hebrew kingdom, which has not and cannot be broken. After Josiah's death the Book of the Law ceased to hold the high place it had. It lost its power over court and people so effectually that, if it had been a "programme," such as is supposed, the bitter foes of Jeremiah would have taunted him with a thing so generally known. But his numerous writings contain not a trace of any such taunts. On the other hand, he denounces the people for their disregard of the law, for their Sabbath-breaking, for their worse than idolatry, even though they had also altars and groves on high hills, for their alliance with Egypt, and especially for their breach of the covenant of the year of release.¹

¹ Jer. xvi. 12; xvii. 3, 22; xxxiv. 13. He believed the year of

When Zedekiah and his princes were thoroughly frightened into the semblance of keeping the law by the din of Chaldean war around the city of Jerusalem, they even observed the year of release for their Hebrew slaves. It came round once every seven years, and the last year of Zedekiah's reign was the thirty-fifth year from Josiah's reformation. The whole story of the treatment of these slaves, as recorded in Jeremiah's prophecies, shews that the princes never would have set them free if the "Book of the Law" had been a mere "programme." Many of the chief men would be twenty years or more of age at the discovery of the book of the Temple; it is outrageous to imagine that they looked on it as a forgery, and did not twit Jeremiah, their great enemy, with building his predictions on a falsehood. Still less is it conceivable that they would part with their slaves at the bidding of a book, of which not a few of them must have well known the origin and history.¹

release to be as old as Moses. The reformation took place in Josiah's eighteenth year. Hence we have—

Josiah . . .	12 years 6 months
Jehoahaz . . .	3 ,,
Jehoiakim . . .	11 ,,
Jehoiachin . . .	3 ,,
Zedekiah . . .	11 ,,
	—
Total . . .	35

So that five years of release had happened since Josiah's reformation, and either that year or the year preceding was a year of release.

¹ Deut. xv. 1, 2, 12-15. Was the law in Exod. xxi. 2 older?

So keenly is this want of historical support for their theory felt by Kuenen and his friends, that Jeremiah gets no better treatment from them than he got from the critics of Jerusalem, who put him in the stocks and threw him into the deep mud hole. False prophets, however, were welcomed as friends by both sets of critics. One of them named Hananiah was such a worthy man that Kuenen becomes poetic in describing his virtues, for Hananiah, and, in general, the prophets who agreed with him, were merely the representatives of the popular desires and expectations. "Full of faith in Jahveh's might, penetrated with the conviction that he stood in the most intimate relation to Israel, gazing on the temple dedicated to him, in which the smoke of sacrifices ascended in his honour, they were convinced that the humiliation of Jahveh's people could but be transitory."¹ Jeremiah's view of the man is somewhat different: "Thou makest this people to trust in a lie . . . thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord."² On the well-known principle of Hebrew law that Jehovah was King of the land, Hananiah was thus guilty of high treason. But Kuenen's partiality to the false prophet need not make him unjust to the true. Because Jeremiah's words cannot be tortured into witnessing for his theories, he might at least hold back from writing a parody of him and his sufferings. He was the traitor, it seems,

¹ Kuenen, vol. ii. p. 63.

² Jer. xxviii. 15, 16. Compare 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.

not Hananiah: "It is a fact that, during the siege of Jerusalem (588-586 B.C.), he did all that lay in his power to make the defence fail, and that his preaching was practised by those who—deserted to the enemy. It was a sad, I had almost said a humiliating part that Jeremiah found himself called upon to play. Is it to be wondered at that, in a moment of despair, he cursed the day of his birth?"¹ The man is an indifferent judge of treason who calls by that name the warnings, the entreaties, the advice given by a true patriot to the king in his secret chamber, to the princes in council, to the people in the public square.

But Kuenen goes further with less show of reason: "Jeremiah was arrested upon one occasion by the governor of the Temple, and was not released till the next day—an occurrence that drew bitter complaints from him."² The prophet is here held up as a poor whiner, complaining bitterly of the trumpery hardship of a night's arrest, during what may have been a state of siege! But the facts are such as to raise doubts of Kuenen's power of appraising things at their true worth.³ He has done the prophet a great wrong. Jeremiah was a priest, in other

¹ Kuenen, vol. ii. p. 69. By consulting the passages he quotes, the strange mixing up of things that differ will be at once seen. Jer xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2, 17, 23, xx. 14-18.

² Kuenen, vol. ii. p. 63; Jer. xx. 1-18.

³ Of a piece with this is the following turning upside down of history, vol. ii. p. 32, "The corpse suspended upon a cross is to be taken down

words, a man of high rank. Pashur, the son of Immer, one of his peers, dared to treat him as a common felon for denouncing a national breach of faith, by putting him in the stocks, where he was exposed to the gaze of the whole people, and specially of his own townsmen going to Anathoth. No man, burning with a feeling of outraged dignity, would have calmly submitted to an insult so deep and so undeserved. And no prophet, speaking in the name of Jehovah, would let the wrong pass without remark. As a messenger from the real King of the land, Jeremiah was neither a traitor for delivering his orders, nor worthy of arrest and the stocks at the hands of a disloyal priest.

The long night of the captivity proved the truth of Jeremiah's commission. When day breaks on the exiles, the five books are again found discharging the same duty as in former ages. But the prophet, who then stands forth as the living interpreter, makes a plainer statement of their place and worth than any who preceded him in office. And there was a good reason for this state of things. The people were ignorant, and most of them spoke a language somewhat different from their fathers' Hebrew. Before they could understand their sacred books, teachers of the things and interpreters of the very words had to be provided. These Ezra the priest, a ready scribe in the law of Moses, supplied at the great reading

and buried before the evening." A *tree* is Jewish ; a *cross* is Roman, and does it not antedate history in Kuenen's view at least ?

described in the book of Nehemiah.¹ It is allowed that the law which he then read and made the people understand was the Pentateuch, mainly or altogether as we now have it. This revival, therefore, by the common consent of all writers, was the result of a prophet's teaching founded on the five books. But is there any better reason for attributing Ezra's reformation to the five books than for attributing to them the revivals we have already discussed, David's, Hezekiah's, and Josiah's? And was Ezra's work a whit more stable or lasting than theirs?

When the subject is carefully considered, it will appear that there is not much more ground for believing Ezra to have been "armed" with the five books than any who preceded him in the same field. His writings record events that took place in a very brief space of time, even if we include under them the book of Nehemiah as well as the book of Ezra. They are full of details if we compare them with more ancient histories, and with the long ages that are crowded into a small compass. They cover forty-two pages of a Hebrew bible, in which the history of Judah from Joash and Jehoiada to the captivity occupies only twenty-five. A period of chiefly forty years is embraced in the former, and of three hundred in the latter. More minute details of what was the all-absorbing topic of interest in Ezra's time thus became a thing to be looked for in his writings. But the details are not such

¹ Neh. viii. 7, 8.

as to satisfy the critic, who rejects similar details as incorrect readings or invented "programmes" in the centuries that preceded. Relatively, therefore, Ezra gives us as imperfect information on the five books as any writer who went before him. But if we judge him by the standard of truth set up in these days, we may be inclined to doubt whether his five books were the same as ours. It is generally held that they were; but a reader trained in modern schools may well doubt whether that view is just. If neither David nor Hezekiah nor Josiah had our five books, then it is possible to turn the critics' reasoning into absurdity by shewing that, on their principles, Ezra did not possess what we now have; in fact, that the five books never had a beginning at all.

Kuenen himself sets the example in this way of doubt. Ezra, he holds, "is inaccurate in saying, 'they set the " ' priests in their orders and the Levites in their divisions " ' for the service of God in Jerusalem, *as it is written in " ' the book of Moses,*' for this book contains no precepts on " this subject."¹ Because our copies of the five books contain no precepts on the subject referred to, Kuenen infers

¹ Kuenen, vol. ii. p. 209. This writer himself is either guilty of an inaccuracy, or his copy of the book of Deuteronomy is different from every other body's when he writes, "The king is to cause the priests to " give him a copy of this law (Hilkiah's book of the law), and is to read " in it constantly" (vol. ii. p. 33). See Deut. xvii. 18, in which the king is ordered to write out a copy for himself, a very different and a better thing than getting a priest to do the work.

that Ezra has fallen into an inaccuracy. We deny that there is any inaccuracy, according to the way in which men generally quote from ancient books, especially when they do not expect their words to be weighed by grains and scruples so fine as the critic's. But putting ourselves in Kuenen's position, and wishing to shew to what absurdities it leads, we are entitled to say that, on his own principles, he is or may be inaccurate in charging Ezra with error. Although our copies of "the book of Moses" do not justify the statement quoted above, how can Kuenen or his friends ever hope to shew that Ezra's copy did not? Ezra may have meant one thing by "the book of Moses," the writers who deny his accuracy of quotation may mean another. We are taking a first leaf out of the doubter's own book to shew how hopelessly we drift out to sea, without rudder or pilot, when hypercriticism is allowed full play. But we may take one or two more, for it needs no learning and no sharpness to pick them up in reading the book of Nehemiah. It is there said that "they found
" written in the law which the Lord had commanded by
" Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths
" in the feast of the seventh month; and that they should
" publish and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem,
" saying, Go forth unto the mount,¹ and fetch olive
" branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and
" palm branches, and branches of thick trees to make

¹ The Mount of Olives.

“booths, as it is written.”¹ Nehemiah distinctly states that Moses mentions Jerusalem and Olivet in his instructions to the people about the feast. We know that he did not name these places; but a common-sense reader sees that Nehemiah is only putting a special interpretation on the general law laid down by Moses. Nothing is more common in everyday life. The matter then stands thus:—If we insist with the critics on literal accuracy, and refuse to allow the spirit of a quotation to shine through the dress in which a later age may justly clothe it, then the inference is unavoidable that Ezra’s “book of Moses” was a different book from what we have. Even the facts of history are wrongly given, if the two books are the same, and the critic’s scruples be the weights employed; for during their wilderness wanderings the Hebrews, it is said, “in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage.”² They only spoke of doing this, but our book of Moses does not say they went farther. Evidently the critical rules of the new school may be employed to throw everything into confusion; there is nothing for us but to despair of ever seeing the face of truth in these, or any other historical matters.

The revival under Ezra was founded on the five books. This is acknowledged on all sides. But was it the same or different in its results from the revivals that had preceded it for five centuries? History furnishes an answer too

¹ Neh. viii. 14, 15.

² Neh. ix. 17.

well known to require much comment. The same tale of backsliding and rebellion was repeated as in the olden time. Nehemiah's witness is, "I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil unto the treasuries."¹ False prophets also were busy at work: "My God, think thou . . . on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear." Heavy usury was wrung from the poor in a time of dearth, until they had to sell their children into slavery. And marriages with heathen women had become so common that the holy city was in danger of being again defiled with idolatry.² The evidence of Malachi is even more decisive. "O priests," he says, "that despise my name . . . ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar . . . ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought the torn, and the lame, and the sick . . . ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law." Among the last words of the spirit of prophecy, as it was giving up the ghost in Israel, was its testimony to the power of a living interpreter for the

¹ Neh. xiii. 10-12.

² Neh. vi. 14, v. 1-8, xiii. 26.

preservation of ritual and worship in the land: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."¹

Allowing then that the Mosaic ritual sketched in the five books was really carried out in all its fulness as soon as the Hebrews conquered Canaan, and set up the Tabernacle at Shiloh, would that ritual be observed with the same fulness during four or five centuries, such as those are dimly seen to have been which intervened between Joshua and Saul? Would priests and Levites retain their proper places? Would the people pay their rightful dues? It is notorious that the ritual neither could be nor was observed in its fulness, although our readiness to believe that all things continue unchanged from the beginning may blind us to this plain fact. But it is

¹ Mal. ii. 7. We might have referred to Nehemiah's library, and the importance attached to it by some modern writers. Dean Stanley speaks of the tradition "as the one particle of truth in the legends concerning the origin of the Jewish canon." He then proceeds to give a long account of what its contents were, and what they were not. But the author of the book quoted (2 Macca. ii. 13) lived three or perhaps four hundred years after Nehemiah's death. He shelters himself from the necessity of proof by saying that Judas Maccabeus "gathered together all those things that were lost by reason of the war we had," clearly implying that Nehemiah's library, if it ever existed, had been scattered to the winds. Besides, the tradition is mentioned in a letter to Alexandrian Jews, who were naturally proud of the great library there, and required to be told that Jerusalem could boast of a library too. However, the value of the letter is reduced to nothing by the monstrous fables it contains.

equally clear that while from the nature of their office priests would be always climbing into higher consequence, Levites, from their servant-like work, would run a risk of falling to a lower place than at first, or of being driven to desert their service altogether. That this actually took place we have the testimony of history. A whole family of Levites, two thousand seven hundred in number, had sunk out of sight, and were only discovered, in the last year of David's reign, in a remote corner of the kingdom. And we have already seen that an hundred years after the return from exile Nehemiah found the Temple deserted by the Levites and the singers, because the people had ceased to pay them their dues.

If this was the state of things during the five centuries between Joshua and Saul, what else could be expected in the five that followed? The kingdom was rent in twain; the house of God had fallen into disrepair, if it was not largely burnt; the dues of its servants were left unpaid; foreign wars, civil broils, heathen persecutions wasted the little kingdom of Judah. Could the ritual of David survive in all its fulness? Most certainly not, except by a miracle continued from day to day and from age to age. Again, as before, the priests would hold their ground from the very nature of the case. Not so the Levites. For centuries before the captivity they would be refused their rightful dues, even as they were refused them in Nehemiah's time. Clearly, then, the 38,000 Levites found on

the rolls of David's kingdom would soon dwindle away. Two hundred years later a mere handful answered Jehoiada's call to dethrone the usurper Athaliah; their number was about 500, gathered from the cities of Judah, and reinforced, it may be, from the ranks of the priests. One object of the Chronicler in writing his history was to raise the Levites again to their rightful place; his work was a handbook for them precisely as the books of Kings were a handbook for the people at large. That the Levites had sunk and the priests had risen is clear enough from history; but no means are left of determining their fortunes and relations after the days of Solomon. Nearly a century after the return of the exiles from Babylon the "priests" always figure in an enumeration of the orders of the people; the "Levites" seldom or never. Nehemiah says: "Neither had as I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work."¹ And Ezra, in his mournful prayer, says: "For our iniquities have we, our kings and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands;" and the letter of Artaxerxes speaks of "the free-will offering of the people and the priests."²

This exaltation of the priests and depression of the Levites come strongly out in the books of the Maccabees and in the New Testament. The events recorded in the

¹ Neh. ii. 16; Ezra, ix, 7, vii. 16.

² Ezra iii. 12.

former took place about three centuries after the time of Ezra. The readiness of the people to fall away to the idolatry of the Greeks and the revival that followed, based on the five books, are simply a repetition of what had frequently happened in Hebrew history in former ages. But again as before the priest stands prominently out, the want of a prophet is bewailed, the Levite is not even named. And in the New Testament the parable of the good Samaritan, the deputation sent to John the Baptist, and the reference to Barnabas the Levite,¹ are the only indications it contains of the existence of these temple servants.

Of breaches of continuity in the Mosaic ritual and worship, there were thus very many among the Hebrews. If then we divide the period from the days of Eli to the birth of Christ into two equal parts, we shall find that the half nearest to our own time, from 586 B.C. downwards, presents a series of quickenings and fallings away in the nation's life exactly parallel to those which formed the outstanding features of Israel's history during the earlier half, from 1170 B.C. to 586 B.C. The number of the series would seem to be almost the same in both halves. The results were clearly the same:—The house of God deserted; its dues unpaid; the Levites turning to what was not their own work, or becoming lost among the other tribes; idolatry prevalent. But the law of Moses, as we

¹ Luke x. 32; John i. 19; Acts iv. 36.

now have it, was in priests' and pastors' hands throughout the later half of that long period of 1170 years; although it was a dead letter, until the heart of the nation was touched by a sense of duty and of danger. How then can there be a doubt in the mind of any student of history that the quickenings and the fallings away in the earlier half, 1170 B.C. to 586 B.C., resulted from the same causes as in the more recent—regard for, and neglect of, the well-known Five Books?

CHAPTER III.

THE PROPHECY OF A KING.

The passage in Deuteronomy not a prophecy—Of the same nature as passage about the judge—"The king" a subject of discussion in the wilderness—The Hebrews' idea of a king—Why the unexpected happened: no King was chosen—Rules supposed to refer to Solomon—A "tradition" assumed, as there was no popular history—Importance attributed to the trade in horses—Its absurdity shewn—Rules apply to other kings besides Solomon—"Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee"—The "Testimony" of Jehoiada.

ONE of the outstanding proofs usually put forward to shew that the book of Deuteronomy is of recent date, far nearer to our days than are the times of Moses, is the reference it contains to the election and duties of a king. Many modern writers decline to recognise in the passage a prophecy of what was to happen four centuries after the Exodus. Some of them openly avow their disbelief in a power given to man to predict events so far off in time; others, without going that length, think the terms of this prophecy are such as could only have been delivered long after the thing itself had happened, and had turned out less happily than was hoped. Both sets of critics are agreed in regarding the passage as an attempt that carries

its own condemnation on its face. It is not a prophecy at all, they say, in the right meaning of the word ; it is a history of what was long past put in prophetic form as if it were still future. They decline to call it a "forgery;" it is a bit of the filling in of the "programme" of Jehovah's party in Judah. The words of the writer of Deuteronomy are these :—

DEUT. XVII. 14-20.

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me ;

15 Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose : *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee : thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses ; forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart

turn not away : neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites :

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life : that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them :

20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand or *to* the left : to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

The first thing to be observed about this passage is, that it has little or no likeness to what is generally regarded as prophecy. We agree with the writers already referred to

in discarding the idea that Moses was foretelling the future, as he did foretell the coming of the great Prophet in the following chapter. The more carefully the passage is read, the more certain may the reader become that words have been wrongly used, and false impressions have been conveyed regarding the passage quoted above. We may justly give up the idea of a prophecy, while avowing our belief that Moses was the author of the words.

The next thing to be observed about the passage is, that violence is usually done by wrenching it from the context; for in the verses immediately before are read these words—

DEUT. XVII. 8-13.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

9 And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:

10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee:

11 According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, *to* the right hand, nor *to* the left.

12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

Manifestly this second passage is not a prophecy. It has never been so regarded. But there is no reason for calling what follows it a prediction, because the word "king" is found instead of "judge." And why should one canon of criticism be applied to the rules about the king, while another, totally different, is applied to those about the judge? Everybody allows that Moses could and may have written the latter. It is not reasonable then to deny that he could and may have written the former also. There is nothing to awaken suspicion about the one passage; the scent for a "programme" is full and strong as soon as the other is drawn across the run of a critic's pen. Moses gets scant justice at the hands of his censors.

It must be observed next that these two passages are connected parts of the same whole. They refer to one general head of affairs—the administration of justice; they are written too by the same man, and neither of them is a prophecy, nor wears the well-known dress of a prophecy. One can scarcely doubt that they are the expansion of a passage in the beginning of this same book, which puts in brief compass the relation of inferior officers to higher, and of the higher to the king.

DEUT. I. 15-18.

15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over

fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between *every* man and

his brother, and the stranger *that is with him.*

17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment ; *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great ; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man ;

for the judgment *is* God's : and the cause that is too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it.

18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

It is thus of no small consequence to find that the parts of the book of Deuteronomy, so far, hang well together ; consistency is a mark of truth in any writing, but specially in one that claims to be divine.

It is reasonable to hold, farther, that these passages were the work of Moses, for we have only to carry ourselves back in thought to the times of the Exodus and of the wilderness wanderings. A nation of slaves has escaped from cruel bondage. After a hundred years of hard grinding at a tyrant's tasks, they find themselves in the wilderness, safe and free, with the Red Sea between them and danger. More than half a million of men, besides women and children, have gone forth from Egypt : there are two millions and a-half of fugitives altogether, a nation born in a day from the cloven head of the greatest empire in the world. This is the story that has come down to our time. Assuming that it is literally true, we can easily imagine the great topics of conversation that stirred the vast host, as soon as their fear of pursuit was allayed by the drowning of the enemy. With one of these we are more immediately concerned at present. It referred to the future government of the nation. Return to Egypt

was impossible ; a few might think of it in times of hardship or grumbling, for grumblers always come to the front ; but every man of intelligence must have seen that the past could not be retraced. As this became clear to all the Hebrews, the more would they be disposed to indulge in speculations on the nature of the government they should be under. What would be the first question for a rescued nation in our own day would also be the first question for the Hebrews, with this difference, that it was perhaps easier of answer for them than it would be for us. A people without rulers in our times may choose between several kinds of monarchy and several forms of a republic. But in the age of the Exodus, and among tribes which had lived in Egypt, such a choice was unknown. There was only one form of government open to a great nation like the Hebrews—a great nation, for, so far as numbers and extent of territory went, there was nothing to prevent them playing the same part in conquering the world as the mighty empires of Egypt and Assyria. For generations they had been accustomed to an absolute monarchy. Nothing else would enter their minds. The question they had to answer in their tents and tribes was not, Shall we set up a monarchy or a republic ? but it was, Who shall be our king ?

These considerations are so obvious to any one who puts himself in the position of the Hebrews, that they stand in no need of proof. But none the less are they of the highest

value in this inquiry. If we know what the Hebrew people were thinking of, it is easier to discover what their leader was proposing to do. Things then take their proper place as cause and effect, while guesses and haphazard are left out of account in a historical reckoning. To wrench out of its place the passage already quoted about a king, to hold it up as a thing standing by itself, like some lonely mountain on a vast plain, and then to ridicule it as a make-up, unfairly thrust into an imaginary document, may be criticism, but is neither history nor business. If the directions about the choice and duties of a king had no root in the heart of the people for whom Moses wrote, if they did not refer to the hopes and fears that were stirring every breast in the Hebrew host, the assailants of the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy would be right in holding, that there was neither ground nor reason for putting them in writing. But these writers are altogether wrong. "The king" was a theme of conversation everywhere in the camp. A people without a king seemed to them, as it really was, a body without a head. And that a nation newly escaped from its taskmasters would never trouble itself with asking who its future ruler was to be, is a dream that scarcely even a critic will imagine, while it is certain to be laughed at by all men of affairs. Constitution-making has always been the delight of the mob, as a sure remedy for every ill that afflicts a nation. Seldom have wise men succeeded in persuading

them that the best constitutions are the slow growth of ages.

A king, according to the ideas of the Hebrews, was needed for a nation to lead its armies in war, and to judge its people in peace. Powers so unlike to each other were then thought to be best discharged when vested in the same man. Nor is the idea wrong, though ages required to pass before the most satisfactory means of working it out in practice were discovered. The king was thus chief judge and chief soldier in the realm, precisely as our own Queen is chief judge and chief soldier in Britain. But at the time of Israel's escape from bondage, Moses, though well fitted to be their judge, was not at all fitted to lead their armies in his own person. All their preconceived notions demanded a personal leader as well as a personal judge in their king—a substitute was not thought of simple though the idea may seem to us. But Moses' claims to the kingly office were too great to be passed over, while his inability to discharge what might soon be its most important duties could not be denied. Hence arose doubt and division in the Hebrew tents. A king they must have; a king fit for the throne they could not find. It was not when they crossed the Red Sea only that this choice of a king would be discussed among them. Even during the wilderness wanderings some of the leading men denied the right of Moses to supreme power. "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi," said

the company of Korah to Moses and Aaron, putting forward an imaginary grievance that they might secure a coveted honour to one of their own number, and a share of high office to his supporters. From first to last Moses saw this desire to be like their late taskmasters, and like other nations, cropping up among his countrymen. It required no great sagacity to discern or to fear what was likely to happen as soon as he was dead ; and he would have been unworthy of his high place as their lawgiver, had he not made due arrangements for an emergency that was sure to happen. It was not enough to assure them that God was their King. They were not satisfied with only an unseen Governor. A king with bodily presence and dreaded power they wanted, and were determined to have, as the history of the following five centuries proves. They preferred a visible man at the head of their courts and armies to the unseen God, and a sword wielded by an arm of flesh to lightning and hailstones launched by an Almighty hand from the skies. It was an odd preference ; but it was the preference of feeble men.

All these considerations are elementary. They may be said to be self-evident ; and they explain at once the rules for the choice and settlement of a king laid down by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, following, as a natural complement, on those for the judge's office. So plainly are they addressed to the people of Moses' own time, that it is hard to understand how the words could ever have been

viewed as a prediction of the future. Nor does it alter the matter in the least to say that a king was not chosen for fully four centuries after. If the unexpected usually happens, then this only shews that what Moses feared, and in zeal for the true King's honour, strove to avert, did not come to pass. Nor were reasons wanting for this unlooked for turn in affairs. Forty years' wandering in the wilderness had rooted out the troublers of Israel's peace, and the despisers of an unseen king. Their children, too, had never seen or had forgotten all about the glory of royalty in Egypt; and a successor was found for Moses in Joshua, who shared his views and followed in his footsteps, especially when age had further sobered a character otherwise noble in its plans and purposes. But still the old spirit was present in the nation, ready to burst into action when a chance was given. Gideon, Abimelech, and Jephthah are proofs of this. The nation, or a part of it, wished these leaders to reign over them; but overruling circumstances were too strong for the design to take effect. As far as the history is known, the hankering of the Hebrews after a king began as soon as they escaped from bondage, and continued, with occasional outbreaks, till the appointment of Saul. Moses was not blind to their feelings and wishes. He was not prepared to gratify them; but he saw it was indispensable on the part of a lawgiver to arrange for what might happen in the near future. Political sagacity, not the spirit of prophecy, may have

prompted Moses to this step, even as the same sagacity shewed him the value of Jethro's advice for the right administration of justice. And this view is strengthened by the terms in which Moses writes.

Seizing on one or two points which favour their ideas, the holders of the new theory affirm that the rules about the choice of a king refer directly to Solomon, and are copied from the mistakes of his life. The words they rely on are:—

I KINGS x. 28, 29.

28 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the (company of the) king's merchants received the linen yarn (drove) at a price.

29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver (£68), and an horse for an hundred and fifty (£17): and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

DEUT. xvii. 16, 17.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

A single quotation will shew the view taken of these passages by believers in the "programme." Kuenen writes, "No less striking is the author's aversion from Solomon, which is plainly visible here. The warnings against trade with Egypt, polygamy, and great riches, are borrowed from the tradition¹ concerning the wise king, and are directed against the errors into which he fell."

¹ The word "tradition" requires to be carefully looked at and carried in the memory. It is an assumption.

“ The isolation which Israel would have to endure in order “ to realise the ideal of the Deuteronomist was indeed “ diametrically and irreconcilably opposed to the principles “ of Solomon’s government.”¹ The causing of the people to return to Egypt is regarded by Ewald as a bitter reflection by the author, then an exile in that land, on the policy of Manasseh who sold “ his unhappy compatriots ”² into slavery.

According to this plan of walking blindfold through the temple of history, the two verses from Deuteronomy merely reflect the judgment of the writer, four centuries after the event, on matters of such surpassing importance that, at that vast distance of time, they bulked largely in the eyes of thinking men and of the thoughtless crowd—the bringing of droves of horses from Egypt by Solomon’s merchants, the host of women in his palace, and the cheapness of gold and silver in his reign! Can the key to the two verses be found in these features of the wise king’s policy, or shall matters so small be said, four centuries after, to be still the talk and abhorrence of Jerusalem? Surely the critic’s pen has lost its cunning before it can describe public opinion as formed by trifles so contemptible, and so far away in point of time.

This then may be a great discovery, or a shabby begging of the question, or a tremendous leap in the dark. A

¹ *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 33, 34.

² *History of Israel*, vol. iv. p. 221.

supposed writer, unknown to history, is believed to have copied these features of Solomon's administration from the known history of his reign, and to have made them do duty as a prophecy of what would happen. But this is not so plain as we are asked to imagine. There is no reason for believing that a thing so small as the purchase of droves of horses in Egypt in days so far off as Solomon's, especially when they were bought to be sold to foreigners at a profit, would be talked of in the age of Josiah, or would then be a living factor in the Hebrew's daily life. Of all the suppositions made by critics, few are more amusing, or shew better the way to blunder. It is strange, too, that horses at seventeen pounds a-piece should figure so weightily twelve generations after, while chariots that cost seventy pounds each, and were more a wonder at the time, are not even mentioned. But all these hard points are slurred over by the critics, although they have not a shred of evidence to shew that there was even a popular history of Solomon's reign in common use till long after Josiah's time. A "tradition" is very conveniently assumed. The book of Deuteronomy, they tell us, was intended to effect a revolution in the public opinion of court and people. Accordingly the writer of it appealed to what men of all classes knew full well from popular history or tradition. But the popular history these critics draw from had no known existence when Deuteronomy, according to them, was written. Of popular tradition there is not the

slightest proof, and such tradition is incredible to boot. No doubt the annals or chronicles of the kingdom were accessible to a few, especially of the priests; but the matter in dispute is the knowledge by the people at large of a point so small, and so utterly unimportant in its bearings on Hebrew history, as Solomon's merchants' trade in horses! Had the trade been so wicked, had it been looked on by Hebrews as we look on the slave trade in the ruin it entails on nations, the Chronicler would not have told the story of the traffic, according to the view of his work taken by the critics. Such a stickler for the law and the testimony would not have fallen into this grave blunder.¹

Is there the smallest ground in history for believing that Solomon, or any other prince, dreamed of "causing the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses"? Writers who see in these words nothing but a reflection of Solomon's glory, are bound to explain what they mean, or how it could have entered into any writer's mind to make such a rule for the king's guidance. It is recorded that Solomon's cavalry force consisted of 1400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen.² It is also known that from the time his father David broke the power of Northern Palestine, an unaccountable eclipse had darkened the brightness of the conquering arms of the great empire of Assyria. Solomon appears to have been the mightiest ruler of his age. Even Assyria quailed

¹ 2 Chron. i. 16, 17.

² 1 Kings x. 26.

before the Hebrew power. But the chariots of Solomon numbered only 1400, and his horsemen 12,000. A prophet, writing in Josiah's time, would not reckon that number of chariots large; for when the tide of Assyrian conquest again flowed towards Syria a century and a-half after Solomon's death, Ahab, the king of Israel, furnished 2000 chariots for the great battle, in B.C. 854, which stemmed its progress for a few years.¹ Even when Palestine is known to have been thinly peopled, a strong confederation of its northern kings surrounded Rameses of Egypt with 2500 chariots. Josiah, the model king of the critics, not only went to battle in a chariot himself, but was attended by a second in case of need, a clear proof, one would think, that his army had a line of chariots in advance, with a second line in reserve behind. The theory of believers in the Egyptian romance crumbles away to dust as soon as the light of day is let in on its dry bones.

But it seems to be forgotten that Solomon was far from being the only king who multiplied wives to himself, or silver and gold. David gathered more of the latter than his son, and seems to have been nearly as guilty in the former respect, perhaps as guilty every whit, both in the number

¹ "The troops brought into the field of battle by the king of Damascus, according to the Assyrian account, consisted of 1200 chariots, 1200 carriages, and 20,000 footmen of Benhadad of Damascus; 700 chariots, 700 carriages, and 10,000 footmen of Irhulena of Hamath; 2000 chariots and 10,000 footmen of Ahab of Israel. . . ."—George Smith, *Assyria from the Earliest Times to the Fall of Nineveh*, p. 50.

of wives who crowded his palace, and in the heathenism of their origin. In short, it comes to be a question whether the writer of Kings, in using the words, “his wives turned away his heart after other gods,” copied the book of Deuteronomy, “neither shall he multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away;” or the writer of the latter book copied, we shall say, from the book of Kings, or from “tradition.” But there is really no alternative in the matter. “Tradition” we may discard as an unknown thing, having no right to intrude here. The words in Kings, then, must have been borrowed from Deuteronomy, whoever the writer was, whether Moses or the imagined author in Josiah’s age, for the books of Kings are allowed to have been written some years after Josiah’s death. Here, then, is reasoning in a circle, with “tradition” invented to get the “programme” out of a scrape. The law of the king in Deuteronomy is supposed to have been modelled on Solomon’s faults and sins, as we find them in the first book of Kings; not on David’s,¹ not on Rehoboam’s or Abijah’s.² Therefore it was long subsequent

¹ He took wives out of Jerusalem immediately after its capture from the Jebusites. Who could these be but heathen women? (2 Sam. v. 13). That ancient author, according to his custom, only records the fact. Absalom, David’s favourite son, was the child of a heathen king’s daughter; and Naamah, a princess of Ammon, and the mother of Rehoboam, must have been married to Solomon, with David’s permission, before the prince was twenty years of age.

² Of Rehoboam, the Chronicler says, certainly not in the way of condemnation, “he took eighteen wives and three score concubines . . .

to Solomon's reign. But it is also clear that, since the first book of Kings is believed to have been written after the supposed author of the "programme" was dead, its record of Solomon's faults and sins was copied from the book of Deuteronomy. Evidently modern criticism makes greater demands on the faith of its disciples than they care to allow. To believe in the Mosaic authorship of the five books seems a path of roses for a student of history; to accept the "programme" is liker walking along a path of thorns.

But these writers cannot be allowed to have the attack all to themselves in dealing with the law of the king. We have shewn already that it is only a continuation of the more general law of the judge, inasmuch as the king was the highest judge or the chief court of appeal among the Hebrews. To wrench a passage out of its connection, and then to draw inferences from it is bad enough; but to judge of this misplaced passage from only some of its statements is adding insult to injury. "One from among thy brethren," he says, "shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother." Those who believe in the "programme" theory venture on no explanation of these words. They are wise to hold their peace, for history gives no "he desired many wives." And, "Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives."

The rule about multiplying wives had no effect even after Josiah's time (Jer. xxxviii. 23).

countenance to their views in this respect, and no “tradition” of a stranger receiving an offer of the Hebrew crown can be invented to explain the passage. Kuenen gets rid of the difficulty by not taking notice of it at all: “In the seventh century B.C. the kingly office “had already existed for a long time. The Deuteronomist “does not allow himself to be hindered by the plan which “he has chosen from stating his ideas on this subject. “The king, he says, must be an Israelite.”¹ That the king must be an Israelite is true as far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth; for no one would infer from it that “a stranger” was solemnly excluded from the Hebrew throne. The words appear to mean that there was a risk of some foreigner being raised to that seat of honour, unless the whole thing be a senseless make-up. Solomon’s faults and sins, whether from tradition or history, cannot be dragged in to do duty here. We come then to the conclusion that the lock, which the “programme” was thought to open, has many wards. Although the key appears to fit several of them, it is unmistakable that here is a ward which it has never been tried on, because the makers of the key knew well it would not fit. Assuming the Mosaic authorship of the five books, have we hope of better fortune?

Even the assailants of that authorship will allow that the defenders of it are not bound to explain the rule

¹ *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 33.

which excluded a foreigner from the throne. Of the circumstances in which Moses and his countrymen were then placed we are largely ignorant. Once, in their madness, some of them proposed to make a captain, and return to Egypt.¹ It may have been one of the "mixed multitude," or half breeds, whose words are recorded; and Moses may have feared the putting forward of a claimant for the throne from that dangerous and restless class. But, whether it were so or not, the brief history of the wilderness wanderings contains one reference to a stranger, which helps to throw light on this rule for the choice of a king. Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, joined the Hebrews in their marching through the desert. He proved so useful to them on the road, that Moses proposed he should join them altogether,—“We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good, . . . if thou go with us, yea, it shall be that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.”² If then “we will do thee good” could be said by the leader of the Hebrews to a desert chief, it is not pressing his words too far to say that services such as Hobab, a stranger, could render to the Hebrews, might have been rewarded by a popular vote with the sovereignty itself. At least, the good, which one stranger

¹ Num. xiv. 4.² Num. x. 29-32.

got the offer of from Moses, might have become an offer of the throne to another from the people as a body.

When a Hebrew king ascended the throne he was required to "write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites." A knowledge of reading and writing by the kings is implied in this regulation. Could that knowledge be expected from them in the days of Moses? Formerly the idea prevailed that writing was then unknown, or practised on a small scale, and only by the most learned. But that idea has long since gone to the capacious grave, in which many a once brilliant discovery of critics has found an everlasting resting-place. The books and monuments of Egypt and Italy have been brought from the tomb to raise our ideas of the progress in education and literature, made by ancient generations. But if kings could thus make copies of the law for themselves, priests and Levites could do the same, and the idea of numerous copies having been made, even in the earliest ages, is at once suggested. The question, however, remains, Have we any reason to think that this rule was ever acted on? Fortunately we have. Jehoiada, the high priest, in crowning the boy king Joash (B.C. 878), gave him two things, the crown and the testimony.¹ The former we know well enough: the latter is a something incomprehensible, if it be not the book of the law referred to in this passage of Deuteronomy.

¹ 2 Kings xi. 12.

But the first example of regard to this rule may safely be placed a century and a-half earlier, for it is clear that the following passages refer to nothing else.

DEUT. IV. 44, 45.

44 And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel:

45 These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt.

I KINGS II. 1-4.

1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it

is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

2 KINGS XXIII. 3.

And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart and all their soul.

David's charge to Solomon is made up of two parts. The close of it is clearly a reference to the promise made to him twenty years before, and recorded in the Book of Samuel. We are therefore prepared to find in the first part a similar reference to the law of Moses. One of the very passages¹ that modern writers rely on, in proving that Deuteronomy was the book found in the

¹ See above, p. 19.

Temple by Hilkiah, is thus quoted from the law of Moses four hundred years before by one who was at once a king, a philosopher, a statesman, and a poet, nor therefore likely to be deceived.

We assume, what is generally allowed on all sides, that the Books of Kings are a true history. Should the view of those who regard the first two chapters as part of Second Samuel be correct, with more force will the argument from David's last charge to Solomon come home to us. That it refers to the law of the king in Deuteronomy, and that it is the same as the testimony given to King Joash, we take as facts till they are disproved. Whoever insists on upturning the order of history from *first* Deuteronomy and *then* David's charge, to *first* David's charge and *then* Deuteronomy, must account for this quotation from the law by David, or at least this reference to its regulations. Either David uttered these words, or he did not. If he did not, then to maintain that somebody at a recent date put into his mouth the words, "law of Moses," and "programmed" his dying charge, would be a denial of history, which the mention of the Testimony in the case of Joash puts altogether out of consideration. This witnessing by the Book of Kings to the existence of the Law in David's time, and specially to the existence of Deuteronomy, cannot be set aside, except by denying that the First Book of Kings is to be trusted any further than we choose to believe its

statements. On that view, all arguing is at an end. If the books we reason from, and reason about, are to be turned out of court as fables, whenever they refuse to say what we think they ought to say, we may at once bid farewell to reasoning altogether. It is allowed that the writer of the Kings lived after Josiah's time; but it is well known that he drew some of the materials for his history from papers as ancient as David's reign, and there is no reason for suspecting that he attributed to David what David never said.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CENTRAL ALTAR.

Alleged appearance first in Hezekiah's reign—The riddle to be read—Period of Judges excluded—The praise of David—View taken by modern writers—The law stated—Not high places, but the worship condemned—Reason for the fierceness of Deuteronomy against them—Moses' preference for high places proved—Reason for worship on high places—Idea of a central altar dates from Mosaic age—Central altar on "The Mount," Sinai—Rules for the building at the great sacrifice—The riddle resumed—Difference between the Kings and the books of Samuel—The Kings' sixty pages of silence and fifty pages of speaking out—Old law of sacrifice no longer held—Divorce between the Ark and the Tabernacle—Samuel's days and Gedaliah's, 1100 B.C., and 586 B.C.—Policy of Samuel in the transition period—No-worship false worship—Samuel returns to the patriarchal model—Heathen hill-worship not dreaded by him—Consistency of the narrative in Deuteronomy.

THE second outstanding argument brought forward to prove the recent origin of the book of Deuteronomy is believed by many to be unanswerable, and is allowed by those who hold an opposite view to be certainly puzzling. Whether the confidence of the former and the perplexity of the latter arise from a one-sided view, is another matter; but of the fact that the appointment of a central altar hampers a defence of the Mosaic authorship, there is no

doubt. The position of its assailants is this. The existence of a central altar, at which alone Hebrews were at liberty to offer sacrifice, is not known till the reign of Hezekiah, or seventy years after, in the reign of Josiah. The thing seems never to have been thought of till then. There was no such rule for Shiloh, or even for Moriah, for more than three hundred years after the Temple was built. Altars might be raised, sacrifices might be offered, people might worship Jehovah with acceptance on any hill top and at any place they pleased, till the discovery of the "programme" curtailed their rights.

Ewald and Kuenen may be accepted as the two expounders of this theory, whose views, while the same on the subject of a central altar, differ most widely on other points. Both agree that Hezekiah attempted to make the altar in the Temple at Jerusalem the one and only place of sacrifice for all the people. The idea that Moses prescribed this arrangement many centuries before is treated with disdain. Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, perhaps prevented the new rule from gaining a firm footing in the nation; for on reaching man's estate, he would have none of it. This "crowned miscreant," as Kuenen says he *Ewald* will appear to most readers, "permitted the existence of "the worship of Jahveh on the same footing as every "other religion, but by his own action turned Judah into "a regular rendezvous of heathen religions, and made his "subjects practise them by force; while he reigned in a

“ State, the ancient religion of which could not lawfully
“ tolerate any other by its side, and in an age when it
“ had just arisen with fresh vigour, and was holding out
“ before the sovereign the clear picture of the perfect ruler,
“ whose coming was a necessity !”¹ This judgment, how-
ever, is pronounced by Kuenen, “ that of Manasseh’s
“ antagonists, who afterwards regained and kept the upper
“ hand. . . Free from all exclusivism, Manasseh cannot
“ well have become a persecutor of his own accord. If he
“ took this part upon him, he was driven to it by the
“ reception accorded to his measures.”² But whatever his
character and actions may have been, and it is clear that
the party of the “ programme ” are not all of one mind
regarding them, he certainly delayed the institution of one
altar for public and private sacrifice in Judah. On this
they are agreed. To ordinary readers of the Bible the
whole thing will seem unintelligible. Has Moses not
written in the law one altar, and one place of worship ?
Nothing could be plainer than that a central altar was the
rule in the wilderness, at Shiloh, and in Moriah, for ages
before Hezekiah, or Manasseh, or Josiah. To the simple,
this is as true as the gospel itself ; but to those who are of
full age and of skill to discern truth from falsehood, “ it
“ need not be repeated here that Moses bequeathed no
“ book of the law to the tribes of Israel.”³

¹ Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. iv. p. 209.

² *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. pp. 2, 3, 5.

³ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 7.

The grounds on which the existence of a central altar, previous to Hezekiah's time, is denied, are the following. Samuel and Saul, David and Solomon, Elijah and Elisha—the greatest names in the heroic age of the Hebrews—acted like men, who, if they ever heard of this law of worship, did not believe it was binding on them or their countrymen. While Shiloh was the chosen centre, according to the old-fashioned view, Samuel worshipped and sacrificed at Mizpeh, at Ramah, at Gilgal, and at Bethlehem. Saul even dared to offer victims on the altar at Gilgal, and seems to have built altars at more places than one.¹ David appears to have sacrificed at many spots on the road when he was conveying the ark from Obed-edom's house to Zion. Both Gibeon and Zion during his time and Solomon's, the Mount of Olives too, apparently, were seats of great altars, on which countless victims were offered. But the grandest sacrifice recorded in ancient history, and approved by fire descending from the skies to light the wood, was a breach of this law of a central altar, committed in the sight of a whole nation, five centuries after the death of Moses. Elijah was the priest, Carmel was the place of the altar; but neither was that prophet a son of Aaron, nor was that hill top a central seat of worship allowed by God. What is true of Elijah is true of not a few others, who stand out as the greatest names of the Hebrew race. Of them at least it may be

¹ 1 Sam. xiv. 35. His first was near Ajalon.

maintained, that they believed neither in the Levitical priesthood nor in one central altar as the only place of acceptable sacrifice. Both the priesthood and the altar are thus pronounced very late additions to the old Hebrew faith, whatever it was.

Some writers maintain that the same freedom of sacrifice prevailed throughout all the period of the Judges. Even though they could prove this point, it might be shewn to tell against their theory rather than in its favour. But they cannot prove the point. Gideon's and Manoah's sacrifices, offered when the angel of the Lord appeared to them, and with His consent, have no place in this inquiry. We know that victims were slain by or for the whole people at Bochim, not long after Joshua's death. But it is vain to appeal to that case, for Bochim—wailers—may have been, and probably was, beside Shiloh, just as there is a Jews' wailing-place in Jerusalem. The only other example in the book of Judges is the sacrifice offered at the House of God or Bethel during the war with Benjamin. But it is impossible to say that the town Bethel is meant in the passage referred to;¹ it seems rather to have been the House of God, Shiloh. Davidson says that Mizpeh was the place of sacrifice, a statement that only shews careless reading of a plain history.²

¹ Judges xxi. 2, 4.

² *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 406. Equally creditable is his discovery of Ahithophel's sacrifice at Giloh, 2 Sam. xv. 12.

It must be remarked, however, that though Samuel and others are known to have built altars, and to have offered victims on them, far away from the then moveable centre of Israel's worship, David is never mentioned as following in their footsteps. When he first appears upon the stage of history, it is at a sacrifice held by Samuel in his father's house at Bethlehem. Some years after, we find him requesting from his superior officer in the Royal Guards leave of absence to take part in a festival or sacrifice at the same place. Whether this was Jesse's anniversary of the great day when Samuel set his youngest son apart to be king over Israel, or whether it was but a new year's feast, called a sacrifice, because part of the victim was given to sojourning priest or Levite, it is not needful to inquire. Either explanation is better than to believe, what the "programme" theory is on the road to, that every house in Bethlehem had an altar for itself, and that the father of every family was priest of God for all his children. But the two sacrifices in which David thus appears were festivals, in the getting up of which he had no hand.

David is never found building altars or offering victims, until he conveys the ark from Obed-edom's house to its new tent on Mount Zion. That was a long interval in a single life. It cannot have been less than twelve or fifteen years. Nor is it an interval that is shrouded in darkness or devoid of most stirring events. It covers

twenty-eight pages out of the whole seventy-six within which David's history is contained. Of hairbreadth escapes, of feasts and marriages, of warlike adventures, of song-writing, there is no lack in these pages; of altar-building and sacrifice there is not one word. Of course one passage, in which David recommends Saul to appease Jehovah by an "offering," has no bearing on the matter. Still further, David had the High Priest in attendance on him nearly the whole time. He was accustomed also to ask advice about the future by means of what his priests and people called "lights and truths." But of altars and victims we find not one word during all those years. Considering, then, the great piety David always shewed, we are entitled to ask those on the other side what explanation they have to give of this silence. It will not do to reply that, although the fact is not mentioned, he did build altars, and did offer victims in Ziklag, Hebron, and elsewhere, as Saul and Samuel had done before him. This is only an assuming of the thing to be proved, a step which no thorough reader of these well-planned books of Samuel will allow either enemy or friend to take. There is clearly a reason for this silence.

More striking still is the difference between the two conveyings of the ark to Zion, as recorded in Samuel—*first*, from Baale Judah to the threshing-floor; and, *second*, from Obed-edom's house to Zion. Not a word of victim or altar appears in the first, whether it be read in

Samuel or in Chronicles. But whatever the arrangements may have been, the second overflows with altars and sacrifices. In the interval of three months David had learned, as we have already seen, that the ark required to be borne by its own carrying staves. Although not a word is said in either record about a second lesson, there can scarcely be a doubt that he had also learned the necessity or lawfulness of victims and altars before the ark.

But we can go a step further. Saul was a favourite of Samuel. David was not. Love breathed in all the prophet's dealings with Saul; duty in his dealings with David. One has only to read the surprise Samuel got when the Unseen sharply told him to rise and anoint the shepherd lad, as in utmost haste he was hurried from the hill pastures home to his father's house, to see that Samuel's first impressions at least were strongly against the new king. First impressions, we know, in such cases are seldom overturned. But there was another great officer in the commonwealth with whom David was as high a favourite as Saul was with Samuel. It was Ahimelech the High Priest, whom David visited so often and consulted so often, that at last the jealous king shed the blood of Ahimelech's race because of the father's admiration of David. Hear how the High Priest speaks of the young soldier, although he knows that every work of love is sharpening a pitiless sword against him and his. "Who is so faithful among all thy servants as

“ David, which is the king’s son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me.”¹ We have thus two pairs of men in the Hebrew state: Samuel and Saul, known for their altar building; the other pair, Ahimelech and David, known for their avoidance of altars and victims, except before the ark.² Can we help saying that David followed the teaching of the High Priest, and not the example of Samuel? It was a season of transition when good men in their perplexity might justly differ from one another on the course to be followed. But hence, also, we can understand the unfailing praise given to David in the books of Kings as walking in the statutes of the Lord, while Solomon has the exception added, “ he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.”

The appointment of a central altar was manifestly a piece of teaching not new to David; teaching, too, the very opposite to Samuel’s practice. Was this teaching oral, or in written books? Believers in the “ programme ” say that the torah, or teaching of the priests, was all oral. This is an assumption they have no right to make; besides being most improbable in itself, it is both unproved and unprovable. But first principles can only be taken for granted when there is no other way of getting hold of them, however large the assumptions may be.

¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 14, 15.

² Or, the tabernacle.

The correctness of these views will, perhaps, be put in a clearer light by a display of the blundering, which the chief English critic on the "programme" side has fallen into when discussing the altar buildings of David. As soon as Absalom—opposite in all things to his father, and therefore, perhaps, the favourite son—found everything ready for the revolt he had planned, he requested leave of the king to repair to Hebron, in fulfilment of a long standing vow; "I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron."¹ Absalom was too thorough an intriguer to say that he meant to build altars or offer victims. He knew his father better than let that out. It meant the same thing, only in more barefaced fashion, as the chariots and the footmen in the gate of justice at early morn. But Dr Samuel Davidson is blind to all this simplicity of intrigue. He makes Absalom say to David what he never said—"When Absalom asks leave to go and sacrifice, David makes no objection."² He means to say that David allowed altar building anywhere, and by any one. The higher criticism, as this sort of interpretation is called, must be in a bad way when it cannot distinguish between *vow* and *sacrifice*, or see into the trick that the son played off on the father. But the blundering does not end there. When Absalom reached Hebron he altered his plan of a vow, if he ever meant to keep it; he would

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 7.² *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 404.

offer victims, he would build altars, he would be as lordly as king Saul. It was a clear protest against David's known preference for the one altar: "Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices."¹ Can any common-sense reader doubt that Absalom was the priest, and Hebron the place of the sacrifice? Strange to say Dr Davidson makes the priest Ahithophel, and the place Giloh. Referring to the passage we have quoted, he says: "Samuel, an Ephraimite, offered sacrifice; Ahithophel, the Gilonite, did the same."² True criticism, the simple handmaid of history, declines all dealings with rashness like the above; and how can any critic hope to grasp the Truth, if he shuts his eyes when the fringes of her robes are lightly playing among his fingers.

Believers in the "programme" theory of Deuteronomy thus consider it to be beyond doubt, that the Aaronic priesthood and a central altar were inventions of priests and prophets, who saw no other way of weaning the people from the heathenism of their fathers. Good men, having great and good ends in view, did not trouble themselves with scruples about the means taken to work them out. However shocking this justifying of the means used by the ends proposed may be to us, it was regarded, it seems, as right in the sight of God and man when done by prophets and ministers of the truth in the

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 12.

² *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 404.

olden time. So confident of this are some writers, that they have given Jeremiah the credit or discredit, whichever it be, of having befooled the world with the "programme" of Deuteronomy. Nor were literary or political frauds regarded in those days with the same feelings they would awaken now. "At a time when notions about literary property were yet in their infancy, an action of this kind was not regarded as at all unlawful. Men used to perpetrate such fictions as these without any qualms of conscience."¹ Proof of this usage and of this general sentiment among men we may ask for, without hope of ever receiving. But though it could be given, it would be nothing to the purpose, for it is not what an Egyptian or an Assyrian did, nor what a Greek or a Roman thought on the matter; but it is what the commissioned prophets of truth and the whole "Jehovah party" thought and did. Although Kuenen and his admirers see no harm in thus stealing or borrowing without acknowledgment, and in writing "programmes," which a more honest age would denounce as forgeries, believers in the honesty of purpose and purity of motive, which actuated God's prophets in the olden time, will not admit these novel views, unless they be placed on somewhat surer grounds than mere assertion. However, it may be that the writer of the books of Kings approaches the new

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 18.

model, for he follows a peculiar course, both in what he approves and in what he condemns, when treating of a central altar on Moriah. While he approves, or seems to approve, of David, Solomon, and Elijah sacrificing wherever it pleased them, and of Elisha even allowing Naaman to go off with two mules' burden of earth to build a holy altar to Jehovah in Damascus, he condemns unsparingly the worship of others in holy places scattered over the country. No harm could come of good men worshipping as they pleased; but the common folk were apt to turn the true worship into heathen rites, if no safeguards were thrown around. By degrees there arose the feeling that a central altar was the best security for the truth. And that feeling at last found expression both in words and in deeds, though not for eight centuries after Moses was supposed to have prescribed the one priesthood and the one altar.

Such is the view now frequently taken: here we find a great source of perplexity to believers in the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. Of the fact of one altar for sacrifice having been appointed by Moses, according to the five books, there is no doubt. The proofs are these:—

LEVITICUS XVII. 1-9.

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them,

This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying,

3 What man soever *there be* of the house of Israel that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth *it* out of the camp,

4 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people:

5 To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them *for* peace offerings unto the LORD.

6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.

8 And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice,

9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

DEUTERONOMY XII. 5-15.

5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:

7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

8 Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes.

9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the LORD your God giveth you.

10 But *when* ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;

11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt

offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD :

12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates ; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest :

14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

15 Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee : the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.

Of the fact of a central altar having been appointed by Moses, there is thus no doubt. But the one altar in his days was different from the one altar in the days that followed the conquest. During the wilderness wanderings, the one lawful altar was a moveable centre ; afterwards it was a centre fixed at Shiloh, or on Moriah. So long as the Mosaic altar of burnt offering in the desert travelled from place to place, and the tribes were scattered widely over the surrounding waste, as any one may see they would be, Moses had to wink at sacrifice and altars " in " the open field." This is expressly stated, and so stated in both of the passages already quoted, as to carry the ring of truth with it. Although the lawgiver had to tolerate these doings of the people, still the worship was unlawful. But this does not account for the altars and sacrifices of Samuel, David, Solomon, and Elijah. We

cannot imagine them offering unlawful sacrifices, and being accepted as true offerers. Nor will it wholly explain their actings to say that, while the centre of worship in the wilderness moved from place to place as the tabernacle and the ark moved, all sacrifices offered "before the Lord—that is, "before the ark"—were according to strict law. Saul, Samuel, and David offered "before the Lord" in this sense, as history testifies; but this is not always certain, while it is well known that Solomon and Elijah offered their great sacrifices acceptably where the ark was not, the former at Gibeon, and the latter on Carmel. The difficulty still demands a solution, and it is mixed up with many questions of interest and importance in Old Testament history.

Running through the views of those who deny, as well as of those who accept, the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy is the idea, not expressed perhaps, but well understood, that "high places," or hill-tops, or "heights," were seats only of heathen worship, and altogether forbidden in the service of God. This is a clear mistake. Some of the grandest events in Hebrew history were transacted on hill-tops. Horeb, Hor, Nebo, Ebal, Gerizim, Ramah, Moriah, and Carmel, were all high places held in highest honour. And in New Testament times the sermon on the Mount, the Mount of Transfiguration, and even the popular notion of Calvary, all bear witness to the holiness of high places. It is the abuse of these

hill-tops to the abominations of heathenism that the writer of Deuteronomy condemns. And with a consistency that is natural on the view of its Mosaic authorship, the book bursts into a fuller condemnation of them than does any other of the five books, because the Hebrew host had then seen the hills of Moab, and had conquered the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, in which the rites of heathenism were first witnessed by the rising generation of Israel. That both young and middle-aged among them would be shocked by the horrors and profanities of the novel worship they then saw, will not be gainsaid by the critic or historian, to whatever party he belong. They stepped almost at once from the purity of their own wilderness worship into the cruelties of Chemosh and Milcom. The bullocks, the sheep, the goats, that smoked on their own altars in atonement for human sin, were replaced by helpless babes roasted to death on the outstretched arms of Molech, or by quivering men ruthlessly butchered on heathen altars and in hideous groves. The consistency of representation in the book of Deuteronomy is thus a witness to the reality of the history. As soon as the weighty words it uses are put side by side with those found in Exodus, the truth of this will be at once seen.

EXOD. XXXIV. 13.

Ye shall destroy their altars,
break their images, and cut down
their groves.

DEUT. XII. 2, 3.

2 Ye shall utterly destroy all
the places wherein the nations
which ye shall possess served

their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree :

3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars,

and burn their groves with fire ; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

Nothing sharper could be looked for or would be natural in Exodus ; the fuller description and the fiercer language are most natural in Deuteronomy. It has been said that the latter book, or the "programme," as it is called, describes the altars, the pillars, the images, the groves that the unknown writer was familiar with in Manasseh's evil reign. Hence his fulness of description, his fierceness of invective. But this has to be proved. It is on its trial, indeed ; while, on the old-fashioned view, the description and the fierceness of Deuteronomy occur precisely where they ought to be looked for. The revulsion and the loathing are those of a man who, after breathing for forty years the pure air of the wilderness, is suddenly transferred to the tainted atmosphere of some slum in a large city. But this view is too simple for modern learning to take.

Although, then, high places are not condemned in the Old Testament, the worship practised there by the heathen is forbidden in the strongest language. To serve God on the summits of high hills was an ancient custom among the Hebrews. Even their long sojourn on the plains of the Delta, out of sight it may have been of either hill or mountain, did not root from their thoughts this

time-honoured worship. "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain," was the assurance given to Moses by the voice from the burning bush. And emboldened by a sight of the dead soldiers lining the shore of the Red Sea, Moses gives expression to the same feeling of reverence for a high place, in the words of the Song, "Thou shalt bring the people in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established."¹ Of course it has been discovered that this song was not written by Moses, or in triumph over the drowned pursuers of the Hebrew host. The "mountain" and the "sanctuary," not to mention other things, are, it is said, unanswerable proofs of the existence of a tabernacle on Moriah, perhaps, or some other sacred centre in the Holy Land. Word-lore, it seems, has now done for history what spectrum analysis has done for sun and stars. The latter brings the heavenly bodies so near that the astronomer in his closet can calmly take note of their constitution, although they are millions on millions of miles off. Precisely so the critic's word-lore has brought Moses and his times so close to our eyes, that we can actually see him writing all he ever wrote of the five books--nothing more, according to latest discoverers, than the Ten Commandments. Won-

¹ Exod. xv. 17.

derful, indeed, is the progress of man's knowledge ; but notwithstanding these discoveries, history compels us to regard Moses as most likely to write in the very strains of the song that passes under his name. Many high places were holy spots in his thoughts, sanctified by the presence of angels, and of one angel in particular, whom the written records of the Hebrew race called "Jehovah," and "The Angel of the Covenant." To these holy heights in general, and to no one of them in special, Moses refers in his song of triumph. His consistency is so incontestable that only those who have a pet theory to swear by and to fight for, could ever dream of calling it in question.

But our modern blundering in this matter may be made far clearer, nor is it free from carelessness. If an ignorant person were asked why astronomical observatories used to be, and often still are, built on high ground above the mists of the horizon near a town, he would probably answer, "To be nearer the stars." And, perhaps, others than the ignorant have actually given this reply to the question. Everybody possessed of ordinary intelligence would smile at the simplicity of the answer. But are our great critics with their loads of learning, and their power of shewing the world Moses at work with all he wrote and did, a whit wiser than these simple astronomers, in the reason they assign for the choice of hill-tops as seats of worship, true and false ? "To be nearer the sky," they say. Even the heathen priests of olden time might justly ridicule this display of

learning. But surely Moses and Abraham, Samuel and Elijah, were not so childish as the wise men of modern days make them. If they built altars on heights, under the impression that they were a step or two nearer the throne of God, they belied their own faith, and wrote "foolish" on their worship to all futurity. Either that, or the common idea of hill-worship must be given up. Let us see whether of the two is correct.

A sacrifice in Abraham's or in Samuel's time was either a public or a private event. So far as it was private, it may be set aside from consideration here. But a public sacrifice, offered at stated times, was a call to worship addressed to a whole neighbourhood, even though the people might be scattered over an area of an hundred square miles or more. The camp of Abraham was made up of many "tents," not all gathered round the home of the chief, but oftener spread along the face of the country, while his slaves and servants were busy discharging the daily duties of pastoral life. A pillar of smoke rising from some far-seen height, was an intimation to all around that the hour of prayer had come; that the morning or the evening sacrifice had been lighted, and that the chief priest of the great camp was worshipping God for his people and himself. On such a height Elijah used to sacrifice before the persecution of Ahab threw down the altars of truth. Modern travellers describe the "burnt place" on Carmel, of which tradition has preserved the

memory as the scene of the prophet's great sacrifice, as a spot commanding a wide view over the low lands at the foot of the mountain range. The smoke from an altar on that shoulder of the hill would be seen at a distance, to which the sound of the clearest church bells in the stillest and purest atmosphere could never penetrate. The most ordinary intelligence will apprehend that this is a more reasonable explanation of worship on high places than is generally given. Abraham and Moses were not children in thought or action; they were grown men, as sound thinkers as their critics, and never to be named in the same breath with them as men of affairs.

A central altar for Hebrew sacrifice, the one and only place at which true and acceptable worship could be paid to the Most High, is believed to have had no existence till the reign of Josiah. Men's minds, it is imagined, had been slowly travelling toward that institution for many years. At last a gleam of heaven-sent light shewed the writer of Deuteronomy what to do. He grasped the idea; he put it in words; and a central altar became the rule in the Hebrew faith. Although this seems very simple, it is really hampered with difficulties far more in number, and far more formidable than those which gather round the old-fashioned view. In the first place, a central altar for the nation, a one and only lawful place of sacrifice, perhaps, was not an original idea in the age of Josiah. Nor was a central altar first thought of even in the earlier reign of

Hezekiah. It is clear as noonday that, if there is a shred of truth in the story recorded by the writer of Exodus, we must go back to the days of Moses himself for the first example. Either the whole story of the departure from Egypt is a fable from beginning to end, or the first thoughts of a central altar were planted in the minds of the Hebrews, and openly avowed in the court of Pharaoh a year before the flight from bondage. The whole history turns on a public sacrifice, which Moses told the king of Egypt the Hebrew nation had to offer to Jehovah in the wilderness. And it was known, too, that the place of worship would be "The Mount," which had been made holy by the appearance of God in the burning bush. Either, then, everything about this narrative is a make-up, or a central altar and a one place of worship form the starting-point of Hebrew faith in the days of Moses. One holy place for the nation—"The Mount"—one altar, on which a national sacrifice should be burned, are manifestly at the root of Israel's religion, if there be a word of truth in the story of their escape from bondage. It is nothing to the purpose to say that other altars would be allowed, and that sacrifices might be offered elsewhere than on The Mount. Whatever the development of the Hebrew faith brought to light in the wilderness, there is no concealing of the fact that one place of sacrifice for the whole people was its starting-point in Egypt.

We have already seen that, in the nature of things, a

chief topic of conversation in the Hebrew "tents," as soon as the fugitives had crossed the Red Sea, would be the king who was to lead the army in war and judge the people in peace. But another subject that would be largely discussed among them is not merely hinted at. It is often indicated in the history. Moses had told Pharaoh that Jehovah had ordered the Hebrews to hold a solemn festival to Him in the wilderness. A great sacrifice and a great feast were thus constantly kept before the people's minds. But the worship to be celebrated was not the worship they had been accustomed to in their land of bondage. Nor was it the worship the king of Egypt thought good enough for them. "Go ye," he said, "sacrifice to your God in the land," meaning, no doubt, that if a million of his people could meet for high festival at some town in the Delta, as we know they did, a million of his slaves could not expect a greater favour or a greater remission of their brickmaking and their building tasks. The purpose of this wilderness sacrifice was unlike anything that was or had been. Many years of cruel slavery had dulled Israel's sense of the true and the good. The time had come when these high sentiments should again sway Hebrew hearts. But along with the growth of new and holier feelings sprang up also a desire, a reasonable and a praiseworthy desire, to know in what outward shape holy thoughts should be embodied. Loftier and purer ideas of God required a loftier and purer form of worship,

Moses had given no hint of the form that should be followed by the people. Sacrifice was known to be one of its features, and with sacrifice an altar. But the shape and nature of the altar were among the things left unsettled before they went forth from Egypt. Was it not reasonable that these things should be discussed in their "tents" and meetings beyond the Red Sea? Either this must be allowed, or we must maintain that the Hebrews were wholly unlike other races of men. The main purpose put forward in the court of Pharaoh for their departure from Egypt was, that they were ordered to offer a great sacrifice to Jehovah. It is most reasonable then to believe that the fugitives discussed the nature of the sacrifice to be offered, the form of the altar to be built, and the priest who was to preside. Moses' earliest duty as a lawgiver led him to instruct them on these points. And there was need.

In the rocky district they were approaching, Hebrew workmen might speedily have smoothed a mighty platform of rock on some shoulder of the hill, whence the smoke of countless victims could have risen to heaven. Such was the altar of Jupiter the Highest at Athens, cut from the living rock, and reached by flights of stone steps. Or on a great barrow of earth, ascended by many stairs, might be raised a smaller platform of stone, imposing by its elevation and the extent of its base. Less noble forms of altars were not unknown, but something grand was clearly filling the minds of the Hebrews. Accustomed as they had been

all their days to the brickmaking of Egypt, and to the magnificent masonry with which its kings adorned the temples of their gods, it is likely enough that the Hebrews imagined an altar built of great squared stones and adorned with figures, that would rival those of their house of bondage. Among the fugitives there were men who had skill to hew, to build, and to carve. The lordly and the lofty not only bulked in the Hebrew mind when it thought of this altar and sacrifice, but there were ways and means in the Hebrew camp of clothing grand ideas with a corresponding outward show.

While Israel was uncertain what orders might be given about this altar and sacrifice, while doubt and expectancy filled the camp, Moses was instructed to set the people right. Neither grandly squared stones, nor bricks, nor lordly steps could be allowed at the national festival on "The Mount." The true God must be worshipped on and with what was wholly His own. Man's thoughts of the pure and lofty were so unlike His that to touch a stone with a chisel would pollute it for Him, and to make bricks would render the earth they were made of unfit for this service. "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thy oxen; in all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it

“ of hewn stone, for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou
“ hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps
“ unto mine altar.”¹

These instructions about altar building are in thorough keeping with the story of the Exodus on the old-fashioned view. However, some writers believe they hang so loose to the narrative that they may easily be detached and be shewn to belong to a different order of things. They regard them as the cropping out of the old law of altars and worship, which prevailed for eight centuries before the reign of Josiah. They look upon the Aaronic priesthood, with its serving Levites and its one altar, as an overgrowth that covered the ancient faith, but left one or two bits exposed to shew to future men what had really been. The view we have taken of the instructions requires no supposition to be made at all ; it is in accordance with the literal truth of the history given in the book of Exodus. A great nation has been born in a day. It is on the road to the scene of its first festival and sacrifice. Nothing has been laid down about the altars to be used, the victims, or the priests. There is excitement in the camp, springing from the doubt and expectancy of the time. But their great leader calms this natural excitement by ordering altars of earth, or of unhewn stone, without steps to reach the table, on which victims should be burnt. Fuller details on all these matters are clearly

¹ Exod. xx. 24-26.

reserved till Jehovah himself begins to speak to the people. Everything is thus plain and simple. But modern thinkers imagine this view too easy to take. They want something that shall shew depth and boldness and originality. Consistently to hold and prove their theory does assuredly require both courage and skill. But difficulties press in on it from all sides. It assumes a number of positions, and calmly ignores facts. It says the whole history is untrustworthy ; it parades its ability to shew what ought to be received as fact, and what thrown aside as fiction ; it calls the version of events given in Exodus an inconsistent tissue of jumbled past and present. More especially, it seems, is the one central altar, on which alone sacrifice was allowed by the law, out of keeping with the position and prospects of the Hebrews, for in that arrangement above all things are past and present said to be jumbled together. But there is really no jumbling and no inconsistency, except to those who are resolved to find confusion where only order prevails. A vulgar proverb declares that none are so blind as those who do not wish to see. It is so here. Let the representation given of events be allowed to hold good ; then, so far as altar building is concerned, nothing was written of the first year after leaving Egypt but what ought to have been written in the age, and by the orders of Moses himself.

But these points are only introductory to the great

puzzle. Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, all seem to have been unaware of the law which prescribed one high place and one altar to the Hebrew people. Every reader who holds that there was no such law till it was conveniently imposed in the reign of Josiah, looks upon the known sacrifices of Samuel as decisive proofs of this position. Here, then, an appeal is made to facts which are undeniable. Two interpretations are put on them—the one being, that they reveal a freedom of worship existing in ancient Israel which could not have existed had the five books been known to the people; the other, that these facts disclose a great break in the continuity of the Hebrew faith, a fault, as geologists say, caused by some wrench parting and dislocating the line of Hebrew thought and feeling. Which of these interpretations is correct?

Before we proceed to discuss the main question, there is an elementary point to be looked at, which may help to undermine the ground on which assailants of the Mosaic authorship are building. The books of Kings are distinguished from those of Samuel by the readiness of the writer to render a reason for a thing, or to bewail the sins and shortcomings of good men. The writer of Samuel confines himself almost entirely to a narrative of the facts of history. While the latter keeps himself in the background, the former steps to the front, letting his voice be heard and his sentiments be known. It is in no way

surprising, then, that the older writer gives no explanation of Samuel's disregard of the law of a central altar. It is not his way; it would be a breach of his plan if he did. Practically, he bids the reader judge for himself from the facts recorded. But it would be surprising were the free-tongued author of the Kings as silent. His plan is to speak out his mind. He does not merely wish the reader to judge for himself, but, by a free utterance of his own views, he helps him to form a just estimate of men and measures. If it would surprise us to find the older author in Samuel speaking out, it would be as surprising to find the younger author in the Kings keeping silence. But the former, true to his character, does not speak out on this subject; while the latter, strangely enough, remains silent at the most critical turn in the history. It is to this silence that attention has, first of all, to be drawn.

The books of Kings cover 110 pages of a Hebrew bible. Of these, sixty are taken up with the acts of Solomon, Elijah, and Elisha: in them worship on high places cannot be said to be condemned; once an excuse is given for it. In the remaining fifty pages high places are denounced as one great cause of the nation's ruin. The worship of God on other hills than Moriah is thus spoken of without disapproval in the bigger half of the two books; hill sanctuaries are condemned in the lesser half. This writer, then, seems to blow hot and cold. At one time he is approving of altars to Jehovah on many heights; at

another, and throughout the lesser half of his work, he is bewailing the same worship as the rock on which the kingdom was splitting to its ruin. The inconsistency here is too marked to escape notice. Strangely enough, however, modern writers have shut their eyes to a fact that stares them in the face and demands an explanation. Their usual resort in difficulties will not help them here; they cannot say that two hands were at work on the books of Kings, one earlier, a favourer of hill worship; the other later, its determined foe. Perhaps it may be maintained that, in point of style, the sixty pages differ from the fifty; the former resembling the style of Samuel, the latter being a manifest product of the exile. But the critic's resources are used up who has recourse to such explanations; the real reason of the difference lies far away from these crudities, and hard by the throne of truth itself.

The hill-tops on which Samuel sacrificed to Jehovah seem to have been double, the higher for the altar and dining room, the lower for the village in which priests and prophets and people lived. Moriah and Zion were of this type. Ramathaim, the two heights, seems to have been similar. When Samuel took up his abode in Naioth, on the lesser height, he required not merely to judge the people as a civil ruler, but also to legislate or to set them an example in holy things as a prophet of the Most High.¹

¹ The longing for a prophet in holy things, uttered by the leaders of the Maccabees, is very affecting (1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27).

The old law of worship and sacrifice no longer held good in Samuel's days. Shiloh, the chosen centre of Israel's worship, was a desolation, a place so heavily visited with heaven's curse that, five centuries afterwards, it still remained a by-word among the Hebrews. Events, to us unknown, had so stamped it with the seal of God's displeasure, that never again should the savour of victims rise with acceptance from its altar. No other centre was then chosen; no other centre was revealed to Samuel. But that was not the prophet's only difficulty, great though it undoubtedly was. Another, equally puzzling, demanded solution. When the ark was sent back from the land of the Philistines after the battle of Aphek, no one seems to have thought of replacing it within the ancient curtains of the tabernacle. Between the ark and the tabernacle there was a divorce as complete as it is inexplicable on our ordinary views. As soon as the people of Bethshemesh saw the ark returned from its captivity, their duty, one would think, was to have sent it on to the place in which the tabernacle had been set up, if at that time Shiloh was blotted out. The tabernacle was the body, the ark was the life-giving soul. A divorce between them was something like death to the Mosaic ritual. But this divorce had taken place. After its withdrawal from Shiloh, the tabernacle was again raised with its courts, its altars, its curtains, first at Nob, and afterwards at Gibeon. Sacrifice was offered there, according to the ancient ritual. When

Nob was stained with blood, Gibeon became the great high place for the nation. But a want existed, which nothing could atone for: the ark was far away, and amid all its wanderings seems never to have again rested within the Mosaic curtains from the day of Shiloh's destruction.

Here, then, is a fact in history unvalued by modern writers. It stands out clear and full, but has been either overlooked, or regarded as a thing of naught. The neglect is dangerous; even if the divorce between the ark and the tabernacle meant nothing, the oversight does not increase our respect for their power of historical research, apart from imaginary discoveries. But the divorce between the two great symbols of the Hebrew faith is full of meaning. The tabernacle was the palace, the ark was the throne of the king. If the throne be withdrawn from the palace it has sanctified for four centuries, and if it be not returned to its ancient abode, the people will cease to regard the former as the king's dwelling. This was exactly what happened after the ruin of Shiloh: the palace was no longer honoured by the presence of the king. Sacred guards still watched the palace gates, sacred duties were still discharged in its courts, precisely as soldiers mount guard at royal residences in our own land, though the sovereign seldom or never resides in them; but the palace itself was empty.

Even during the time of this divorce, the ark carried with it a weight of authority the tabernacle seems never

to have enjoyed. Each was the centre of a hill sanctuary devoted to Jehovah worship, the former at "the house of Abinadab in the hill;"¹ the other, first at Nob, and then "at the great high place" in Gibeon.² But the ark was a moveable centre, always stamping the place it rested at as "before the Lord." Still, the holiness attached to the tabernacle was also very great, and the divorce between it and the ark gave rise to questions which the most honoured prophets of that generation were unable to answer. Shiloh was a ruin; it was branded with the curse of heaven, so clearly traced in letters of fire that men's ears tingled at its very name. But though this heaven-appointed centre of faith and worship was blotted out of existence, no other centre had been named in its stead. Where were men to worship God? Not at Shiloh, was an answer every one could give, for so clear was the wrath of heaven against the place, that no attempt was made to restore what had been destroyed. Besides, so uncertain were the most enlightened regarding God's will, that no effort was made to undo the divorce that had befallen between the tabernacle and the ark. A most serious state of affairs in the nation's faith had then arisen. A centre of worship was commanded, but none was named by the messengers of God. The sacred symbols of the Hebrew

¹ 1 Sam. vii. 1.

² 1 Kings iii. 4; 2 Chron. i. 3. The Chronicler does not conceal this fact about Gibeon, though he ought to have done so, according to the new views of his work.

faith had been so thoroughly divorced, that there seems to have been even a fear of again bringing them together. Where were good men to worship? What ritual were they to observe? There does not appear to have been any light to guide them, so far as a direct message from heaven was concerned; evidently there was no guidance but such as prophets and priests could draw from the customs and writings of former times.

It may be said that it is unnecessary to consider this divorce between the tabernacle and the ark, for, according to the latest discoveries, the two had never been together before this time. The former is usually thought to have been as old as the days of Moses, but by denying the truth of this, and maintaining that a curtained house of God came into being at a far later date, if it ever had a being at all, we may pass over the divorce between the two as a thing of no account. There is only one drawback to this method of discovery. Whoever follows it is doing the same thing as sawing through the branch he is sitting on. There is nothing left to reason about. We may shut the book of history for all time, and all lands, in despair of knowing what former ages thought and did.

The same state of things again arose in Israel after the burning of the Temple and the ruin of Jerusalem. Gedaliah, with the priest-prophet Jeremiah, and other Jews, took up their abode at Mizpah, a high place, as the name imports. It may have been Nob, or it may not, but

every reader of the Bible knows that it had at one time been a famous meeting-ground of the Hebrews. There was no centre of worship in Samuel's days; nor was there any in those of Gedaliah. Events had shewn that God's curse had passed on Moriah as well as on Shiloh, though it was proved by what afterwards happened that it fell less crushingly on the former than on the latter. Compare then the conduct of the worshippers in the two cases. Here it follows in the words of Scripture:—

I SAM. X. 3.

Thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el,¹ one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine.

JER. XLI. 5.

There came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD.

It will not be denied that the words *to Bethel* in the earlier of these two passages may, and perhaps ought to be, translated "to the house of God." What the "house of God" means in the one case, "the house of the Lord" may mean in the other. The words did not refer to Shiloh in Samuel's time; and it is plain they did not refer to Moriah in Gedaliah's. In the former case the offerings

¹ It is difficult to imagine that the English translation is correct. In Judges xx. 26, the same two words are rendered "to the house of God," and rightly. The two words in Hebrew mean "house of God," and when used as the name of a town, "Bethel." They are evidently parallel to "the house of the Lord" in the passage from Jeremiah.

may have been intended for Nob, or for Samuel's own altar that Saul had just left at Ramah. In the latter case there is only one spot we can imagine the eighty men were going to. It is not Moriah, but the place we find them at, the sacred centre of a former age, Mizpah itself. They came "with offerings and incense," indicating beyond a doubt that there was a sanctuary there, a body of temple servants, and possibly an altar and sacrifice too. "To the house of the Lord," then, was a phrase meaning for the use of the servants who attended to the things of Jehovah's house. Here then we have Jeremiah witnessing to, and perhaps countenancing, the same sort of hill-worship that prevailed in Samuel's days and with Samuel's approval. Like causes had brought about like effects.

That the divorce between the tabernacle and the ark in the age of Samuel is a fact, no historian will perhaps deny. Other points, that we are assuming for argument's sake, have been denied; but this will be allowed. Shiloh was undoubtedly an ancient centre of Hebrew worship, but one school of modern thinkers avows the belief that the god worshipped there was the heathen god Baal. The customs and writings of the Mosaic age, that we receive as history, they regard as inventions of far later date. But all these matters are beside the question under discussion. They must not be allowed to complicate an inquiry that can be kept free from such entanglements. And if there is one point clearer than another in Hebrew history—

unless that history be a fable, from Moses to Jeremiah—it is that, following on the terrible destruction of Shiloh, a divorce that was never healed took place between the ark and the tabernacle.

Shiloh was destroyed: where should the Hebrews worship God? The ark and the tabernacle were far apart from one another; what ritual should they observe? There were only two answers possible to these questions among men who loathed the service of heathen gods. One was to wait until it should be seen what arrangements the Heavenly King of the land might make for the future. As the ruin had come from Him, so should the restoration. Where He had thrown down, it would be rash and unwise in men to build up. When He kept silence, it behoved His people to wait till He chose to speak, and not to run into doings which had no countenance from His words or will. “Do nothing,” some might say when they surveyed the nation’s ruined faith; “wait till the word is given from heaven itself to retrieve the past, and to build up the “downfallen.” But this meant, cease from worshipping God altogether. Samuel and other good men knew that no-worship would soon become false worship. The former could no more hold its place in the nation than fertile land, if uncared for and untilled, can abstain from bringing forth weeds. If truth cease to take the lead among a people, falsehood steps forward to the vacant place. Samuel then had another and a safer course to propose.

He seems to have seen that the age he lived in was one of uncertainty and transition. Without fully realising the fact, and even while fighting against the political side of it, he had clearly grasped the need of interim arrangements for divine worship. And what arrangements could he propose, save the ritual and worship of the Hebrew patriarchs? What service save the simple sacrifices of the great fathers of the nation, before the Highest himself had ordered a more complex and more national worship to be put in their place? It is manifest that Samuel fell back on the ritual and customs of Abraham's time, as the only safe course for the nation to follow till the Highest should make known His will.

We shall be immediately told by modern writers that in that case the book of Deuteronomy could have had no existence in the age of Samuel. High places are condemned so unsparingly in its pages, that even the greatest prophet who ever lived could not have had the courage to disregard its precepts. However, this is not a judgment with which men of affairs are likely to agree, for they know that what is condemned as unsafe for a nation to-day may to-morrow be pronounced its only way of escape from ruin. Criticism is a totally different thing from business, just as the philosopher's closet is unlike life. Samuel was a wise statesman, who would not be deterred by the thought of a lesser danger from forbidding his country to rush headlong into a greater. Amid the turnings and

windings of a nation's life, the precipices that it starts back from in youth, it may regard with such calmness in its manhood as to bridge across and run roads along. Samuel did this, and did it wisely, whatever may be said by the thinkers whose wisdom is confined to the closet, and would sadly fail should they ever try their hands at business or statecraft.

But those thinkers take a wrong view of the case who believe that Samuel violated the precepts of Deuteronomy. It is a mistake to hold that that book, or any other in the Bible, condemns worship on hill tops. "It is unnecessary to analyse any more of the constantly recurring exhortations to be faithful to the one sanctuary—admonitions against 'the high places,' one might call them."¹ By a well-known figure of speech, Hebrew writers put "high places" for "abominations done on high places." But our keen sighted critics do not give due weight to this manifest distinction, although it colours the whole history. In the time of Samuel, Palestine had long been conquered by the Hebrews. The days of heathen rule and heathen worship were past for ever. Of the ancient tribes who held the land, it is known from David's census that there were not tens for the Hebrews' hundreds. They were trodden down, they were beaten to the ground, they were a depressed race. Four centuries of bondage had told a tale of rooting out that was reflected

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 25.

in Samuel's view of hill sanctuaries. If they still worshipped their fathers' gods, it was done in secret and at their peril. Chemosh and Milcom, with human sacrifices and the countless horrors of a barbarous worship, were as little feared in Palestine during Samuel's judgeship as the burnings of Smithfield and the horrors they awoke are feared in ours. The iniquities of hill-worship, in its degraded forms, were then things of the past; the glory of hill-worship, as a relic of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was a living power among Samuel's people. Where the great founder of the Hebrew race prayed and worshipped, where Joshua and his army sought and found counsel of God before Shiloh was known, Samuel judged, and judged rightly, that God would be met with again amid the uncertainties of a second transition period.

During this period of divorce between the tabernacle and the ark, and especially during those dark hours in Hebrew history when there was no high priest but the youthful Ahitub or the outlaw Abiathar, the great feasts of the Hebrews must have been indifferently observed, if they were observed at all. A dislocation had taken place in their religious life; between precept and practice a severance had happened, as complete as between the ark and the tabernacle. Even though foreign conquerors had not forbidden these great meetings, as they would most assuredly do during their season of conquest, the destruction of Shiloh, the overthrow at Aphek, and the

massacre of Nob, all operated to render the feasts either an impossibility or a failure. Other causes also were at work, tending in the same direction. With the building of the temple, the overthrow of foreign oppressors, and the union of the tribes under a visible king, things returned to the condition in which Moses left them. The feasts could then be held in their pristine fulness and glory. Necessarily, therefore, our information of the state of things in this respect is very scanty during the period of the judges. A new light dawns after the building of the Temple; the feasts and ritual of the Mosaic age are restored to their place in the nation's religious life.

The consistency of the Scripture narrative from Moses to Samuel, and from Samuel to Elisha, when regarded in this light, is thus complete. And if there be consistency, it is the best argument we have for historic truth. All who deny the genuineness of the book of Deuteronomy are agreed in holding that its statements are inconsistent with what preceded the reign of Josiah among the Hebrew people, as well as with what existed in its supposed writer's own day. But the charge of inconsistency in the representation of history breaks down at its strongest point, the theory of a central altar. It is as little worth as the more painfully got up details which have been forced by modern writers to do duty in this war.

CHAPTER V.

PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

“The Priests the Levites,” “Priests and Levites”—Chronicles and Deuteronomy—The Porters (Levites) of Chronicles—Argument from the silence of “Kings” unsafe—Views of Ewald stated—Kings a “history,” Chronicles a “programme”—Two views of same month of English history—A test reading in the “history” affirmed to be wrong—The two accounts of Jehoiada’s plot—The guard or “runners” the Temple police—“The hundreds” “for Cherethites and runners”—Who they were—“Priests keepers of the threshold”—The “Testimony” at a coronation—The Levites “degraded priests”—Levitical priests as opposed to other priests—Levites as singers and porters seldom mentioned—Never mentioned by Malachi—Testimony of eye-witnesses of first temple—Small number of Levitical exiles who returned—Reasons of the small number who returned—Levites never mentioned in the first book of the Maccabees.

EVERY one is aware that the tribe of Levi was divided into two great families—the priests descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses, and the Levites, or the rest of the clan. A divine commission was given to Aaron and his sons to execute the priest’s office before the Lord. All the other members of the tribe were forbidden to intrude on his place and duties; they filled a lower but a highly honourable office in the arrangements for divine worship—it was “to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of

“ the house of the Lord.” Minute details of the duties of both priests and Levites are given in the five books ; much more minute details of the arrangements, that were rendered necessary by the building of the temple, are found in the books of Chronicles.

Nearly all these details are now regarded as unhistorical, a polite term for the less sweetly-sounding word “ forgeries.” Those of the five books seem to have been invented as parts of a “ programme ” during the exile ; those of the Chronicler, including the names with which his pages are crowded, date no farther back than the days of Alexander the Great (B.C. 330), except such as he has clearly copied from more ancient and well-known writings. Many of the names and events found in his books are thought by some of the wiser believers in the “ programme ” theory to have been taken from records now no longer in existence ; but most of these writers are altogether doubtful of his worth as a witness in anything relating to the ancient history of the land. Perhaps the two books of Chronicles are, in this view, of no higher historical value than a romance founded on facts.

Let the nature of the case be thoroughly understood. With regard to the five books, it is said that an unknown novelist, if there were only one, writing in Babylonia, called up in imagination the details of Hebrew worship as they existed in the wilderness a thousand years before. It is a

case of the wish being father to the thought. He wished it had been so ; then he thought it had really been ; and then he believed it was a fact, and set it down in writing. By brooding over past glories that never had a being, this poor exile became so accustomed to an atmosphere of fable that his eyesight lost the power of distinguishing between the real and the unreal. And in the same way, apparently, he did not know whether he was writing these fictions himself, or God was using him as a penman to recover the forgotten or unknown past for the good of the whole race. It was more agreeable to human nature to think itself specially inspired for a great purpose. Accordingly he represented Moses as having been ordered by God to set aside for the service of the tabernacle priests and Levites, to draw up a liturgy or a regular order of sacrifice, such as is found in Numbers xxviii. and xxix., and to build at great cost and trouble a holy tabernacle. At last the truth has been discovered. Was there ever a tabernacle ? There may have been an ark ; there was no such liturgy, except in the novelist's imagination ; there were no house-servants called Levites till after the return from Babylon. This is the first great discovery of our day in this matter. The second is, that David knew as little of the distinction between priests and Levites as Moses, that the Chronicler's account of his arrangements for the Temple service is a fable from beginning to end, and that the fable has been the more readily believed from the

boldness with which he has entered names and numbers and duties in his books. A fiction, so vast as either of the two and so successfully passed off for truth on intelligent men, may well fill us with despair of the future of our race. In proof of these results it is pointed out that the writer of Deuteronomy, by always speaking of "the priests the Levites," but never of "the priests and the Levites," knows no difference in rank or in duty between the two classes. He is thus at open war with the unknown romancer of the exile and the writer of Chronicles. The books of the Old Testament, instead of hanging consistently together as was long supposed, are now found to be at strife so irreconcilable that the one manifestly contradicts the other.

Before we proceed farther, it may be advisable to look for a little at the minute details given by the Chronicler, for it is in them that the hand of the forger may be most easily detected. He states that, in David's time, the nominal roll of the Levites was 38,000, of whom 24,000 were appointed "to set forward the work of the house of the Lord," 6000 were officers and judges, 4000 were porters, and 4000 were singers. Had he contented himself with these general numbers, he could not have been easily put in the witness-box for cross-examination. But he sometimes breaks them up into smaller. The two sets of numbers we can then bring face to face. If he be a forger, it will be something new in history should his

armour leave no hole in it as a road to truth. He must have a fair trial, for the judgment is too sweeping which proclaims that "critical examination has completely demonstrated the untruth of these returns, and of the entire conception with which they are connected."¹

There were 4000 gatekeepers or porters for the Temple service, according to the Chronicler's idea of David's arrangements. They were the guards or police of the house of God. Twenty-four were on duty each day. No one will be so unjust as to imagine that these sentries were on duty for twenty-four hours. The meaning is, that there were twenty-four on guard for each watch, day and night, to see that nothing unclean or forbidden entered the holy courts. But there were six watches in a Hebrew day of four hours a-piece. Twenty-four sentries at a time, then, guarded the Temple gates, or 144 during the day and night. Allowing for officers in command of these soldiers, and for other work within the Temple courts besides outer-gate sentry duty, we may put down the least number required for the service at 250. These porters were the police of the Temple, and held a place of high honour among the middle class of the land. As the total number was 4000, each division would thus be engaged for about three weeks every year. To this constrained absence from home add the great feasts of the year, at which many more would be required to act as guards.

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. i., p. 338.

The time is then made up to nearly six weeks, a reasonable period for these soldiers to be detained from home on Temple business.¹

The books of Kings, which were written a century at least before those of Chronicles, make no mention of these Temple arrangements. One may read the books from beginning to end without discovering anything about judges or singers or porters. The history they contain seems the history of a totally different land from Palestine, with the names of kings, places, and tribes the same. Must not one of the two histories be largely fabulous, or a make-up? Nor can there be any difficulty in determining which of the two is trustworthy, and which not. In the judgment of recent writers Chronicles contain a "programme," and Kings a "history." In a case thus summarily settled, the voice of reason may be drowned amid shouts of triumph at the discovery. But it is not the part of a historian to turn his witnesses out of court on grounds so flimsy; for it is well known that an argument from silence is the most dangerous of all arguments to build on in reconstructing the distant past. Consider for a moment the absurdity of arguing that a thing did not exist because a historian makes no mention of it, although he may have seen it almost every day. Daniel

¹ Six or eight weeks appear to have been among the Hebrews, as among the Anglo-Saxons, the time the militia of the land were expected to bring provisions for when engaged in defending the country (1 Sam. xvii. 16, 17).—Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. iii., p. 200.

must have often looked on the great winged bulls of Babylon, and paid many a visit to its library or register-house. He has not a word to say of either. Shall we therefore maintain that neither bulls nor library existed in his age? We know better than be so rash. Or, because the pyramids and temples of Egypt are not mentioned in the lives of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jeroboam, and Jeremiah, all of whom lived in that land, to infer that these great buildings did not then exist, would be a blunder of the same sort as may have been committed by those who argue from the silence of the writer of Kings that the Levites, porters, and singers of the Chronicles were unknown to him. It may have been no part of his plan to mention these Temple servants. He has said nothing directly about their divisions and duties; still, it would be perhaps difficult for him to avoid giving a hint of their existence, even in the brief handbook he has written, if they really formed part of the Temple arrangements.

A quotation or two from Ewald's history will shew that we have done no injustice to his views and those of the more advanced school of thinkers. Speaking of the Chronicles, he says: "We need no further proof of the
" richness of its stores of information, both from ancient
" and from recent times; and we also discover that the
" judgments of some modern German writers respecting
" it are either based upon misconception, or else very

“ unjust. Undoubtedly the writer assumes very great
“ historical licence in his endeavour to revivify many
“ periods, especially that of ancient Jerusalem; yet even
“ there he restrains himself within certain bounds.” “ The
“ manner in which he deals with his sources may, however,
“ easily lead to misunderstanding; and, of course, a work
“ so far removed from the early history, and describing it
“ only through the medium of derived authorities, must
“ be employed for historical purposes with very great
“ caution.” “ And thus the historian who can carefully
“ sift the author’s various accounts, and extract from them
“ the precious grains of truth, will even here reap a harvest
“ as the reward of his labours.”¹ At the best, therefore,
this unfortunate book of Chronicles is like a bag of chaff
with a few grains of wheat hid away in the heap. If its
friends speak of it in this disparaging fashion, what can
we expect from its foes?

The writers of these two sacred histories are not the only
authors who have recorded the events of the same period,
and yet looked at the events in lights so different, as to
seem more like men who wrote of ages or countries far
apart. The following extract will illustrate this difference
of view from the history of our own island:—“ During
“ the first fifty years after the Revolution (1688) highway
“ robbery was one of the most ordinary events of life.
“ On this subject it is somewhat interesting to contrast

¹ Ewald, *History*, vol. i. pp. 194-196.

“ the diaries of Evelyn and Luttrell, both of whom wrote
“ at the end of the seventeenth century. Evelyn set
“ down chiefly matters of personal interest to himself—
“ the marriage of a daughter, or a visit to a friend, or
“ something extraordinary in the weather. He noted
“ also great political events, but he is rarely betrayed into
“ the mention of anything so commonplace as the deeds
“ done upon the high road. He seems to have taken
“ them for granted, very much after the fashion of a
“ mediæval chronicler, and calls attention only to a poli-
“ tical plot or some other crime on a scale unusually
“ large. He tells us of a ‘signal robbery,’ in 1693, of the
“ tax-money as it was being carried from the North,
“ through Hertfordshire, to London. The escort was
“ attacked by a number of desperate men, who had pre-
“ viously dismounted all travellers on the road and placed
“ them under a guard in a neighbouring field. The
“ treasure was taken, the horses of all possible pursuers
“ were killed, and the robbers rode off unmolested with
“ the plunder. But it is possible to read month after
“ month of the diary, and find no indication that life and
“ property were miserably insecure. The pages of Luttrell,
“ on the contrary, teem with accounts of violence, robbery,
“ and execution for crime, and shew, by contrast with
“ Evelyn’s diary, how inadequate must be the annals of
“ any one mediæval chronicler to place before us the
“ internal history of the people, and how necessary is

“reference to the records of the courts. The whole
“month of January 1693 is dismissed by Evelyn in six
“lines, and without any reference to criminal acts. A
“single day (the third), according to Luttrell, brought to
“light events which, if they occurred in our time in the
“course of a year, would cause a panic, and probably the
“discussion of more than one bill in Parliament. On
“the previous day (Saturday), a notorious highwayman,
“named Whitney, had been taken ‘without Bishopgate
“‘He defended himself for an hour, but the people
“‘increasing, and the officers of Newgate being ‘sent
“‘for, he surrendered himself.’ On the Sunday, two
“more of his gang were also seized and committed. ‘One
“‘kept a livery stable in Moor Fields.’ A highwayman
“was also taken in St Martin’s Church. The same day
“‘a Jacobite meeting was discovered in Johnson’s Court,
“‘in Fleet Street, where about a hundred persons met.’
“The same day also, ‘seven persons, at five in the morn-
“‘ing, broke into the Lady Reresby’s house in Gerard
“‘Street, and bound her, with two daughters, the maids,
“‘with two footmen, and then rifled the house.’ The
“news had that day arrived that a son of Colonel Blood
“had been arrested as one of the robbers of the Ports-
“mouth mail. Three ‘hectors’ on the Sunday evening
“had come out of a tavern in Holborn with their swords
“drawn, and begun to break windows; a watchman had
“asked them to desist, but one of them had run him

“ through, and left the sword in his body. Lord Danby
“ and Captain Stringer had just fought a duel. And to
“ shew how little terror the gallows had for the adven-
“ turous spirits of the time, Luttrell announces that ‘ yes-
“ ‘ terday three coaches were robbed coming from Epsom ;’
“ the robbers told their victims that they ‘ borrowed’ the
“ money to maintain Whitney in prison. Day after day
“ Luttrell has the same story to tell, especially with
“ respect to highway robberies.”¹

In our day two newspapers will be found to give much the same account of what is taking place in the world. But two historians, for obvious reasons, would not shew a like sameness of view, at least if they were worthy of the name. Most reasonable, therefore, is it to expect that the *Chronicles* should differ from the writer of *Kings* in the ground plan of his history, as well as in the building he raises. Fortunately, too, it will soon appear to the unbiassed that the theory of a “ programme ” for *Chronicles*, and a tolerably careful “ history ” for *Kings* is far too simple to solve all the knotty points that lie in a reader’s way. Human life and State policy contain depths and turnings the critics have no faith in. The first demand they make is to correct a blunder in the account given in the *Kings* of the dedication of Solomon’s temple. The “ history,” according to the critics, has fallen into error. But who shall put the error right? Strange to

¹ L. Owen Pike, *A History of Crime in England*, vol. ii. pp. 274-76.

say, the Chronicler gives the right reading, and his much despised "programme" must be used to correct the "history." The two passages are these:—

1 KINGS VIII. 3, 4.

3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

4 And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

2 CHRONICLES V. 4, 5.

4 And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark.

5 And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle; these did the priests the Levites bring up.

"The priests the Levites" is said to be the correct reading; "the priests and the Levites" is said to be wrong.¹ Priests and Levites is a distinction which the Chronicler knew about, but did not set down here; while it is believed to have been altogether unknown to the writer of Kings, and yet to make its appearance here in his book. Is this not very like assuming the point that has to be proved? A theory is formed. It stumbles badly almost at the first attempt to use its feet; and the proposal then is to deny the existence of the stumbling-block that has tripped it up. This beginning is not good.

That there were Levites as distinguished from priests

¹ "In 1 Kings viii. 4, the priests are distinguished from the Levites, "but this is merely in consequence of a clerical error (?), which can be "corrected by means of 2 Chronicles v. 5. It originally stood, 'And "the Levitical priests brought it (the ark) up'; comp. vers. 3, 6, 10, "where, in conformity with this reading, the priests alone are men- "tioned" (Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 301).

is not denied. But it is maintained that the distinction had no existence till after the return from Babylon, and that every passage in the Old Testament where it is found was either written or revised during the exile. "Priests and Levites" is a phrase implying this distinction. "The priests the Levites" is held to be a phrase meaning that every member of the tribe of Levi was or might become a priest of Jehovah.

The next clue we have to guide us in groping through the darkness of the past, is the plot formed by Jehoiada the High Priest for the overthrow of Athaliah the usurping queen-dowager, and the crowning of the boy Joash. Bishop Colenso regards it as a test of truth for the books of Kings, and of falsehood for the Chronicles. That it is a test passage will be allowed on all hands; that it is a difficult passage for every critic, without exception, few will deny; that there is room in it for discovery follows as a matter of course. The testing parts of the two accounts must be set down side by side.

2 KINGS XI. 4-11.

4 And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son.

5 And he commanded them, say-

2 CHRONICLES XXIII 1-9.

1 And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him.

2 And they went about in Judah,

ing, This *is* the thing that ye shall do : A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house ;

6 And a third part *shall be* at the gate of Sur ; and a third part at the gate behind the guard : so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand : and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain : and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all *things* that Jehoiada the priest commanded : and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple.

and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David.

4 This *is* the thing that ye shall do : A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* porters of the doors ;

5 And a third part *shall be* at the king's house ; and a third part at the gate of the foundation : and all the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD.

6 But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites ; they shall go in, for they *are* holy ; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD.

7 And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand ; and whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death : but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.

8 So the Levites, and all Judah, did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to

go out on the sabbath : for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses.

9 Moreover, Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that *had been* king David's, which *were* in the house of God.

The young prince, Joash, was hid by his aunt and the high priest in a chamber of the Temple. Athaliah had no suspicion that one of the king's sons had escaped her cruel sword, nor did a whisper of the widely-known plot reach her ears. The coronation took place by "the pillar," "at the entering in, as the manner was;" that is, the king stood at one of the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz,¹ in front of the entrance to the Holy Place, while the guards, or "runners," as they are called, apparently two hundred strong, formed a serried semicircle facing the boy and the Temple. In rear of the "runners" were another hundred, guarding the east gate of the court of the Temple. Other two divisions, of a hundred each, watched, one at the gate Sur, the other at the west gate leading to the palace and the town. A Sabbath was chosen for carrying the plot into execution, as the guards at the gates were then relieved from their week's duties, and the people would crowd the courts in greater numbers than during the other days. The incoming guards would secure the west

¹ There seems no reason for supposing that another pillar was set up for the purpose.

gate, by which they entered the Temple from the town; the outgoing guards would remain in the courts to swell the force round the king. If the western gate of the Temple courts was commanded from the palace, as seems likely enough, the mustering of the Temple police there on the Sabbath morning would not awaken suspicion in Athaliah or any of her people. But the shouting of the crowd in the courts, and the sound of trumpets proclaiming the king's accession, were heard by Athaliah in the royal palace on Mount Zion, the king's house with the royal stables mentioned in both narratives. Knowing that something unusual was on foot, she hastened to the spot. Evidently she came on the rejoicing crowd, not from the east gate of the Temple, fronting the king, but from the west side, by the bridge which is known to have connected Zion with Moriah. If Solomon's "ascent," as the bridge seems to have been called, was the king's private entrance to the Temple courts, she would not require to pass the watchers at the public gate. She heard the noise as she drew near the king, but could see nothing from the Temple buildings coming between. As soon as she rounded the north-eastern or south-eastern corner of the buildings, she both saw and was seen by Jehoiada and the chiefs of the plot. She even appears in her rage to have forced a way within the ranks (ranges)¹ of the

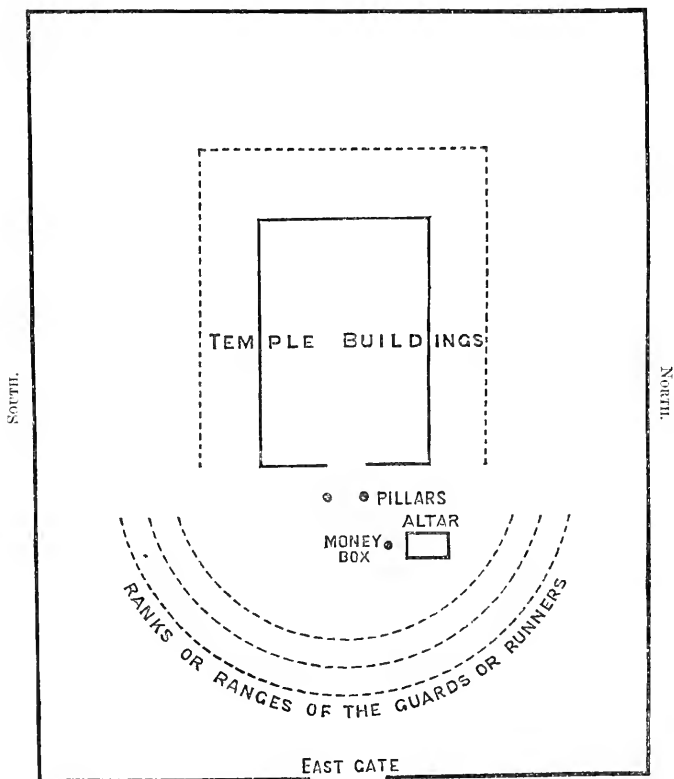
¹ Dean Stanley seems to make these ranges or ranks "the circle of "rails which enclosed the royal seat or stand."—*Lectures*, part ii, p. 396.

"runners" placed round the king. Her apprehension and instant removal by the way she came, and then her death at the royal stables followed. Both accounts agree in all these respects.

ZION.

The Royal Palace.

WEST.



In the younger version of the plot, that in Chronicles, Jehoiada is said to have "strengthened himself," by taking the captains of the hundreds and sending them through the cities of Judah to bring trusty Levites to Jerusalem.¹ Afterwards² he is said to have set officers over the house of the Lord. We can scarcely be far wrong in putting these two things together, and maintaining that the Temple service and all its arrangements were placed on their ancient footing by Jehoiada, with a view to the furtherance of the plot. At least, time was required for arranging things so as to avoid suspicion. By the older writer, in Kings, Jehoiada is said to have "sent and fetched the rulers over the hundreds." Evidently these two accounts are the same as far as they go. The plot originates in Jerusalem, and strikes its roots abroad; time is required for its growth. But the Chronicler says, the soldiers employed were Levites or porters; the writer of Kings is silent on that point, or seems to be. Here is the whole

¹ Dean Stanley's view of the captains and the hundreds is so novel, that one may well wonder at the ingenuity of his misinterpretation. "He placed himself first in direct communication with the five officers of the royal guard, now, as in David's time, consisting partly of foreigners, amongst whom the Carian mercenaries were conspicuous. These he bound over to his cause by a solemn oath. The Chronicler adds that a body of armed Levites was also introduced into the temple."—*Lectures*, part ii. p. 396. The *Carian* mercenaries are a puzzle; *Cretan*, having perhaps the authority of the Septuagint, might have passed.

² 2 Chron. xxiii. 18.

tug of war between the two schools of critics: who were these soldiers, Hebrew militiamen, or Levitical guards? Have we here one of Ewald's "precious grains of truth," or a bit of one of Kuenen's "programmes"?

The guards were clearly the Temple police. Ewald holds that they were the royal guards, the trusted protectors of Athaliah herself, whom Jehoiada was thus able to turn against their mistress, without one of them breathing a word to her or her advisers of the treachery on foot. Not only is this unlikely, most unlikely in itself, but the number engaged is far too small to countenance the supposition. Fifty years after, Judah could boast of an army of 300,000 men; but the soldiers engaged in the plot against Athaliah were the companies of only five captains. Although these commanders are also called "officers of the host," it does not follow that they belonged to the army, or the militia of the kingdom, for the word "host" or "power," a good old English word for a body of men, may refer quite as well to the little force employed at the coronation, as indeed the context shews it does. The number of men represented by five captains would be about 500, divided into fifths,¹ as we have already seen, for carrying out the plot. One set came in on the Sabbath as a relief to the guards, whose week's duty then expired.

¹ The four divisions were three of a hundred each, and one, the runners, of 200. This was the usual Hebrew arrangement by fifths. Ewald imagines they were divided by thirds.

Jehoiada had evidently maintained the old Temple arrangements, or infused new life into them, with a view to further measures: "he strengthened himself." Even if Athaliah knew of this, it would cause her no apprehension, as the Temple guards were unarmed, and there was no rival to contest the throne. One thing is clear, these guards were not the militia or soldiers of the kingdom. The small number of them, and the want of arms, alone prove that point. They were men who, with their captains, owned the authority of Jehoiada. If the Chronicler's Temple arrangements were acted on by the high priest, 500 is about the number of porters who would assemble every Sabbath at the change of guard. We have seen already that this is a fair inference to draw; it shews at least that there is thorough consistency in the narrative.

But the writer of Kings lets us see a little farther into the state of things in those days. Jehoiada "sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds," or as it reads literally in the Hebrew, "sent and fetched the captains over the hundreds," for a definite purpose. It is perfectly just to hold, that "the hundreds" meant certain well-known and well-defined bodies of men; and it seems clear that "sent and fetched" indicates he brought them to Jerusalem from a distance for a purpose. What was that purpose? Our English translators have blundered in rendering the words that follow, plain and simple though they be: "Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over the hundreds

“with the captains and the guard,” should be, “Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over the hundreds for Cherethites and for runners.” He wanted a body of guards for the young king, in furtherance of the plan he had formed. Formerly these king’s guards were called Cherethites and Pelethites,¹ although the writer of the Kings has not used the words since the close of David’s reign. Now they are called Cherethites and Runners. Gesenius, under the former word, calls them the attendants of Athaliah, a construction of the passage for which there is not the smallest foundation. These unarmed men were thus introduced into the Temple courts to be ready for action when the plot was ripe. The “runners” seem to have been picked men, whose office was to close round the king at the coronation.

If, then, it be asked who were these 500 Temple guards whose officers Jehoiada “sent and fetched,” the Chronicler at once answers, the Levites, not the priests. Nothing that has been recorded by the writer of Kings is opposed to this view of the matter. On the contrary, the number of new and otherwise unknown points set down in the Book of Kings forbids us to draw an opposite inference from his silence. Nowhere previously are we informed that the Temple guards were relieved every Sabbath,

¹ These words are usually thought to mean “cutters and couriers,” that is, “executioners and runners.” They were the body-guards who carried out King David’s commands.

that the king at his coronation stood by the pillar at the entrance to the Temple, that David's spears and shields¹ were in some of the adjoining chambers, and that the royal guards still continued to be called Cherethites. The writer omits to say who these Cherethites were. He has mentioned them only twice² before in his history, and that at the very beginning. He expects his readers not to forget the name or duties of the soldiery so called. In like manner he has mentioned "priests and Levites" at the beginning of the Temple history. Another chapter in that history opens at the commencement of the reign of Joash: is it not reasonable to infer that he expects his readers to bear in mind, or to know, who the Levites were, and how they would be employed in Temple business? If the argument holds for Cherethites, it is equally good for Levites or the gate-keepers of the Temple courts. And it is plain in the former case that he supposes his readers to know much more about the royal guards than he is disposed to relate. Why, then, should there be a doubt that he believes they know much more about

¹ Ewald translates "David's spear and shield," as if these were a sort of baton of authority given to the leaders of the guards. "Shield," of course, is not the translation; it is "shields." "Spear" is an ordinary case of singular for plural. Manifestly the guards were all unarmed till Jehoiada brought them arms from the Temple armoury. Were the spears and shields those of David's valiant six hundred, preserved as relics of the men who founded the dynasty?

² I Kings i. 38, 44. Those who look on this chapter as properly belonging to Samuel, have a difficulty to solve in the Cherethites of Jehoiada's time.

priests and Levites than it entered into his mind or plan to set down in writing?

It may be urged that "the hundreds" were the priests themselves. But there is no evidence for this view, unless it be maintained that in the reign of Joash, and in the lifetime of Jehoiada, they are called "the keepers of the door." The passages are:—

2 KINGS XII. 9, 16.

But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD. . . . The trespass money

and sin-money was not brought into¹ the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

—
2 CHRONICLES XXIV. 8.

And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without (outside) at the gate of the house of the LORD.

The older writer speaks of "priests, keepers of the door"; the younger avoids the words. A brief account of this money-box is given by the former; a much more detailed account by the latter. The two differ in some points; but the difference is in words, not in things. From the place assigned to the box, it appears that it was beside the altar of burnt offering, between the great eastern gate of the Temple court and the door or porch in front of the holy place. The older writer calls the latter door by a peculiar name, which may be translated "sill" or "threshold." "Priests, keepers of the threshold," were thus the inner guards who watched at the porch of the Temple buildings.

¹ Or, rather, *for the building of.*

This is the view given by the writer in the Book of Kings. In Chronicles, again, it is said that the Levites kept the door or gate leading from the outside town or country into the Temple courts. There is thus no variance between the two accounts. "All the money" paid to the priests at the door of the holy place for holy things, or for ransoms, or of free gift, was put into this box. It was their duty to receive these monies; it was not a duty of the porters who guarded the court gates. A glance at the diagram on page 144 will shew that the "priests, keepers of the threshold," faced those who walked past the Levites on guard at the outer gates, met them as they came up to the box, and received the money from them there. But it is expressly said in the Kings that they did not drop into the box the trespass-money and the sin-money: it belonged to the priests, not to the building fund or the Temple. Had this exception been found in the Chronicles and not in the Kings, it would have been seized on as a proof of the inventive powers of the writer. But it occurs under circumstances which defy the most sceptical to take up that ground. These priestly monies formed an insignificant part of the Mosaic customs; are they not therefore a proof of the existence of the whole ritual in Jehoiada's time, and long before? Or, will believers in the "programme" denounce the passage as an interpolation by a later hand to give an air of truth to a forthcoming romance? When things so small as "ransoms" and

“gifts” are incidentally mentioned in a matter so small in itself as the money-box, used for the gathering of a building fund to repair the Temple, the inference is unavoidable that, if the lesser details of the Mosaic ritual required nothing more than a reminder to refresh a reader’s memory, the greater details would be passed over in silence as things too well known to need mention.

At the coronation of Joash, Jehoiada gave the king two things, “the crown” and “the testimony.” The latter must have been looked on as of high value, since it is put on the same footing as the former, and spoken of as its proper complement. The anointing is put in a lower place, and follows the giving of the crown and the testimony. What was this “testimony”? Modern thought passes it by on the other side. “The author of the Books of Kings,” says Kuenen,¹ “gave us occasion several times to complain of the incompleteness and vagueness of his accounts.” Of course this only means that the “programme” does not get that amount of support from the Kings which its inventors would like. Ewald, again, is strong on the anointing, “with all the customary solemnities,” but of the “testimony,” notwithstanding the higher place it holds, he says not one word. We read in the Book of Deuteronomy, that every king at his installation was bound to write a copy of the law for his own use.²

¹ *Religion of Israel*, vol. i. p. 375.

² Compare “The law of the king,” pp. 82-85.

Joash was too young to do that. Did Jehoiada get it done for him, and present him with the book? The Hebrew word for "testimony" is one of the most holy in the Old Testament. It is especially used of the ten commandments, of the ark, and of the law. There is no ground for doubting the reference at the coronation of Joash, or of the blow dealt by this one word to the views of the "programme."¹ A writer, who refers to trespass-money and sin-money, small matters of the law, as things well known, would not waste words on the king's first and outstanding duty, to write out a copy of the law for himself. Whoever wishes history and not romance, can scarcely have two thoughts about this one word, "Testimony."

We are now in a position to return to the construction put on the phrase, "the priests and the Levites," by the assailants of the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. "Every Levite is not a priest, but he is qualified by birth to become one" (Deut. xviii. 1). "Priests were chosen *in preference* from the tribe of Levi, to which Moses

¹ Dean Stanley is sorely puzzled by this Testimony. "The diadem," he says, "which was probably a band studded with jewels, was placed on his head by the High Priest, and upon it the sacred 'Testimony,' which in the reign of Jehoshaphat had been raised into new importance." The words "upon it" are of course incomprehensible. They are either a printer's blunder, or a curious mistranslation of the Hebrew, probably the former. The footnote to the passage says truly of the "Testimony," "Whatever this was, it was probably the same as the 'Book of the Law' in 2 Chron. xxii."—*Lectures*, part ii. p. 397.

“ and Aaron had belonged ; it was only by degrees that
“ the Levites managed to introduce the conviction, that
“ they alone were competent for the priestly functions.”
“ All Levites had an equal claim to the priesthood, but
“ many of them did not avail themselves of it, and gained
“ their living by other means.”¹ “ The higher and lower
“ services and offices in the temple at Jerusalem, although
“ accessible to all Levites, remained, as might have been
“ expected, hereditary in the families which had once
“ discharged them ; and thus in the natural course of
“ things arose the distinction between higher and lower
“ priests, which contained the germ of the subsequent
“ contrast between priests and Levites, but did not call it
“ into being prior to the exile.” “ This distinction had
“ arisen immediately after Josiah’s reformation, when the
“ priests of the high places were admitted into the Temple
“ at Jerusalem, but not to offer sacrifices ;” that is to say,
the Levites, the porters, the singers, were only “ degraded
“ priests.”² These are vast inferences to draw from a
premiss so small as “ the priests the Levites.” They
cover a large field, but the base they rest on is a point so
sharp that the merest touch may overturn the whole.
The “ programme ” makes heavy drafts on the faith of
believers. The bankers must have a large unoccupied
capital who can loan it on the security given.

¹ Compare Deut. xviii. 6-8.

² Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 26 ; vol. i. p. 338 ; vol. ii. p. 168.

On looking at the phrase, "the priests the Levites," a commonsense reader would either transpose it into "the Levitical priests," or into "the priests and the Levites." Should he hesitate about the latter, though there may be no reason for so doing, he would immediately ask regarding the phrase, "the Levitical priests," what other priests there were among the Hebrews in the days of Moses? "The priests," meant all who went by that name, whether Hebrews or not;¹ "the priests the Levites," meant those who were specially set apart for the service of the tabernacle. It is well known, from Moses' own writings, that in the wilderness there were other priests than the sons of Aaron among his countrymen. A struggle, that did not die out for forty years, arose at once on the appointment of the latter. The family priests of the Hebrew tents claimed their birthright in the face of heaven's own choice of Aaron and his sons. Some weeks or months before the Aaronic priesthood was instituted, men from other families are known to have discharged the priests' duties. When Jethro visited the Hebrew camp, burnt offerings and peace offerings were slain before the altar, but the offerers were not Levites.² And when, shortly after, Moses built "an altar under the hill, and "twelve pillars," it is expressly said that "he sent young

¹ Jethro, the priest of Midian. "David's sons were priests," 2 Sam. viii. 18.

² Exodus xviii. 12; xvii. 15.

“men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.”¹ But these instances of altar building, and of other priests than the Levites, date from before the giving of the law, and were forty years earlier than the writing of Deuteronomy. Did the necessity of distinguishing the Levitical from other Hebrew priests continue during the wilderness wanderings of the twelve tribes? Unquestionably it did.

After the settlement of the priesthood in Aaron's family, the demand for free admission to the office assumed formidable dimensions. All the people were declared by the discontented to be holy, and a number of leading men, belonging to different tribes, refused to acknowledge the arrangements made by Moses in Aaron's favour. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram are mentioned by name; but there were 250 others who joined them in their intrigue and rebellion. A terrible doom swept them all away, but it did not quench in the breasts of their countrymen this strong longing to celebrate the priest's office. We have the testimony of Moses himself to the fact, that he winked at a worship which he was unable to put down, and of which he could not approve. “Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance

¹ Exodus xxiv. 5.

“ which the Lord your God giveth you.”¹ Amos, the prophet (B.C. 805), is a witness to the same thing, a witness, too, whose words are reckoned of more weight than those quoted from the book of Deuteronomy. “ Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel ? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chium, your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.”² Here then we have other than Levitical priests referred to. What more can any one wish ? The priests the Levites were one set of men ; the priests, not Levites, were another. Moses tells us of both kinds, in words that he who runs may read. He is therefore altogether consistent in his statements, and most simple in his explanations. A meaning is forced upon his words by critics which he heartily repudiates in almost every page. But these writers, instead of letting Moses speak for himself, treat him as if he had been in his dotage, and did not know what he meant to say.

The phrase, “ the priests the Levites,” became common in Hebrew politics and literature. It occurs repeatedly in the beginning of the book of Joshua ; and, strange to say, is found also in the books of Nehemiah³ and Chronicles. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, who was

¹ Deut. xii 8, 9.

² Amos v. 25, 26.

³ Neh. x. 28, 34 (Hebrew, ver. 29, 35). If some critics claim the right of inserting an “ and ” in these passages, how can they deny the same right to their opponents in other passages ?

himself a priest, reference is repeatedly made to priests, to prophets, to pastors, to princes, but never to Levites. A hasty reasoner might conclude from this that of the Temple servants called Levites, who waited on the priests, Jeremiah had never heard; that indeed there was no such class of people about the Temple, or in the land. But second thoughts would modify this conclusion. Even the Levites themselves commit the same blunder of overlooking the Levites in an enumeration of the orders of the people, if blunder that could be called, which was really a way of speaking that had been common for many years. "Neither have our kings, our princes," they say in the solemn prayer at the close of the great feast of Tabernacles an hundred years after the return from Babylon,¹ "our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law." "The Jews, the priests, the nobles, the rulers, the rest of the people," "we, our kings and our priests," are other forms of enumerating the classes of the people long after the founding of the second Temple.² It is equally striking that Malachi, the prophet, writing when these Temple servants are allowed by all learned men to have formed a section of the community, is as silent on their existence

¹ Neh. ix. 34.

² Neh. ii. 16; Ezra ix. 7. Modern writers unconsciously borrow the same mode of speech. Dean Stanley says, "There is a ponderous and simple dignity in the emphatic reiteration addressed to every class of the community—prince, priest, and people."—*Lectures, Third Series*, p. 101.

and duties as Jeremiah himself. One cannot help thinking that, if Malachi held his peace about the Levites, and devoted his attention solely to the priests, much more might Jeremiah have done the same. We saw already the great risk the body of the Levites were exposed to, of being underpaid or not paid their dues at all, and of ultimately deserting their service to find other means of livelihood.¹ A people whose princes violated the law of the year of release, as we found they did in Jeremiah's time, and whose priests were rude and violent, would have no scruple in robbing the unfriended Levite of his dues.

But the testimony of eye-witnesses at the founding of the second Temple (B.C. 535), is an argument for the existence of Levites as porters and singers in the first, which the ingenuity of a "programme" cannot get rid of. "Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice."² This invaluable piece of evidence occurs in the book of Ezra, the priest and scribe, who came to Jerusalem in 458 B.C., and had access to all the sources of information stored up by a caste familiar with writing and with tradition. Even the most attached follower of the "programme" will scarcely doubt the accuracy of the statement made.

We have seen that the newest phase of modern thought

¹ Ezek. xlv. 10-15; xlvi. 11-13.

² Ezra iii. 12.

regards the Levites as the “degraded priests” of the high places, who were brought from heathen sanctuaries to serve in the Temple after Josiah’s reformation. But the years that passed over Zion between that great event and the utter destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, were not favourable to the rise of new arrangements in the Temple worship. Within twenty-two years after Josiah’s death, four kings ruled over Judah, of whom two were placed on the throne by foreign princes. Four times was the holy city taken by enemies, thrice after a long and terrible siege, in which famine and pestilence played their usual part. Thrice were the kings led captive to a foreign land, and twice at least the chief men of all ranks in society accompanied them into slavery. And twice, for a period of two years and upwards, the land of Judah was wasted by roving bands of plunderers from the neighbouring nations, who exacted a Turkish price for its sovereign’s treason to his Babylonian master. During all these years of misrule and misery, the Temple itself was under the control of men, whose deeds of violence may be read in the prophecies of Jeremiah. In these days, “degraded priests” are supposed to have slowly developed into inferior servants of the temple, and then by a process still more inexplicable in the land of Babylon, where there was no house of God, and no altar to supply with victims and wood, into Levites, porters, singers, judges, Nethinim, before the founding of the second Temple in

535 B.C. We are expected to believe that the first steps of this evolution of new species of things took place after 623 B.C., in a country rent and torn by faction, reeling under repeated blows of foreign hands, drunk with the intoxication of a great deliverance in store for it, and yet deliberately breaking the laws of the only Being from whom that deliverance could come. We have farther to believe that this evolution of the new from the old, far from being a work of time, took place in little more than thirty years (623 to 586 B.C.); and that all traces of its sudden action were blotted out of the memories of men who witnessed the change going on under their eyes. The theory is beyond the belief of ordinary mortals.

To these considerations must be added the testimony of the "ancient men, Levites," who had seen the first Temple, and were present at the founding of the second. A child born in the year of Josiah's reformation would have been eighty-seven years of age at the return from Babylon. He would have been thirty-five when Jerusalem was destroyed. A man of seventy-five, looking on the foundation of the second Temple, might have been an officiating Levite of twenty-two when he took his last sight of the first. He was old enough to know whether his father was a "degraded priest" of Josiah's time, or could lay claim to a nobler lineage. Is it reasonable to suppose that these "ancient men" could or would have

been deceived into the acceptance of "programmes," which, they well knew, did not contain one word of truth? Much better and much simpler is it to believe that profound learning has led wise men with a theory to support into profound mistakes.

But the weary roll of arguments in favour of a desperate cause is summed up by the application of arithmetic to criticism. Practically it assumes the form of a comparison between two sets of numbers, and a question, to which only one answer is thought possible. Of the exiles who returned with Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua in 536 B.C., "the priests are more than 4000 in number; the Levites only amount to a total of 74, or 341, if we include the singers and porters. This proportion remains an insolvable riddle to any one who, with the (younger) Mosaic laws, holds the priests or sons of Aaron to be a small subdivision of the tribe of Levi. On the other hand, it is extremely natural, if the Levites be regarded as degraded priests."¹ Compare the 38,000 Levites at the founding of the first Temple with the miserable handful of 341 who came back from exile to the founding of the second, and say if the Levites as porters, singers, and judges had any existence in David's time, save on the paper of a "programme." This is the comparison; this the question.

It is not fair in these writers to put a problem before

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 203.

the world, and to defy a solution of it, when they do not give us the ordinary means of arriving at the truth. If they ask us, why did so few Levites return from exile, is it not clear that they have no right to look for an answer till they tell us how many Levites were taken captive? We have every reason for believing that the Levites deserted the Temple before its destruction, that they left the city, and that they were counted among the lower ranks of the people. The "three keepers of the threshold"¹ whom Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard carried away into captivity were priests of highest rank, not poor Levitical sentries, for they are classed with the chief priest and his second in command. But not a word is said of Levites who were carried away. As soon as we know how many were taken to Babylon, we shall be in a position to say why so few came back.²

But without waiting till the exact lists of captives be discovered at Birs Nimrud, or some other register house of the Babylonian king, we find, in the writings of Ezra, a reason for the small number of returned Levites. When he was ready to start for Jerusalem with a second band of

¹ 2 Kings xxv. 18.

² After the burning of the Temple, and the overthrow of the monarchy, there must still have been Levites left in Palestine to conduct the worship of the Jews. Jeremiah was one of them. There may have been many more both priests and porters, for it is odd that as many as eighty men came "with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring to the house of the Lord," while Gedaliah and the remnant of the Jews were living at Mizpah (Jer. xli. 5).

exiles in 458 B.C., he discovered that not a single Levite had joined the caravan. They would not come. They were better off in the land of exile, now become their home, than they expected to be in a city like Jerusalem that had been wasted by passing armies, and was still beset with bitter foes, and in a service which their forefathers had found to be precarious and ill-paid. The priests had seized the prizes of the profession: the Levites had been too often left to shift for themselves. But Ezra would not leave without an effort to persuade some of them to join his company. Accordingly he sent a deputation to "Iddo the chief, at the place Casiphia," to ask his good offices with his Levitical brethren. But so keenly did they feel the wrongs of the past, and fear the dangers of the future in Jerusalem, that, apparently with every effort put forth to induce volunteering, only thirty-eight Levites were persuaded to leave their foreign homes.

Had the writers, who deny the truth of the account contained in the five books of the distinction between priests and Levites, carried their investigations three centuries nearer our own time than the days of Ezra, they might have been startled by the apparition of a fact, which they cannot deny or evade, and which deals a fatal blow to their argument, drawn from the unmistakable difference of view given in the Kings and the Chronicles. The writer of the Books of Kings makes no mention of porters, singers, and judges, furnished from the tribe of

Levi; the writer of the Books of Chronicles gives long accounts of their duties, their glory, their achievements. The inference is, that the former had no knowledge of these classes of Levites; that, in short, the distinctions among the Temple officials, described at great length by the Chronicler, had no existence before the days of Ezra. But the same argument must be held true of the first Book of the Maccabees, written about B.C. 120, or four centuries after the return of the exiles from Babylon. It covers sixty-four pages of a Greek bible, in which the second Book of Chronicles covers seventy-three. A period of thirty-three years is embraced in the one, of nearly 500 years in the other. But, notwithstanding the minuteness of its details, the first Book of the Maccabees makes not the slightest reference to Levites, or to porters and singers belonging to that tribe. No reader could ever imagine from its pages that the serving "Levite" was even known to the Hebrews. Of priests and scribes plenty is said, but of Levites not one word. The pollution of the Temple is described; its recovery and cleansing, with the building of the altar of burnt offering, and the siege of the tower overlooking the courts, are related at great length; but not a word is said about the Levites and their duties. If the writer of the Kings knew nothing about these helpers of the priests, much less did the writer of the first Book of the Maccabees. But it is allowed on all sides that the latter had in his hands the five books in the form we

now have them ; it is unreasonable, then, to hold that the writer of the Kings cannot have had the same books in his possession, seeing that he is less silent about the Levites than the author of the first Book of the Maccabees.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRAMMES AND FEASTS.

Is Moses a name or a person?—The Five Books a patch-work of “programmes”—Most of these “programmes” written in Babylonia—The great novelists of the Exile—This “mental activity” doubtful—Survival of only the fittest “programmes”—“Passover” and “Tabernacles” “programmes”—“Passover” a “sacrifice” “of the flock and the herd”—Table of order of time of Passover laws—Sacrifices at “Tabernacles”—Artistic arrangement of numbers of victims—Absurdity of the arithmetic shewn—No one so qualified as Moses to write the Liturgy—The eighth day added to the seven days’ feast—The travelling days added—Parallel from records of Egypt—Reason in things for eighth day always a Sabbath—Hebrew year and Calendar—Connection of Jubilee, Year of Release, and Tabernacles—Not chance—The sending away day.

THE cutting in pieces of the Five Books can scarcely go farther without the question rising, Who was Moses? Or, rather, it will be found that one of the greatest mistakes of modern writers is to imagine that such a leader or lawgiver, or even such a man, ever lived, save in the dreams of romancers. He may be consigned to forgetfulness without loss to the human race, if the new ideas regarding his works be correct. A mighty disenchantment has taken place in history, sacred as well as profane. Moses, Homer, Romulus—the pivots on which the world

may be said to turn—are names and nothing more, shadows that fill the past with strange shapes, which it is the glory of the critic to have stripped of their imagined majesty, and sent to stalk through future time in discrowned poverty and weakness. The marvellous skill with which the patch-work called the "Five Books" has been taken to bits, each bit assigned to its own age and writer, and the whole arranged so as to shew its historic worth, fills many scholars with admiration and envy; while common-sense readers are astonished at the temerity of the performance. Had the aim of the critics been less ambitious, it might have met with more regard from the uninitiated.

It seems there have been several hands at work in several ages on the writing of the five books. There is first a bit of old ruin, so weather-beaten and so often touched-up by improvers, that even sharp-sighted discoverers have usually no small trouble in picking out the old from the new. They are perfectly aware that most people regard their method of discovery as only a display of "shocking caprice."¹ Still, even the boldest of them are not without a feeling of apprehension, such as, "We must not feign greater certainty, however, than we really possess"; and at times there is a candid confession that, unless a grievous mistake has been committed, the whole subject is involved in hopeless confusion. With somewhat hesitating steps, then, the latest writers on this side in the

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. pp. 16, 17.

controversy proceed to shew that, to the original bit of ruin, a number of recent additions were made, to give a look of completeness to the building. First, "the laws relating to feasts in Exod. xxiii. 14-18, are the oldest of "all" the Mosaic ordinances.¹ Next follow the regulations about the incomes of priests and Levites. In a later age come the distinctions in rank and pay among the Temple servants; and, later still, ordinances about the Sabbath-year, and the year of Jubilee. Beyond doubt, also, the fusing of these laws into one whole—such as it is—and the order of the sacrifices in the Temple, the liturgy we have in the five books, were due to the mental activity of the down-trodden Hebrews, whom the Babylonian king carried captive from their own country to the banks of the Chebar. But the progress of discovery in this field has not yet stopped its triumphant march; nor is it likely to do so, till the anatomy of the five books be for ever laid bare by some digger among the mounds discovering on the banks of the river the villages of the exiles, the register-house of the colony, and the original clay cylinders or papyrus-rolls, from which Ezra or some other scribe pieced together the Pentateuch.

It is pardonable to be somewhat nervous in treading on ground so soft. Before we can withdraw our foot we may be up to the waist, or even over the head, in a bog-hole. Ordinary mortals who have to walk across this treacherous

¹ Kuenen, vol. ii. p. 295.

surface may well envy the power of the critic, who surveys its dangers from above by lightly skimming along on wings. However, even his endowment may be fraught with risk, if his wings, like those of Icarus, be so badly glued on, that they fail him when he is over the softest part of the morass. Nor is this unlikely to happen.

It is imagined that these "programmes," especially those bearing on the priestly laws, circulated among the learned class as oral tradition (*torah*),¹ and were not committed to writing for centuries. Others again may have been school-exercises in the schools of the prophets, or "studies on prophecy," as early as the eighth century before Christ. This is Kuenen's view of the touching story told in Num. xii. of the quarrel fastened on Moses by Aaron and Miriam. How he has arrived at this result, and how that exercise should have been put in writing so early, but the priestly laws not, are matters for the discoverer to explain. There is this outstanding difference between a discovery in modern biblical science and a discovery in modern natural philosophy, that everybody acknowledges the reasonableness and accuracy of the latter, while nobody but the discoverer himself acknowledges the reasonableness and accuracy of the former. *He thinks so*, is the furthest most people can go in the way of praise, and that is really all that can be said in favour of the school-exercise origin of Num. xii.

¹ It is altogether arbitrary to limit the Hebrew word to this meaning.

In the first place there is far too much of "programme" writing in these theories of learned men. At one time the programme is prophetic; then it is legislative; and, next, the greatest wonder of all, historical "deductions" do duty for historical facts, or, in other words, what was thought likely to happen is put down as having actually taken place. According to the views of these thinkers, Deuteronomy from beginning to end is only a "programme." Then, the whole liturgy of the Hebrews, the sacrifices for each day, the rules for distinguishing clean from unclean, the differences among the Temple servants, the dues and duties of the priests, with a host of smaller matters, are parts of other "programmes" thought out by priestly lawgivers in Babylonia, written down and put in the name of Moses to give the force of truth to the make-up. Most of Leviticus and a large part of Numbers are thus thrown into the waste-basket by a few strokes of the critic's pen. A large part of Exodus fares no better. These poor exiles in Babylonia had a busy time of it in drawing up programmes. They had almost no leisure for the weeping their plaintive poet speaks of. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept," is clearly a wrong reading, requiring to be corrected into, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wrote programmes." But the remainder of the five books, like remainders in a drapery shop, count for little, and are disposed of without a thought of the loss sustained. The stories of the

creation and the deluge, the two numberings of the people in the wilderness, the rebellion of Korah, and other bits of what seems history, were inventions of some Hebrew exiles in Babylonia, who amused their leisure hours with writing novels, founded on fact, and oftener founded on nothing at all. The judgments passed on these pieces of Old Testament narrative are sweeping and unmitigated. "It is clear that all this is fictitious," "all this is as unhistorical as the foregoing;" "in fact, Enoch was *originally* the year;" not a man who lived on earth, and walked with God, and did not die;¹ "in the Sinaitic desert such an encampment is as inconceivable as such an order of march;" "cities for priests and Levites are a product of the imagination of our priestly writer;" "the honour of the discovery" of the Aaronic priesthood "is due to him;"—these are a few of the "grains of truth" which have rewarded the researches of modern thinkers. But, how successful was the writer of these fables—if there was only one—unknown exile though he was! "It is only with difficulty that historical criticism has freed itself from the prestige which he exercised over his contemporaries and posterity."²

Moses then is nothing at all, or a name at the best.

¹ The "year" does not die, but lives again as soon as it dies; and because Enoch lived 365 years, it is assumed that, since there are 365 days in a year, he was simply another name for the ever-living though ever-dying year.

² Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 173.

Abraham, Joshua, Aaron, and others are as shadowy. But the greatest names in Hebrew history, the finest writers it knows, the grandest novelists the world has ever seen, the men of whom "it must avail as a proof of the power of their mind," that they made "historical deductions" stand forth to seventy generations as "historical facts," are absolutely unknown. They flit through the past like Homer's ghosts in Hades, dim shadows wishing to tell the tale of wrongs done them by the world, but unable to utter aught save the faintest cry, which the quick ear of the critic has at last caught. Spirit-rapping is nothing in comparison with this. The nameless dead are summoned from unknown graves; they are questioned before the world; they tell the tale of cunning "programmes," and are dismissed to eternal rest "with mighty strides along the asphodel meadow, glad because the critics told them of their illustrious offspring's fame." These Hebrew masters of poetic invention will have to be ticketed A, B, C, D, since people generally require names to think by, and Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Abraham are now consigned to their proper place in the waste-basket.

It is evidently a strong objection to these views of modern thinkers that, while *one* Moses is as much as the world could ever expect to see, a whole batch of men as great as, if not greater than, Moses is forced upon our acceptance, however we may ridicule the idea of such a

band of romancers having lived together, or even lived at all. A poet is a better judge of the possibility of this than a critic; here is the evidence of one on a kindred question: "Some people believe in twenty Homers; we
" in one. Nature is not so prodigal of her great poets.
" Heaven only knows the number of her own stars, no
" astronomer may ever count them; but the soul-stars of
" earth are but few, and with this Perryan pen could we
" name them all. Who ever heard of two Miltons, of
" two Shakespeares? That there should ever have been
" one of each is a mystery when we look at what are
" called men. Who, then, after considering that argu-
" ment, will believe that Greece of old was glorified by a
" numerous brotherhood of coeval genii of mortal birth,
" all 'building up the lofty rhyme,' till beneath their
" harmonious hands arose in its perfect proportions,
" immortal in its beauty and magnificence, 'The Tale of
" 'Troy Divine.'"¹ As there was but one Homer, one
Shakespeare, one Milton, so we may conclude there was
but one Moses.

But is this imagined writing of programmes fact or fiction? The poor exiles in Babylonia have lost all hope of ever seeing the land of their fathers. False prophets once buoyed them up with high hopes only to plunge them into deeper depths when these hopes failed. Most of them have formed ties in the seats of their captivity, which

¹ Professor Wilson, *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 2.

have rendered Canaan a name that awakens no thrill of patriotism in their bosoms. So far as history informs us of their condition, it is known that their hearts were wrung with sadness, their hopes were crushed, their spirits were broken. They even ceased to wish to return to the land of their fathers. But it is not a people so down-trodden that amuses itself with writing programmes and passing them off as history. Even Kuenen is doubtful of his ground in attributing such mental activity to an expatriated race. "At the first glance," he says, "no doubt so great an activity on the part of the priests of Javeh in the land of exile is singular."¹ If a critic with the powers of discovery he possesses is doubtful, other men can hardly be blamed if they dismiss the whole theory as a baseless invention. But it is not the successful programmes only that have to be dealt with. A new art had sprung up among the exiles, devised either to while away time, or to cheat its inventors into the hope that their country's sorrows were all a dream. It was the art of writing pleasing story books. It was largely practised in their townships. Only the best examples of it, we shall suppose, have survived the weeding-out of time; the poorest have sunk out of sight. In this new theory of the evolution of species, the law of the survival of the fittest eminently holds good. But the multiplication of examples does not lessen the difficulty to the critic. He

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 153.

is bound to explain the origin, the persistence, the success of the operators. A whole colony of forgers is represented as having been at work. A false coinage is minted; it passes current among them, although everybody knows its worthlessness; and during the exile, or even after it, the coiners successfully pursue their work in the name of God and truth! It is a marvellous theory.

Among these programmes the three great feasts of the Jews, and the ceremonies connected with them, hold no mean place. The five books, the books of Kings, the books of Chronicles, the prophets, are all put in the witness-box, sharply cross-examined by counsel, and every little jot and tittle of a variation in their testimony put under a microscope till a molehill is turned into a mountain. Discoveries cannot fail to be made when this plan is tried; but what are they worth? The writer of Deuteronomy, it seems, "especially insists that every one shall "offer up his sacrifices in the Temple at Jerusalem, and that "the sacrificial meals shall be held there."¹ It requires no critical skill to discover that Jerusalem and the Temple are never mentioned in the book: they are implied, it will be said; but even a child may see that this is assuming what has to be proved. Nor is this introduction to the "Feasts-programme" unlike the body of the programme itself. The writer of Deuteronomy knows of three annual feasts—the passover or unleavened bread, pentecost, and

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 27. Deut. xii. 26, 27.

tabernacles. The two last he leaves untouched; his regulations for the first "may be partly new." And here we enter a region of critical haze, so high up among cloud and mist, that it seems as if the critics' engineering could not even form a sheep-path through its wilderness. We shall take a specimen or two of the sharp handling, to which the feasts are subjected before they can be tortured into giving evidence for the "programme."

The feast of the passover is frequently called the feast of unleavened bread. In several passages it is spoken of as a sacrifice, and most justly, because the blood of the lamb was sprinkled "on the two side posts, and on the "upper door post of the house," while whatever of the victim remained till the morning was burnt with fire. The sprinkling of blood shewed the sacrificial nature of the feast. It was the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread, it was the chief part of it, and though the passover, properly so called, was eaten in one night, the name "passover" was given to the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted for seven days. Nothing is more common among ourselves than to name a whole from its chief part—a steamer from the steam that drives it through the water, or a factory-hand (for a worker) from the organ of his body which he chiefly uses in spinning or weaving. The seven days' feast of unleavened bread is thus spoken of as the passover, which was its chief and outstanding feature.

And the prophet Ezekiel speaks in this way: "In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten."¹ But on each of these seven days certain sacrifices were prescribed to be offered from "the flock and the herd," according to the liturgy in Numb. xxviii. 17-24: "Two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year . . . and one goat for a sin-offering." All the victims are thus referred to in the book of Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd."² These simple facts, in which the five books tell the same consistent tale, are thrown into confusion by learned men, who have lost the clue to guide them through the ordinary turnings and windings of man's speech. "The flock and the herd" are made use of by them to shew that a calf or a bullock must anciently have been allowed at the paschal feast, and that "a lamb for an house," or a goat, was a change in that annual meal! With the ordinances laid down in Exodus xii. 1-20, Moses therefore can have had nothing to do! Instead of allowing that great master of words and things the common rights of the poorest author, they are ever looking out for him tripping and stumbling in his language. Discoveries are unavoidable on this method.

"The sacrifice of the passover" is especially seized on

¹ Ezek. xlv. 21.

² Deut. xvi. 2.

as a way of speaking altogether foreign to that feast. It is something new, it is hundreds of years more recent than the institution of the festival. Along with the phrase "the passover of the flock and the herd," it is held conclusively to shew that the writer of Deuteronomy had imported new ideas into this feast unknown to his predecessors. This view is wholly unfounded. There is not room for proof or disproof, for the position taken up by those who hold it is entrenched with nothing better than, "we think so," or "it is manifest."

But the strangest discovery of all is, that the passover was one feast, and "unleavened bread" another. Somehow the two were run together into one. We must be careful here. It is nowhere said that this spring feast was fully described in its details, and once for all a little before the departure from Egypt. On the other hand, it is expressly said that the original institution was added to by Moses, in so far as the passover was, in certain circumstances, allowed to be eaten in the second month by some who could not eat of it at the usual time in the first. That the rudiments of the feast were prescribed at the going forth from Egypt is all that can be asserted; and that Moses modified or added to the arrangements during the wilderness wanderings will not be denied. But this is very different from the views advanced by believers in the "programme." No fewer than five different sets of laws about this feast are thought to have been inserted in

the five books. They were written at different times, and by different men; and they shew beyond a doubt, it is said, that passover and unleavened bread, or *Mazzôth*, to use the Hebrew word, were different festivals, which had been at last fused into one. Great skill or great credulity is shewn in discovering the order of time in which these programmes were written. Here it is, according to Kuenen and his admirers:—

“ 1. Exod. xxiii. 15 (*Mazzôth*; no mention of the sacrifice of the passover).

“ 2. Exod. xiii. 3-10 (ditto; but in verses 2 and 11-16, the dedication of the first born).

“ 3. Exod. xxxiv. 18 (ditto; but mention is again made in verses 19, 20 of the dedication of the first born; while verse 25 speaks of ‘the sacrifice of the feast of the passover’).

“ 4. Deut. xvi. 1-8 (*Mazzôth* and sacrifice of the passover; immediately preceded in chap. xv. 19-23 by commandments relating to the first born of sheep and oxen).

“ 5. Exod. xii. 1-28, 43-50; Lev. xxiii. 5-8 [also 10-14]; Num. xxviii. 16-25, ix. 1-14 (all of which laws belong together, and connect *Mazzôth* with the sacrifice of the passover).”¹

Because the laws relating to this feast are thus found scattered over the five books, sometimes more and sometimes less fully, to infer that they were written by different hands, and in ages far apart, is unsafe and unwarrantable. No history and no legislation could bear to be dissected after this fashion. Reasons for it there are really none. Or, if there be any, they are as hard to take hold of as the

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 87, and the authorities there quoted.

following somewhat comical criticism on the order for a public meeting at the beginning and end of the feast: "And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you." "Of course," it is said, "at the first paschal sacrifice a sanctuary, &c., was out of the question. But as far as the annual passover is concerned, the law-giver, unless I be mistaken, really takes the celebration in the city of the Temple for granted (comp. Exod. xii. 16; also Lev. xxiii. 7, 8, 10-14; Num. ix. 6, seq., throughout which the celebration at the sanctuary seems to be assumed)." To draw this conclusion about "the city of the Temple" from the passage quoted requires as much ingenuity as the writing out of a programme. But the whole criticism, in the table of the order of time, is equally unsubstantial.

We reach firmer ground at the feast of tabernacles. The critics there come down from the clouds to the earth, and use their pens quite as much as their fancies. To spread discussion over the wide surface sketched by modern thinkers would not promote the cause of truth. But by concentrating attention on two points of attack directed against the feast of tabernacles, we can at once test the theory of the "programme," and satisfy ourselves of the truth of the Bible narrative. At the same time,

the two points attacked give rise to other considerations of no small importance in Hebrew history.

In the book of Numbers, as we have already seen, the lawgiver has laid down with singular minuteness the sacrifices that were to be offered each day during the feast. "Ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord," it is said, "seven days"; while, during these days, the altar blazed with the burning of bullocks, sheep, and goats. The arrangements prescribed will be seen from the following table:—

NUMB. xxix. 12-34.

Day of Feast.	Bullocks.	Rams.	Lambs.	Oil-Flour.	Goat for Sin-offering.
First	13	2	14	57 tenth deals	1
Second	12	2	14	54 „	1
Third	11	2	14	51 „	1
Fourth	10	2	14	48 „	1
Fifth	9	2	14	45 „	1
Sixth	8	2	14	42 „	1
Seventh	7	2	14	39 „	1

On the eighth day there was a solemn assembly.¹

The priestly law of public worship at the feast of tabernacles is thus very minute. But Moses is believed to have had nothing to do with it, as it dates from far

¹ To any one who has read the "Harris Papyrus" as translated in *Records of the Past*, vol. vi., these great sacrifices will appear small when compared with the host of victims and of offerings dedicated by Rameses III. of Egypt. "I made for thee store-places for the show festivals with slaves, male and female, I supplied them with bread and beer, oxen, fowl, wine, incense, fruit, fodder, vegetable, pure offering daily" (p. 29). "I gave thee ten of tens of thousands of bushels of corn to supply thy divine offerings continually;" I gave thee flocks of the south and north having cattle, geese, and beasts in hundreds of

more recent times. By a means of proof that ordinary intelligence has some difficulty in following, the lawgiver is shewn to have lived a thousand years after Moses, if Moses ever lived at all, and the regulations for public worship to have been a "programme," the worthlessness of which, from an antiquarian's point of view, can easily be detected. Really and truly all the proof adduced for this great discovery is, that the priestly law "even has its "special demands for each day of the feast of tabernacles, "which form together an artistically-descending series."¹

This "artistically-descending series" is a poor bit of arithmetic, equalled only by other sums this school of thinkers sets us to work out. Any one may see that the whole art in the matter consists in taking off one bullock each day as the feast proceeds, along with the three tenth deals of oil-flour assigned to the victim. There is no art in this; and Moses was surely as competent to draw up this plan of sacrifice for actual use as an unknown priest in fun or stupidity, while the wilderness was a more likely scene for the victims really to be slain than Babylonia for them to be imagined as having been offered. But the

"thousands, having superintendents, herdsmen, keepers, officers, workmen, and numerous keepers behind carrying fodder for the cattle to "sacrifice O Lord of the gods! to thy image in all thy festivals" (pp. 30, 31). "Total of herds, 86,486. Herds of cattle, 421,362" (p. 36). "Total of good bread, different loaves, 2,844,357" (p. 45). Moses had thus examples before him in drawing up a liturgy for his countrymen, even supposing he had no divine commission at all.

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 254.

artful arrangement of the numbers has been missed by the learned men. They are evidently indifferent hands at arithmetic. Though not believing a word of their theory, we shall present them with better proofs of it than "the artistically-descending series" of a bullock off each day as the feast advances.

First of all, it is very suspicious that the priestly lawgiver begins with a sacrifice of animals equal in number to the days of a Hebrew month, $13 + 2 + 14 + 1 = 30$. Even if the goat for a sin-offering be left out, the number is still more singular, 29. A Hebrew month was perhaps regulated by the moon; its length therefore was twenty-nine days twelve hours, or half-way between twenty-nine and thirty, just as we have seen there were twenty-nine or thirty animals sacrificed on the first day of the feast. Does this not look like a make-up? Next, the lawgiver assigns to the victims tenth deals of flour equal in number to the working days of the week; 3 for a bullock + 2 for a ram + 1 for a lamb = 6, a very inartistic division between smaller and greater cattle. Farther, two weeks were wanting to complete the month at the beginning of the feast. Therefore he "programmes" a couple of rams. But two weeks are fourteen days, therefore he represents each day by a lamb, or fourteen in all. And the sum total of bullocks, rams, and lambs is $70 + 14 + 98$, or 182. But this sum is as near as can be the half of what "Enoch originally was," a year of 365 days, a clear

attempt on the lawgiver's part to make the feast of tabernacles stand for the last six months of the year, while passover stood for the first six. But the sum total of the tenth deals of flour at the feast is even more manifestly a coinage, artistically done, but not beyond discovery. The sum is 336, or the number of days in "Enoch," less the new moons, 12; new year's day, 1; the day of atonement, 1; and the days in passover and tabernacles, 15; or 365, less 29, that is 336! And does not the number of bullocks, seventy, at once recall the camp at Elim, where the fugitive Hebrews are said to have found "twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm-trees;" or rather, "all the souls of the house of Jacob, "which came into Egypt, threescore and ten"? Could anything be more satisfactory or more convincing? All these arrangements are a clear make-up, a skilfully put together piece of arithmetic. Not much credit is due to the discovery; but is it not as valuable for the purposes of history as most of those that buttress up the "programme"?

The table of tabernacle sacrifices was thus due to the taste for artistic arrangement shewn by some unknown genius in the days of the exile. What soft-hearted patriot in any country can refrain from sympathy with the great-souled priest, who longed to see again in Zion glories that no eye had seen but his own, and altars that never smoked with victims except such as the fire of his

own fancy kindled? The liturgy of the Hebrews was surely not so unlikely a thing for Moses to draw up in the wilderness. If an unknown exile could successfully try his hand on a programme which he had no hope of ever seeing realised in a city that had been laid waste, and in a temple lying in ruins—and so it is asserted this liturgy did arise—it is far more reasonable to hold that Moses drew it up himself for use among a people that had a great future before them, and to prevent the unseemly wrangles that always arise about the ceremonial worship of a nation. Moses had a definite purpose in view in making arrangements for public sacrifice; the “programme” had none. Victims bled and altars smoked throughout the wilderness in the days of the great lawgiver; is there any reason to think that the plains of Babylon ever witnessed a Hebrew sacrifice, or bore a Hebrew altar? Moses was accustomed to a priesthood and a ritual in the great kingdom of Egypt; the writer of the “programme” could scarcely have thought of an imposing ritual in the exiles’ villages on the banks of the Chebar. We know from history that Moses mingled freely with the great men of Egypt, and witnessed its grand sights of temple and tomb; but there is not a scrap of evidence to shew that the drawer up of the “programme” visited the great scenes of Persian worship, or had any acquaintance with its ritual. In ascribing the Hebrew liturgy to Moses, no demands are made on history which

history refuses to honour; in ascribing it to an unknown writer in Babylonia, the critic first supposes his existence possible, then assumes considerable practice in the new art, next imagines he thought a day would come when his programme would be carried out in a rebuilt Zion and in a new temple; and lastly, represents him as forging the name of Moses and the orders of God! Which of the two carries truth on its face?

But neither Egypt nor Persia could have furnished the example from which the Hebrew liturgy was copied. Certainly Egypt could not have been the source of it, for the ceremonies in its temples, and at its feasts, were unlike any Hebrew sacrifices,¹ and "the abomination of Egypt" was offered on Hebrew altars. Therefore the Mosaic ritual could not have been derived from that country. Nor could it have come from copying the Persian worship, near as the religious sentiments of the exiles are thought by critics to have approached to those of the Parsees. Worship among the latter consisted "in the frequent offering of prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, in the recitation of set hymns, the performance of a certain ceremony called the homa, and in the occasional sacrifice of animals. . . . The homa ceremony consisted in the extraction of the juice of the homa plant by the priests during the recitation of prayers, the formal presentation of the liquor extracted to the

¹ *Records of the Past*, vol. ii, pp. 54-58, and indeed *passim*.

“sacrificial fire, the consumption of a small portion of it
“by one of the officiating priests, and the division of the
“remainder among the worshippers. . . . The animals
“which might be sacrificed were the horse, the ox, the
“sheep, and the goat, the horse being the favourite
“victim. A priest always performed the sacrifice, slaying
“the animal, and shewing the flesh to the sacred fire by
“way of consecration, after which it was eaten at a
“solemn feast by the priest and people.”¹

But the great arithmetical discovery of this school of critics is that an eighth day was added by the priestly lawgiver to the original seven of the feast of tabernacles. It is a notable discovery, well worthy of a place in a modern programme. Before the imagined lawgiver's time, the feast was held for seven days; but he and his friends slipped in an eighth day, and laid the blame of the addition on that most useful shadow, poor Moses. This is the position of matters: “Let the reader remember that the feast of
“tabernacles is celebrated, according to Deuteronomy,
“from the fifteenth up to and including the twenty-first,
“and, according to the priestly laws, from the fifteenth up
“to and including the twenty-second of the seventh
“month; and let him now compare together the two

¹ Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 634. Our knowledge of Parsee worship is derived from books that are not older than the third century of our era. And yet modern thinkers are sometimes so uncritical as to ascribe to Parseeism a leavening influence on the Old Testament faith!

“ following accounts of a feast of tabernacles kept under
 “ Solomon, the first written before Ezra’s time, the second
 “ from the third¹ century B.C. :—

1 KINGS VIII. 65, 66.

And at that time Solomon held
the feast, and all Israel with him,
 a great congregation from Hamath
 unto the river of Egypt, before
 Jahveh, our God, for seven days
 [and seven days, even for fourteen
 days]. On the eighth day he sent
 the people away, and they blessed
 the king, &c.

2 CHRON. VII. 8, 9, 10.

And at that time Solomon kept
the feast seven days, and all Israel
 with him, a very great congrega-
 tion from Hamath unto the river
 of Egypt. And on the eighth day
 they made a solemn assembly, for
 they kept the dedication of the
 altar seven days, and the feast
 seven days. And on the three
 and twentieth day of the seventh
 month he sent the people away
 into their tents, &c.

“ It is evident at once that the words of 1 Kings viii. 65,
 “ which I have placed in [] must be omitted ; they have
 “ all the appearance of a gloss, and moreover are contra-
 “ dicted by the beginning of verse 66, where the fifteenth
 “ (and not the eighth) should have been named, if four-
 “ teen days (and not seven) had been mentioned just
 “ before. Thus Solomon lets the people go home *on the*
 “ *eighth day*, *i.e.* on the twenty-second of the seventh
 “ month. In other words, the author of this account knows
 “ nothing of the priestly regulation which makes the
 “ eighth day a feast² and a day of rest ; he only knows of
 “ the Deuteronomic law, with which his account entirely

¹ The *third* century is certainly a wrong date for the writing of the book of Chronicles.

² There is no warrant for using the word “feast” of the eighth day.

“ agrees. With the younger Chronicler it is otherwise. He *improves* the older account (1) by expressly mentioning the eighth day, and (2) by fixing the departure of the Israelites (not on the twenty-second, but) on the twenty-third day of the seventh month. Is it not as clear as daylight that the priestly law must have been made and promulgated *after* the author of Kings had written, and *before* the lifetime of the Chronicler? And, finally, let there be added to this the evidence in Neh. viii. 14–17.”

“ According to Deut. xvi. 13–15, the feast of tabernacles lasts *seven* days; according to Lev. xxiii. 36–39, Numb. xxix. 35, an eighth day, likewise a feast and a day of rest, must be added to these seven.”¹

How thankful we ought to be that this formidable looking battery is no longer masked, or hid away in the clouds, but facing us in the open field. The best resistance any one can offer is to walk straight towards the cannon's mouth. Noise there may be in abundance, harm there can possibly be none. Both in Leviticus and in Numbers in the very chapters quoted above, though not in the same verses, the agreement with Deuteronomy is complete:—

LEV. XXIII. 34.	NUMB. XXIX. 12.	DEUT. XVI. 13.
The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of	On the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy	Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days.

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 296.

tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.	convocation ; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days.
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Nothing could be plainer than that these three passages tell the same story, and say the same thing. Whoever denies this because of the eighth day afterwards mentioned has no standing ground.

It is known from history that the great feasts were stretched out to include "the three days before the feast and the three days after the feast."¹ But there is no reference to these days in the New Testament. It was a custom that grew up to suit the convenience of the people for travelling to and from Zion, but these six days were not part of the feast, nor were they laid down in the law. The eighth day must have been added in a somewhat similar way, if it was not in the original ordinance. But why this eighth day should have been expressly added, while the travelling days, six in number, were left to be understood, is somewhat of a puzzle. As eight and six make fourteen, it would have rounded the thing far better off had the "programme" made tabernacles last two weeks, instead of eight days. These "programmes" lead to absurdity at every step.

Before we proceed to this grand difficulty of the eighth day, it may be advisable to look again at the words, "an

¹ 1 Macc. x. 34.

“ holy convocation.” On the first day of the feast a general meeting was held, and another on the eighth. In modern times it is assumed that this proves the regulations had reference to towns like Jerusalem with its temple, and not to the wilderness. To this odd and, apparently, inconclusive inference the reply is, what were the antecedents of Moses and the Hebrews? Were these feasts with solemn assemblies known to them in Egypt, or were they unknown till perhaps Samuel’s or Solomon’s time? “ ‘ Solemn assemblies ’ were numerous in Egypt, “ and were of various kinds. The grand assemblies were “ held in the large halls of the principal temples, and the “ king presided at them in person. Their celebration was “ apparently yearly, regulated by the Sothic or by the vague “ year;¹ and others at the new moons when they were con- “ tinued for several successive days, and again at the full “ moon. . . . Some great panegyries seem to have been “ held after very long periods. Many other ceremonies also “ took place at which the king presided; the greatest of “ which was the procession of shrines of the gods. . . . “ They were attended by the chief priest or prophet, clad “ in the leopard skin; they were borne on the shoulders “ of several priests, by means of staves sometimes passing “ through metal rings at the side.”² What is here said of the splendour and ceremonies of Egyptian worship might

¹ Twelve months of thirty days each, or 360 days in all.

² Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, vol. ii. p. 84, note 9.

almost be said of the great Hebrew festivals. Moses had examples of feasts and convocations which could not fail to exert an influence on him in the arrangements made for Israel's worship. To say that he copied them would be wrong. But he was commissioned to engraft on Hebrew worship, in purity and in nobleness, a thing good and useful in itself, but often applied to evil purposes in the land of Egypt. The Hebrew ritual, without being a whit less divine, thus becomes greatly more human. From the country they lived so long in, that people borrowed well-known methods of preserving a nation's faith and life. Their sacred customs were not all a new thing on the earth; many of them had been approved in their experience, while the whole was purified by a Spirit unknown in their land of bondage. There is no reason for thinking that a Babylonian exile had the same examples, or the same inducements to copy their better features a thousand years after Moses' time. And so vast was the crowd which sometimes gathered at the festivals in the Delta of Egypt, that Herodotus puts down the number in the Bubastis assembly at 700,000 men and women, besides children.¹

An eighth day, then, is admitted as having closed the seven days of tabernacles. The feast is always spoken of as a seven days' feast; but an eighth day is also mentioned.

¹ *Herodotus*, ii. 60.

Was this eighth day an unauthorised addition to the original seven that we read of in Solomon's reign? In that case large portions of the five books must have been written or improved long after the age of Moses. But there has been no adding or tinkering about this eighth day. We admit the day at once not only as a fact, but also as a necessity; and a reason is given for the fact which it is not creditable in any one to overlook or ignore. The first day of the feast, the fifteenth of the month, was a Sabbath, on which, according to the books of Leviticus and Numbers, Moses commanded the people to hold "an holy convocation." But the eighth day after, or the twenty-second of the month, would be a Sabbath also, in which travelling was not allowed, and a second holy convocation was held. And this reason for the eighth day is expressly given in Lev. xxiii. 39: "On the first day shall be a sabbath, and "on the eighth day shall be a sabbath."

But a difficulty at once stares us in the face, and of its hardness there is no doubt. If the first day of the seventh month, which answers nearly to our September, always fell on a Sabbath, the eighth, fifteenth, and twenty-second would fall on Sabbath also. But there is not an exact number of weeks in a year of 365 days. Consequently, if the first of the month was a Sabbath one year, it would not fall on a Sabbath in the following, nor until seven years after. Here then is a joy to the critics. Unquestionably it is a puzzle, arising from our

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ignorance of the divisions of the Hebrew year. Our year contains 365 days, and every fourth or leap year 366. The Hebrews had not this arrangement. Their months were lunar, apparently; but even of that we are not certain.¹ However, let us take what we do know, and reason from it. The first day of the seventh month was a Sabbath, and was always to be a Sabbath. This means that the first six months of the year contained an exact number of weeks, and the second six months an exact number too, with no odd days over. How could this be managed? Throw away the odd day in 365 days. We then have 364, or fifty-two weeks exactly. If the first six months contained 182 days, or twenty-six weeks, the second six would contain the same, and the first and eighth days of Tabernacles would be Sabbaths. This is simple enough for a beginning,

The odd day, however, will force itself on our notice, do what we will. Harvest began in Palestine about the first of April. By dropping a day out of the year, the first of April would go back through the seasons till it would be really the first of March, and in the short space of thirty

¹ They may have had two reckonings for their months and years, so that the new moon in the one reckoning did not fall on the first of each month, though it did so fall according to the other reckoning. The latter would be for the priests to keep accurate note of. We find something of this sort, or rather this very thing, in the *Annals of Thothmes III.*, King of Egypt, who reigned before the Exodus: "On the twenty-second day of the month Messori, the day of the festival of the new moon."—*Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 43.

years harvest would commence in the beginning of May, according to the almanac. In less than a century the Hebrews would find they were sowing their fields at a time when their fathers used to reap, and the vintage would be gathered three months before the grape used to be ripe. Moses knew too much of astronomy from his Egyptian teachers not to make provision for this; and there is a trace left us of the provision he made. By adding a week every seven years, he would wipe out the balance of days due to the year, and at the same time keep the year with an exact number of weeks, or without odd days. But every seventh year was a marked year in Hebrew administration. It was the year of Release; and it was moreover the year that was specially distinguished above all others by the command then, at the feast of tabernacles, "to read this law before all Israel in their hearing." A week added to the seventh year would thus answer the same purpose as our leap year, and would also meet the requirements of the feast of tabernacles. But that is not all. The year is a little more than 365 days in length. It is nearly six hours more. Moses might not know the exact number of hours, minutes, and seconds; but he knew pretty nearly. In the same way then as some years, that should be leap years with us, are not leap years because of these odd hours and minutes (1800 A.D., 1900 A.D., for example), so Moses required to take account of this odd bit of time. We are not told how it was done, but from

the nature of the case we can easily imagine. A hypothesis may at least be useful. Two great years followed each other in the Hebrew reckoning, the forty-ninth and fiftieth. The latter was famous as the Jubilee year. A week would be added in the former to take up the seven odd days according to the hypothesis already made. A fortnight would be added in the fiftieth to take up the odd hours, minutes, and seconds. Had this been done, so closely would the Hebrew year have approached to the true length, that it would have been wrong by about a day and a-half in a century, or about a fortnight in a thousand years, a strain it was never called on to bear. No one accustomed to weigh probabilities will reckon these arrangements chance. Three things so far apart, and seemingly so unconnected as the year of Release, the Jubilee, and the fact that the first day of tabernacles had always to fall on a Sabbath, are linked together by a chain of arithmetic that will not be easily broken. What the arrangements were for securing that the true length of the year would be observed in Canaan we do not know; but this connecting together of these three most unlike things is at least a contribution to the truth.

We are now in a position to return to the eighth day of tabernacles. It was clearly a necessity of the arrangements for the feast. Modern thinkers revel in arithmetic here, although their skill in applying its rules is not a thing they have much cause to be proud of. Solomon's

feast of tabernacles was held, according to the Kings, "for seven days and seven days, even for fourteen days." Two commentaries are presented to us on this passage—one of them by the Chronicler, the other by the school of advanced thinkers. The latter hold that the words, "and "seven days, even fourteen days," "must be omitted." Why? For no better reason than "it is evident at once." So far is it from being evident at all, that the very difficulty of the reading is an argument for it being correct. But the commentary of the much despised Chronicler is more worthy of a critic. Seven days, according to this ancient writer, were devoted to "the "dedication of the altar," while the seven following were the feast of tabernacles. There is nothing in history to set aside this explanation; there is much that supports it.

But the finishing stroke is given to both Deuteronomist and Chronicler by the skill which has discovered that the eighth day, or the twenty-second of the month, was the sending away day in Kings, while the twenty-third is named in Chronicles. No doubt the eighth day is mentioned in Kings. We must abide by that, for it is so stated in the book. Had it been considered that the eighth day was a Sabbath, and that the Hebrew day ended at sunset,¹ all the difficulty would have disappeared without resorting to paper and ink. These two points bring into agreement the eighth day of Kings and the

¹ See Exod. xii.

twenty-third of the month in Chronicles. Tabernacles ended at sunset on the twenty-second of the seventh month. This was the second Sabbath, or the eighth day of the feast. The dismissal was then pronounced by Solomon. But who would leave at sunset, when the Sabbath ended, and all were free to travel? None but those in and near the city of Jerusalem itself. For them the feast ended at sunset on the twenty-second of the month, and they could then resume their usual duties. It was otherwise with the great body of the people. Although dismissed at sunset on the twenty-second, they would not leave till day-break on the twenty-third. And most justly too may it be said that Solomon sent them away on one day, though the formal dismissal was given the day before. Early morning was the time of a royal audience; the gate of the city was the place. As chiefs and people passed through the gate, Solomon sat in the open space to dispense justice, and to receive their leave-takings. A two-fold sending away thus became a necessity of the case from the nature of the Hebrew day, and the arrangements of a Hebrew court. But even though Solomon did not receive his chiefs and people at a leave-taking on the morning of the twenty-third, though he sent them away at sunset on the twenty-second, it is a trifling with things to carp at a writer who says, as he was most justly entitled to say, that the dismissal of the meeting took place on the twenty-third day of the

seventh month, the day on which the great body of the assembled thousands would set out on their return home. Arithmetic, then, has only shewn that it is a dangerous ally when called in to befriend error.

CHAPTER VII.

AGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY.

Forgery rarely thought of—View taken of forgery by men—Why not believe the claim of authorship in Deuteronomy?—References to former books of the Pentateuch—Quotations or allusions in Samuel—Joab's prayer—Tamar's entreaty—Argument of the critics turned against themselves—Davidson's blunders (1) about Korah—(2) "The children shall not die for the fathers"—(3) The Tabernacle of the congregation—Relation of Solomon's prayer to Deuteronomy—Argument from names of Israel in the historical books—Children of Israel, or Bene-Israel and Hebrews—Israel—All-Israel: reasons for the name—Congregation of Israel—God of Israel.

IT has become common in our day to unearth books and papers that have been buried out of sight for two or three or four thousand years. When a writing thus discovered reveals the author's name, every reader feels disposed at once to believe that the writing speaks the truth. Only when it bears on its face proof, more or less clear, of forgery, will a reader put himself to the trouble of comparing it with itself or with other books. We start with the belief that a forgery is a rare thing, that it is also a stupid thing, and that, do what it will, it cannot long pass itself off for what it is not. It is also a fact

that, usually, no one is on his guard against a counterfeit being given out for a real work. Nor can we be wrong in maintaining that a forgery has never been regarded by the world in any other light than we regard it now. Some modern thinkers believe that Hebrew priests and prophets saw nothing mean or wicked in putting the names of ancient sages to books, written many hundreds of years after these sages were dead. But false witness is only a longer name for forgery, and the command not to bear false witness against one's neighbour, besides being allowed by every writer to be as old as Moses' time, is put on the same level as worshipping heathen gods, or murdering a man.¹ Pride or profit, or both, may have led people to forge books in ancient times; a spirit of mischief or of fun has given birth to such forgeries in our own day. And the fact, that men of the world, as well as men of the highest genius, are easily deceived, may well make us somewhat doubtful of the critics' discovery, when they raise against any book of established reputation the cry of forgery. The British envoy in Spain, along with

¹ Exod. xxiii. 1, 7. "Thou shalt not raise a false report," and "keep thee far from a false matter," clearly cover such a proceeding as the supposed invention and discovery of Deuteronomy. The Behistun inscription of Darius shews what he at least thought of unfair dealing with books, whether they be made of stone or of paper: "Beware, my successor, that what has been thus publicly done by me on that account thou conceal not. If thou conceal not this edict, but tell it to the country, may Ormazd (God) be a friend to thee," &c.—Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, vol. ii. p. 506.

two friends, once forwarded to King Joseph a counterfeit state paper from his brother Napoleon for the purpose, in which they succeeded, of increasing his fears and discontent.¹ Chatterton the poet not only proved his friend the pewterer's descent from the ancient nobility of England, but "kept on producing ancient documents with "extraordinary rapidity . . . for the eager antiquarians" of Bristol, and at last "drew Horace Walpole, shrewd "man of the world though he was," into the same trap.² And the great scholars of Europe are no more on their guard against being cheated than was King Joseph or Horace Walpole. Gesenius wrote a learned and ingenious essay on a Phœnician inscription, which was said to have been found in Cyrene, though it was but a piece of jargon, mischievously written in Paris three thousand years after the time assigned to it. Another great scholar actually had high words with Gesenius about the honour of deciphering the nonsense, thus dressed out in antique clothes.³ But in such cases the suspicion of forgery does not exist, for a real forgery is a rare thing; it is as stupid as it is rare; and it is soon a traitor to itself.

We have already examined the reasons assigned for entertaining this suspicion of the book of Deuteronomy. Allowing that they carry little weight with them, and

¹ Napier, *Peninsular War*, vol. iii. p. 241.

² Martin, *Poems of T. Chatterton*, xxi., xxvii.

³ The story is told in Gesenius, *Scripturæ Linguaeque Phœnicie Monumenta*, p. 247.

that the most serious are nothing but the ordinary difficulties, which always beset an inquiry into the date and authorship of rare books,¹ we have advanced no farther than to shew that we ought not to doubt, or at least to deny, the Mosaic origin of the work. We have not proved that Moses was the writer. We have only got the length of shewing that it may have been his handiwork. And in proceeding beyond this point the common custom of mankind warrants us in saying, that the statements of the book itself must count for a great deal. At the very beginning of it there stands: "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness." Immediately after, the pronouns *I*, referring to Moses; *we*, referring to him and the people; and *thou*, referring to every one in the camp, begin and run through nearly the whole work. And not merely did Moses deliver the addresses in the book, he even wrote them down, and ordered the scroll, which he named "the book of the law," to be "put in the side of the ark for a witness against" Israel.² Now, it is not in question whether a subsequent writer, Samuel it may be or Ezra, may have meddled with the words or arrange-

¹ Witness the amusing theory about the non-existence of several volumes of the *Paston Letters*, which was consigned for ever to its proper place, by a chance turning over of some old books in an English country house.

² Deut. xxxi. 24-26. The "midbar-sheker," "lying word" or "false matter," forbidden in Exod. xxiii. 7, is clearly intensified, if the "programme" be a true theory.

ment of the book. That is quite distinct from the question of authorship. It deals with the editing and with the history of the text. The book then claims to have been written by Moses. Why should we not allow that claim, as we allow it without a grudge in plenty of similar cases?

Sometimes an author refers in his later books to works written by him long before. With all readers this ought to count as evidence for the authorship of both sets of books. Thus Ovid, writing from the bleak desert at the mouths of the Danube, refers in unmistakable language both to other works, and especially to the fifteen books of his *Metamorphoses* :—

Adspicies illic positos ex ordine fratres,
 Quos studium cunctos evigilavit idem ;
 Sunt quoque mutatae ter quinque volumina formæ,
 Nuper ab exsequiis carmina rapta meis.¹

But it is not often that references so manifest are found in an author's own works. That they occur in Deuteronomy is not to be denied, for what else but a reference to the book of Numbers are these words, enforcing the necessity of caution in dealing with leprosy, "Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt."² The passage is void of meaning as it stands in Deuteronomy ;

¹ *Trist. Lib. I.*, i. 107-118.

² Deut. xxiv. 8, 9 ; cf. Numb. xii.

it takes shape and expression as soon as one turns to the book of Numbers. Whoever believes that a forger might have set down the reference to Miriam with the view of giving to fiction the look of fact, attributes to a romancer a far-reaching ingenuity of invention, that only the simplicity of truth could attain to. But it is seldom that the references in Deuteronomy, or any other book, are so direct. Usually they are rather little touches, added in a later work to give greater life to a record written many years before; or statements, which at first sight seem contradictory of what the same author had said in an earlier work. However, every one knows that a view which may be lost altogether, or greatly blurred in one record, may be recovered or cleared up in another by the addition of a word or two.¹ That Deuteronomy contains many references and allusions of this nature to matters previously recorded is not denied; the other books of the Pentateuch must have been known to the author.² But the difference of colouring, which exists between his account of a matter and theirs, is set down by some to the skill of the inventor, and by others more justly to a fulness of know-

¹ Horace Walpole, referring to Lady Suffolk, says, "Each of us "knew different parts of many court stories, and each was eager to "learn what either could relate more; and thus, by comparing notes, "we sometimes could make out discoveries of a third circumstance "before unknown to both."—*Reminiscences*.

² *In writing*, says Dr Samuel Davidson, *Introduction*, i. p. 386. For examples and proof, see Davidson, or Keil, *Introduction*, i. p. 138.

ledge in the author that was not conscious of even the appearance of contradiction.

Small matters may thus be tossed from side to side in the controversy without ever producing conviction in any mind. They have no more effect on the dispute than skirmishers have in deciding a great battle. Far weightier arguments must be used. And among these is the allegation that, between the age of Moses and of Ezra, an interval of one thousand years, there is really nothing to prove the Mosaic authorship, or even the Mosaic antiquity of the book of Deuteronomy. At any rate it is maintained that the first notice we have of this written "book of the law" goes no farther back than the reign of Josiah, or eight centuries after Moses. What are supposed to be references to it are found in many places, but it is alleged that careful criticism has set them aside as passages that were written by men who flourished long after Josiah's death, or merely put down, in writing, traditions floating among the people. This large assertion would have a better chance of living if it were cut down to half its size. Even then, besides being too unwieldy, it is not consistent with either the broad features or the lesser facts of history, as we have already seen. Both the outline of Israel's national life, and often too the filling-up of details enter a protest against this assertion. To the details already given we shall here add several of a minute and therefore reliable nature, such as no writer of

“programmes” or “accommodations” would be likely to take thought of.

The book of the Old Testament that is always quoted as singularly deficient in references to Deuteronomy, and to the law generally, is Samuel. We propose to take some quotations or allusions from that work. Should it be proved that the actors in Israel’s history during the period covered by the two books of Samuel were acquainted with Deuteronomy, the theory of the “programme” can scarcely be maintained.

At the close of the books of Samuel we find Joab saying to David, “The Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold.” A sentiment similar to this occurs in the beginning of Deuteronomy, when Moses offered up the prayer, “The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are.”¹ Even an English reader has little difficulty in seeing that these sentiments are so parallel as to suggest that the one is borrowed from the other, though the change from the person spoken of to the person addressed throws somewhat of disguise over the likeness. Of the nine Hebrew words which Joab utters, five are found in

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 3 ; Deut. i. 11. The Hebrew runs thus :—

וְיִוְסַף יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָעָם כְּהֵם וְכֵהֶם מְאֹד פְּעֻמִּים.
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵכֶם יִסַּף עֲלֵיכֶם כְּכֶם אֶל־פְּעֻמִּים.

Did the change of person compel Joab to use nine words instead of eight?

the eight words spoken by Moses. The only real difference between the two sentiments is, that Joab uses "hundred" and Moses "thousand." But a reference to other writings, ascribed to the lawgiver, shews that he was far fonder of "thousand" than of "hundred." If we judge from the books he is thought to have written, we shall not hesitate to believe that he would use the word "thousand" in the passage quoted.¹ But why should Joab have said "hundred"? There was nothing of the poet about him as there was about Moses; he was too matter of fact, too plain-spoken, too uncourtier-like in all his doings. Besides, he knew that no kingdom in the world could boast of a larger population within so small a territory as Israel's. To multiply by a hundred seemed to his blunt speech compliment enough to pay to his master, David. And if he were quoting from memory, it is perhaps likely also that "hundred" would come to a soldier's lips more readily than "thousand."

We have assumed two things—*first*, that there was a borrowing in the utterance of the same sentiment under circumstances not unlike, but in ages far apart; and *second*, that the borrower was Joab. Perhaps the borrowing will be allowed by scholars of all shades of thought; but some may give Joab the credit of uttering the

¹ Exod. xx. 6; Numb. x. 36; Deut. v. 10, vii. 9, xxxii. 30; Psa. xc. 4.

sentiment first. So far as the look of things goes in determining the point, it is not in Joab's favour.

In the story of the ruin that befell David's house, the second stroke of the avenger's sword is thus referred to by his daughter Tamar, "No such thing ought to be done in Israel; do not thou this folly." But death by stoning was the punishment inflicted on a damsel, "because she bath wrought folly in Israel." It is clear that the likeness between the two passages may be made much closer by reading Tamar's words, as they ought perhaps to be read, "No such thing ought to be done; in Israel do not thou this folly."¹ But that is not all. The words quoted from Deuteronomy are part of a law given nowhere else in the five books. At one time they helped to swell the proof urged against the antiquity of the work. But here, as in Joab's case, we have what looks like an adapted quotation; or, at least, a reference to a more ancient writing, and that writing was Deuteronomy. If, however, any one, judging of Hebrew times and Hebrew ways by the customs of our age, reject the reference as implying

¹ 2 Sam. xiii. 12; Deut. xxii. 21. Comp. 2 Sam. xiii. 13.

כִּי לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה בֶן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת

and

כִּי עֲשִׂיתָה נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

The law expresses the ground of the punishment by three Hebrew words; they are found in Tamar's entreaty with "thou" for "she," and "this" added to give force to her prayer.

The value attached to three words as a proof of borrowing may be seen in Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 387.

an unlikely acquaintance for a princess to have with the criminal law of the land, it has to be remembered that the book in which this law occurs was ordered to be read in the hearing of all the people, "men and women, and all that could hear with understanding,"¹ once every seven years. Tamar as well as Joab was therefore more likely to be acquainted with Deuteronomy than with other parts of the Hebrew law. And in this way there is a consistency of representation on the commonly received view of the authorship, which no other view possesses.

Believers in the "programme" cannot refuse to allow the truth of these references without sacrificing their own theory. While they maintain that, in the story of the discovery of the "book of the law," there is a clear quotation from or reference to Deuteronomy, they know that the Hebrew words which are supposed to prove the quotation—statutes, testimonies, commandments—are far more common in the Old Testament than the turn of thought and expression, which proves an agreement between Joab's words to David and Moses' words to the people, or between Tamar's entreaty and a section of the Deuteronomic criminal law. Grant that there is quotation or reference in the story of the finding of "the book of the law," then much more is there the same in Joab's prayer and Tamar's entreaty. If any writer can build so large a theory as the "programme" on so small

¹ Nehem. viii. 2. See Deut. xxxi. 10-12.

a base, we are at least entitled to conclude that the book of Deuteronomy was well known in David's court. Either this result follows from these two passages, or we shall suppose that they were written after Josiah's time, and that, far from having any counterpart in fact, they were thrown into the book of Samuel, because the writer had read them in Deuteronomy, and had not skill enough to perceive that he was putting the cart before the horse. But it is unlikely that any historian will place the writing of the two books of Samuel near, far less so late as the reign of Josiah (630 B.C.). Even the critics themselves will be slow to hazard that date.¹ Our position, then, is made good that, if due regard be had to the history of David's court, as it has come down to our time, Deuteronomy was an heirloom, and a household book for high and low among the Hebrews four centuries before Josiah's reformation.

It is allowed that the prophecies of Hosea (783-725 B.C.) and Amos (805 B.C.), who flourished from an hundred to an hundred and fifty years before the finding of the "book of the law," contain many references to the book of Deuteronomy. So clear are these references that they often become quotations. Besides, Amos tells us that he

¹ Dr Samuel Davidson's judgment will not be supposed to be warped by undue leanings towards the traditional. He says: "Nothing nearer can be obtained than that the books were compiled after Solomon's death. . . . How long after must be chiefly a subject of conjecture. . . . The reign of Asa is preferable to that of Rehoboam, B.C. 940." —*Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 528.

was not trained among priests or prophets, from whom he might have got a scientific insight into the old Hebrew writings. He was a farm-servant, or a field-labourer, it may be. But he was one of the people, and as such would be specially acquainted with the people's book, Deuteronomy. When therefore many and clear references to this book are seen in the writings of these two ancient prophets, why is the controversy not at once closed? For, was not the book quoted from a century at least before it is thought to have been written? The force of this reasoning is allowed by believers in the "programme," if they can be convinced that Hosea and Amos were not copying from a source outside of Deuteronomy altogether, the law in the three middle books of the five, or that useful ally in desperate straits, oral tradition and common forms of speech. When the references found in Isaiah and Micah to this same book are placed before these writers, and an explanation is required of their acquaintance also with Deuteronomy, the answer is, "It is as likely that Micah is the original of Deuteronomy."¹ According to the commonly received view, Moses stamped the image of that book on all future ages of his country's literature. This is a simple and a natural explanation of countless facts that meet every reader of the Bible who carefully studies its language. But the new view throws everything into confusion. It maintains that a skilful

¹ Davidson, *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 395.

writer, having mapped out a host of references and quotations, some obscure, others not, from older authors, worked them up into a literary whole so complete that, from his day to ours, the world has persisted in thinking he was the original and they the copiers. The very conception of such a plan is almost proof in itself that the man, who conceived it, would never have stooped to carry it out. A genius so exalted as to devise this plan for deceiving the world; a knowledge of the law of God so profound as to leave no doubt that he well knew the meanness he was guilty of; and the ordinary promptings of his human nature, which would have scorned to do by foul means what he might as well have done by fair, are considerations which ought to keep every writer from defaming an author, whom all acknowledge to have been possessed of both genius and piety. Before we ask, Did he write the "programme" supposed, we have to answer the previous question, *Could* such a man have schooled his own heart to the writing of a paper so unworthy of his genius?

But these references by Moses to older books have been turned into proofs that another and not he must have written Deuteronomy. No one can object though the lawgiver be put into the witness-box and sharply cross-questioned. We only ask for him fair-play. Many writers, as we have already seen, lay great stress on the words, "The priests the Levites," that occur in the book, as if they proved that all Levites were reckoned priests.

But some of them go farther: "In noticing the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, where the distinction between the priests and Levites is strictly observed in the book of Numbers, it is worthy of remark that the Deuteronomist passes over the Levite Korah because, in his eyes, there was nothing improper in aspiring to the priesthood."¹ It is quite true that Moses does not name Korah in the book of Deuteronomy; but it is also true that if he had named him there, he would have been charged with contradicting what he says in Numbers. There is not only no error in Deuteronomy, but a proof that the man who wrote the book knew full well what happened at the swallowing up of the rebels.

Rehearsing to the people examples they had seen of the dangers of disobedience, Moses says: "And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents."² These were part of the company of Korah, who refused when summoned to meet Moses at the tabernacle door. But Korah does not seem to have been with that part of his

¹ Davidson, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 356. Imputing of motives, especially such as must be called unworthy, is not reckoned handsome in literary controversy. We are so apt to make mistakes, that it is always best to confine ourselves to facts. But this safe and courteous rule is not observed towards the writer of Deuteronomy, who is treated in the above extract as if he were a convicted forger, when it turns out that his judge had mis-read the evidence.

² Deut. xi. 6.

own company.¹ He was one of the party, two hundred and fifty in number, who came with censers in their hands, and were struck dead by fire from the Lord. When spoken of as a whole, the rebels are called the company of Korah,² as if he had been the head of the intrigue. But the narrative in the book of Numbers shews that, on their day of doom, the murmurers perished by a two-fold death; one set, the censer party, among whom was Korah, being consumed by fire; the other set, among whom were Dathan and Abiram, being swallowed up by the opened earth. Whether all the company of rebels had drawn their tents together to one spot or not is left unsaid; but as it was a likely thing for intriguers to do, so it appears to have been done. Hence the tent of Korah is mentioned as having gone down into the gaping earth. Is it not plain that the evidence thus offered against Moses is an overwhelming proof in his favour?³

Equally singular is a leading argument sometimes advanced to shew that the book of Deuteronomy was written long after the days of Moses. "It was not extant in the time of Joshua, else he would not have taken Achan, with *his sons and daughters*, and stoned them with stones, contrary to the express prohibition in Deut. xxiv. 16, 'The children shall not die for their fathers,

¹ Numb. xvi. 19, 6, 12-25.

² Numb. xvi. 32.

³ The author of the article "Korah," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, takes the same view of the story; and, besides, calls attention to the fact that Korah's family did not all perish.

“ ‘but every man shall die for his own sin.’ ”¹ If the argument is good to prove that Joshua knew nothing of the book, it is equally good to prove that it was not written by the man who wrote it, whoever he was. We have seen that he records the swallowing up of Dathan and Abiram’s “households,” that is, “their wives, and “their sons, and their little children.”² He cannot, therefore, on the shewing of the critics, have written the book we know he did write. But it is painful to dwell on the blunders of men who are seeking historical truth and cannot find it.

These are only specimens of the uselessness of piling up small objections, as many writers do. One of their arguments may often be made to answer another. Thus it is a proof of the “programme” theory to Dr Davidson that “the tabernacle is never mentioned in Deuteronomy”; but on the next page he refers to “alleged Mosaic marks “in the book, *the very thing intended by the writer.*”³ Of course, then, a forger ought to have mentioned the tabernacle. But what shall be thought of an assertion so rash by any one who reads Deut. xxxi. 14, 15, where we find “the tabernacle of the congregation,” and “the pillar “of the cloud.” It is at once assumed that that chapter was no part of the original book. This is entirely a matter of taste. But it is safer to lie under the imputation of

¹ Davidson, *Introduction*, i. p. 379.

² Numb. xvi. 27.

³ Davidson, *Introduction*, vol. i. p. 396.

wanting that nicely discriminative sense of truth, which no critic for any length of time has prided himself upon having without finding cause to regret his conceit, than to run the risk of making oneself ridiculous by hacking in pieces one of the finest gems of ancient literary art.

There is a famous passage in the historical books so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Deuteronomy, that if the latter be an "accommodation," the former may be but an echo of an echo of truth. It is the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. Thoughts and words that meet us in the pages of Deuteronomy meet us again in the prayer. A large and a clear borrowing on one side or the other is unmistakable. If Solomon's prayer was the source which furnished a priest-prophet four hundred years after with the ideas and figures he amplified into the book of Deuteronomy, the theory of the "programme" is useless, for that prayer, and the history connected with it put in a brief compass a knowledge of the work of Moses, which can only have been got from the books we now have. But this alternative is unlikely—then the prayer may have been borrowed from Deuteronomy. This view, again, has two sides, according as we assign that book to the time of Moses (1450 B.C.), or to the reign of Josiah (630 B.C.). Let us look at both sides.

If Solomon borrowed thoughts and words and figures in his prayer from the book that Moses ordered to be read every seventh year, we have a history of which it can be

said that it hangs well together. Every quotation the king made, every reference in his weighty words, was understood by the people. He was using phrases they were familiar with, phrases too that may have been read in their hearing at that very time. If the year of the dedication was a year of release, as it probably was, Deuteronomy, according to the law, would then be read before the whole congregation from beginning to end. The king's prayer was therefore full of quotations and allusions to what was truly the people's book. Everything hangs together as it would do in the truest history. And attention need scarcely be called to the facts that, precisely as Deuteronomy speaks, so speaks the book of Kings in assigning Horeb, not Sinai, as the scene of the giving of the law, and in describing the people by the new name of All-Israel.

Of the borrowing between Deuteronomy and Solomon's prayer, it may be well here to give a few examples :—

DEUTERONOMY.

The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day (iv. 20).

It shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, . . . and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven

SOLOMON'S PRAYER, I KINGS VIII.

They be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron (ver. 51).

If they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, . . . and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of

thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, . . . and will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul (xxx. 1-6).

When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel (xxxii. 8).

But let it be assumed that Deuteronomy belongs to the reign of Josiah, and that the prayer is borrowed from the late-written book. Manifestly the words put into Solomon's mouth cannot have been uttered at the dedication of the Temple. Whatever his real prayer may have been, the prayer we now read in Kings must be a make-up. Part of it may be his, but a larger part is another's. It is not history; it is one of the "accommodations" that seem to be plentiful in the Bible. Our faith in Hebrew history must surpass the simplicity of childhood if it survive the shock of this new revelation. No business can long be carried on by constant calls for "an accommodation." Bankruptcy would be the inevitable result. Either the critics' credit must share this fate, or a large part of the Old Testament is a bankrupt concern. A prayer that is

their enemies which led them away captive, . . . forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, . . . and give them compassion before them who carried them captive (vers. 47-50).

Thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God (ver. 53).

pieced together from a little Solomon may have said, and a great deal he never could have said, must belong to fiction, not to fact. However lofty its teaching, however noble its aim, every one must feel that here truth has been slain as a victim on the altar of good intentions. A profound criticism may admire the sacrifice, because the table of the altar is a mirror in which it sees its own discoveries reflected, but the common sense of mankind will regard it as a slaying of what is noblest in humanity itself.

But there is still another means left us of determining the antiquity of Deuteronomy. It is easily explained by reference to our own country. Should any author, professing to be writing in the fourth century, speak of the natives of Britain generally as Saxons or English, he would be at once proved to be a cheat. Or should a writer in the tenth century call them Normans, his credit would be equally gone. Britons, Saxons, Normans, English, are four names that indicate well-understood periods in history, though there is also a shadowy borderland in which an illiterate forger might grievously blunder, even while he was partially correct. It is possible, then, that a discussion of the nation's name may lead to some settlement of opinion regarding the ancient history of the Hebrews. Taking the books of Moses, and those of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, as one group, we may compare them together in the first place, and then set the results side by side with

those got from a second group, such as Ezekiel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, for the former are thought by many to be very little, if at all, older than the latter. The common names for the Hebrew people in their own books are, *Children of Israel*, *Israel*, and *All-Israel*. Many other names occur, but it is to these three, along with the phrases, *Congregation of Israel*, and *God of Israel*, that attention has to be specially directed. These names occur in the historical books with the frequency set down under each head in the following table¹:—

	Pages of Hebrew Bible.	Israel; or Elders, or Princes, &c., of Israel.	Children of Israel.	Congregation of Israel.	All-Israel.	Men of Israel.	God of Israel.	Tribes of Israel.
Exodus . . .	73	30	116	10	1?	—	3	1
Numbers ² . . .	73	56	165	15	1?	—	1	1
Deuteronomy ³ . . .	64	33	20	1	13	1	—	1
Joshua . . .	46	43	56	4	12	3	14	6
Judges . . .	44	76	57	4	3	20	7	6
Samuel . . .	107	142	17	—	29	28	20	8
1 Kings i.—xii.	33	41	11	—	14 ⁵	—	10	2
Ezra . . .	18	12	4	1	4	—	13	1
Nehemiah . . .	26	8	8	—	3	—	—	—
Leviticus . . .	52	4	35	1	—	1	—	—
Ezekiel . . .	85	112	10	—	—	—	7	6
Maccabees i.	—	42	5	1	4	—	—	—

¹ It is not pretended that the numbers are minutely accurate. For many reasons a general accuracy only can be had, and nothing more is needed.

² "Tabernacle of congregation" is of frequent occurrence.

³ "The Lord thy God" occurs often, but not "God of Israel."

If for the sake of comparison we now reduce these numbers to one standard, we shall have for every hundred pages in each book the following table of frequency of occurrence:—

	Israel.	Children of Israel.	Congregation of Israel.	All-Israel.	God of Israel.
Exodus . . .	41	160	13	?	4
Numbers . . .	76	226	20	?	1
Joshua . . .	93	121	7	26	30
Judges . . .	161	121	9	6	15
Samuel . . .	132	16	—	23	18
1 Kings i.-xii.	124	33	18	42	30
Ezra . . .	66	22	6	22	72
Nehemiah . . .	31	31	4	11	—
<u>Deuteronomy</u>	51	31	1	23	—
Leviticus . . .	8	67	6	—	—

A glance at these numbers is almost enough to satisfy any reader that the usual order of the books is the order of time. The most ancient name of the Hebrew people was, it appears, *Children of Israel*, or to use the modern Arabic way of speech, *Bene-Israel*. Slowly, but surely, the name lost ground; till, from a value of 160 in Exodus, or 226 in Numbers, it fell to 16 in Samuel, and rose again, under the influence of a revived faith, to 33 in Kings. Had the books of Exodus and Numbers been the work of men in or shortly before Ezra's day, how is the number 22 for *Children of Israel* in the book of Ezra to be accounted for against 160 and 226 in the "programmes" of Exodus and Numbers? Nor is this all. While the numbers for that name of the Hebrew people are falling

as the ages roll on, the numbers for the shorter name *Israel* are steadily rising. In Exodus the proportion is 41, in Samuel it is 132, and in Kings 124, while in Ezra it has fallen to 66, and in Nehemiah to 31. Is it possible that all these books can have been composed in or about the same age? We might as well say that two and two make five, unless we suppose there was no general name for the people at all, but every writer took what pleased him best, a theory that is disproved by the regularity of the increase and the decrease shewn above.

The books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy deal so much with the laws of the people, that there is less room in them than in Exodus and Numbers for names and history. But even in Leviticus it is clear that the Hebrew people in the days of Moses were known to each other as *Children of Israel*. *Hebrews* was the name given to them by their enemies, or to indicate that they had fallen from the high estate of free sons of Jacob. Pharaoh uses the word; Balaam introduces it (Eber) into his prophecy; the masterful Philistines also use it; and in the Mosaic law it is applied to those of Israelitish blood who had sunk to the lot of slaves. But in course of time *Israel* became common as a name of the nation; *house of Israel*, *people of Israel*, *elders of Israel*, *princes of Israel*, *land of Israel*, *camp of Israel*, are all found in the Mosaic books; and when we come to the Kings we also find *throne of Israel*. Since such phrases as elders or fathers of the children of

Israel occur, it is plain that *Israel* was a contraction for *Children of Israel*. The books in which the former name has clearly supplanted the latter must be later in time to the former. But this is the ancient view of the relation of the books of the Old Testament. And it would be more surprising to find a number of forgers conspiring to cheat the world by this most scrupulous regard to an imaginary chronology, than that the books were written at the times usually supposed.

But there is another name for Israel seen forcing its way to the front after the Mosaic age—*All-Israel*. It cannot be said to occur till the beginning of Deuteronomy; but its rise was afterwards rapid and its influence great. In Samuel, and in the first twelve chapters of the Kings, it has taken the place of *Children of Israel*, which had then ceased to be the favourite name of the people. But in these books *All-Israel* was a name that called up a history full of jealousy and division, of civil wars and of political strife, quite as much as the term “United Kingdom” suggests what happened in our own land when it was a divided and a disagreeing country. Believers in the “programme” may find in this an explanation of the name as it occurs in Deuteronomy. They may say that the writer, knowing the meaning and antiquity of the title, skilfully inserted it in the book to impart an air and a look of remote antiquity. Clearly, if this had been

his purpose, he would not have carried it out with so faltering a hand, for he has set the name down too often not to have had a good reason for it, and too seldom for the one assigned to have been the real reason. Besides, on that shewing, the name *Children of Israel* occurs in Deuteronomy little more than half as often as the name *Israel*, a mistake which so skilful a romancer would have taken care to avoid. The "programme" is put in straits about this new name of the people.

If Moses be assumed to be the writer of Deuteronomy, and the place the plains of Moab, on the east bank of Jordan, it becomes an easy matter to breathe life and history into this name for the Hebrew people. As soon as the fertile lands on that side of the river were won from the heathen, the cattle-rearing tribes of Israel asked the lawgiver to assign the whole region to them. He refused at first, because he felt that their request could not be granted without doing a wrong to their brethren, whose possessions were still in the enemy's hand. But on being assured that a large body of their soldiers would cross into Canaan to help the rest of Israel in conquering the country, he divided among them the whole district, from Lebanon on the north to the Mountains of Moab on the south. About a fifth of all the people were settled on these rich lands. They were thus separated from the rest of the Hebrews by a deep and rapid river, dangerous to ford, having no bridges, and perhaps no boats. Israel was

split in two; a river divided the nation. But Moses may have felt that, if Egypt remained one, though split in two by a deeper and broader river than the Jordan, so Israel also might retain its oneness in spite of the hatred of surrounding nations. At the same time the danger of disunion in these untoward circumstances was present to his thoughts. A few years later it struck the eastern tribes so forcibly, that they took unlawful means to prevent that calamity happening. "In time to come," they said to the chiefs of the western tribes, "your children might speak unto our children, saying, 'What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben, and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.'"¹ Moses seems to have felt the danger, and to have met it as a statesman would; he stamped the unity of the people on the new name which he coined at the very time, and in the very spot where the danger first shewed itself. All-Israel, occurring for the first time in these days of threatened division among the Hebrews, may be regarded as a testimony to the Mosaic antiquity of the book of Deuteronomy.

The phrase, *Congregation of Israel*, is first used when Moses meets with the elders to give them instructions

¹ Josh. xxii. 24, 25.

about the passover.¹ Apparently the people were assembled, ready to march as soon as the last plague wrung from the king of Egypt permission to leave the country. The name was most appropriate in the circumstances, and it continued to have the same appropriate use. That it occurs far more frequently in Exodus and Numbers than in any other of the historical books is either a proof of rare skill in the writers of these "programmes," or is a mark of the simplicity of truth. And when we add the fact, that it barely occurs in Ezra and Nehemiah, we again find ourselves face to face with a flaw in the new theory, which supposes the books of Moses to be penetrated by the spirit of Ezra and his contemporaries. If we were to count the times that *congregation*, or *tabernacle of the congregation*, and such phrases, occur in Exodus and Numbers, the divergence between these books and Ezra's age would be much more evident. But it is also startling to find that the book of Ezra contains what is almost wholly wanting in Exodus, and the three following books—*God of Israel*. The figures that express the frequency of occurrence of this phrase in Joshua, Samuel, and Ezra are thirty, eighteen, and seventy-two. It is found often enough in Jeremiah and Ezekiel; but this only proves that, if it be so common in their writings, and in those of their followers, it ought to have been frequent in the five books, if these were written

¹ Exod. xii. 3.

after the captivity, or not long before. It may be some consolation to the friends of these "programmes" that Nehemiah uses the phrase *God of Heaven*, and not *God of Israel*. Let them make out of that what they can, but they will have to bear in mind that Nehemiah was a courtier, living in an atmosphere different from that breathed by the rest of his countrymen, and sharing with all who were brought under Mesopotamian influence a liking for what seems to have been a Persian form of expression, *God of Heaven*.¹

An argument based on only one of these names might justly be looked upon with suspicion; but when we find them all telling the same story, and pointing to the same result, it is difficult to withhold our belief that they are marks of truth which no company of forgers, however skilful, and however well disciplined, could ever have thought of.

What should withhold us, then, from allowing the Mosaic authorship of the book of Deuteronomy? Everything points towards its origin in the age of Moses; why should we refuse to believe the words of the writing itself, that the addresses it contains were first spoken by the lawgiver, and then delivered in manuscript to the priests. We may be told that Moses was in feeble health,

¹ The prayer of Solomon does not contain the phrase, though it sometimes approaches so closely to it as to shew that it was unknown to him.

or that he felt the approach of death.¹ Obviously, then, he never could have addressed to a whole nation the speeches he is said to have delivered. That he was in feeble health is nowhere taught; the very opposite is always maintained. But it becomes a fair question to discover whether, or how, he could have spoken to an audience so vast as the host of Israel.

Perhaps our own carelessness in reading the five books, and an unavoidable ignorance of distant times and distant places, may be the main causes of most of the entanglements that hamper this inquiry. Moses is said to have delivered the speeches himself; his hearers were "All-Israel." Allowing that the lawgiver was the speaker, is not the idea that his voice could reach to "All-Israel," a body which numbered six hundred thousand fighting men, proof enough of the imaginary nature of the book? "Not to a "chosen few," it is said, "to priests or elders, but to his "whole people does he address himself." What human voice could fill the ears of a host so great as All-Israel? What voice, it may well be asked, when the orator was one hundred and twenty years of age? Strange though it may seem, the power of the human voice cannot be appealed to as a gauge of truth in this matter; the proof is easily got. "The acoustic properties of these clear regions have "often been spoken of. We had here a wonderful "instance. Hayne had remained behind for an hour,

¹ Davidson, *Introd.*, vol. i. p. 348. "Disabled by age and near death."

“ when we started for the ascent of Masada. When at the top, we saw him on his way to join us at the foot of the next cliff, about 500 yards from the base of the rock of Masada, and 1250 feet below us; yet at this immense distance of over 600 yards, we not only carried on a conversation with him, but, as he proved on joining us, he could hear several of our remarks to each other.”¹ Masada is not far from the scene of the address recorded in Deuteronomy; and even an indifferent knowledge of arithmetic will be enough to shew any one, that a much larger host than half a million of men might have heard Moses speak, quite as easily as a fellow-traveller heard Tristram and his companion. The vastness of the assemblage that is said to have gathered round Moses, and is thought to have heard him speak, is therefore no gauge of the truth of the story. As soon as facts are appealed to, the possibility of a speaker being heard by All-Israel is put beyond doubt.

But is the view correct which translates “ All-Israel ” into “ the assembled thousands of the Hebrew people ? ” Or do the words not mean the heads of the nation, who delivered to their followers the speech Moses delivered to them ? If we go back to the book of Exodus, we see at once that the two views are so mixed up together as to be well nigh inseparable. At the appointment of the pass-over, the Lord commands Moses and Aaron to “ speak

¹ Tristram, *Land of Moab*, p. 33.

“ unto all the congregation of Israel” the ordinances which he delivered.¹ In carrying out these instructions, “ Moses then called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover.”² At the conclusion of this speech, “ the people bowed the head, and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.”³ Further proof is not needed. Moses speaks to the people by calling for “ all the elders of Israel.” And in cases where this is not directly said, it is so plainly implied that no reader can fail to discover the true meaning. Thus, “ the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth.”⁴ Evidently Moses gives the order to each head of a brigade in the Hebrew army ; the whole, that is moved according to the order given, is put for the few to whom the command was imparted.⁵

There is therefore no doubt on the subject. By “ All-Israel” may be meant, or rather is probably meant, “ The chiefs of All-Israel.” The vast assemblage, insisted on for the purpose of giving an air of life to the “ pro-

¹ Exod. xii. 3-20.

³ Exod. xii. 27, 28.

² Exod. xii. 21.

⁴ Exod. xiv. 1, 2.

⁵ See also Numb. viii. 9-12, where the whole is mentioned and a part intended ; and especially Numb. xxx. 1. “ All the men of Israel ” (2 Sam. xvii. 14) evidently means a few of the chiefs. In Judges vii. 8, our translators have changed *All-Israel* into *all the rest of Israel*.

“gramme,” dwindles down to a few whom the lawgiver repeatedly met, whom he often addressed, and with whose presence he was familiar. Many, who shrink from the grand idea of a dying speech by the prophet of God to the whole Hebrew host, as a thing in itself unlikely and out of keeping with the rest of the history, will find in this view a safer middle course, which is but a fair carrying out of arrangements already familiar to the reader of the five books. Without giving up the possibility of the great multitude thronging forth from the camp to hear their leader’s last words, as with unabated strength the aged chief rehearsed the law in their presence, and kindled into eloquence when his undimmed eye caught sight of the effect on them, we may silence a doubter by reminding him that, at the outset of the history, the five books warn us to interpret the words “children of Israel” or “all the people” by “elders of Israel,” their leaders and representatives, precisely as in our own country the House of Commons may be put for all the millions of the United Kingdom.

A writer, who wishes his readers to believe that he was some other man, and that he lived in an age far removed from his own, has usually great difficulty in steering clear of the sunken rocks on which fables cannot fail to be wrecked, when they are passed off for facts. Sir Walter Scott introduces one of his heroes talking science in these words: “The clouds will burst when surcharged with the

“ electric fluid, whether a goat is falling at that instant
“ from the cliffs of Arran, or a hero expiring on the field
“ of battle he has won.”¹ Reuben Butler, into whose
mouth Scott puts the sentiment in 1751, was thus aware
of the identity of lightning and electricity a year before
Franklin made the discovery. Scott is so nearly right,
that he must have thought he was right altogether in
representing this discovery as being well known to the
educated occupants of the boat on the Clyde; and he is
so thoroughly wrong, that the story he tells of their sayings
and doings could never have passed for anything but
fiction. No book of fable or romance can easily, if at all,
escape shipwreck on rocks of this nature. Have any of
them been discovered in Deuteronomy—references to
things that had not taken place in the days of Moses, or a
careless disclosure by the author of somewhat that, though
true of him, was not true of the lawgiver? It is said
discoveries of this kind have been made.

One of these chinks in the armour of the author is
thought to occur in the words, “The children of Esau
“ destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their
“ stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession,
“ which the Lord gave unto them.”² The conquest of
Canaan is here thought to be viewed as a thing long past,
for it seems scarcely to meet the difficulty to say that,

¹ *Heart of Midlothian*, chap. 51. For the date 1751, see chap. 49.

² Deut. ii. 12.

before these words were written, Israel had overrun and mastered the country on the east side of Jordan. So boldly does this apparent reference to a thing long past stand out to some believers in the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, that, while they assign the contents of the book to Moses on the east side of the river, they assign the editorship to a prophet on the west side in Canaan. According to their view the editor lets out the secret of his existence and labours in the words quoted above.

If those who believe the "programme" theory regarded this reference to the conquest as a slip of the author's memory, or as a lack of care to keep up the idea that he was Moses, they have to be reminded of the injustice they do to their author. Although he is allowed by his discoverers to have been a man of transcendent genius, as soon as it suits their theory they mix a large lump of the clay of stupidity with the fine gold of his genius. It is barely possible that a writer, whose success in passing himself off as Moses must be measured by the fact that he deceived more than seventy generations of men, should have fallen into a blunder so ridiculous. May we not be attributing to him as an error what is really a want of perception in ourselves? If it be maintained that our English version of the passage is correct, and that no change can be allowed on, "As Israel did," we may be really doing a wrong to the author's language. The Hebrew verb, though richer than ours in some respects,

was poorer in others, and its poverty may be the cause of the difficulty here. Were the first verse of the first Psalm translated as literally, it would run, "Blessed is the man that walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful," for the Hebrew tongue may be said to have no present tense such as ours has. Every one sees that the verbs, though perfectly good Hebrew, are bad English. "Walked not," means "has not walked, and is not walking:" "stood" and "sat" have the same meaning, but to avoid phrases so long, we use one word, "standeth;" "walketh;" "sitteth." Are we at liberty to do otherwise with "did" in "As Israel did"? Has it not manifestly the meaning, "As Israel has done and is doing," or "As Israel has done and is going to do" to the nations around? Hebrew grammar makes no objection to this; while in all languages the context sometimes determines the meaning of a word or phrase. And since the author of Deuteronomy does not say, "As Israel did to the land of Canaan," but "As Israel did to the land of his possession,"¹ it is only fair to give him the full benefit of an honest rendering of his words into English.

¹ However, the old view of a reference to the conquest of Gilead is not without strong support. The word "possession" or "inheritance," used here, occurs ten times in Deuteronomy and Joshua, and four times in later books of the Bible. Of the ten times, four of the passages have no bearing on the argument in the text, as they refer to neighbouring nations. But four of the remaining six passages, in which the word is found, refer to the tribes on the east of Jordan only (Deut. ii. 19, iii. 20;

It is not denied that the author of the "programme" did what he could to make the world believe he was Moses. Among other little touches that help to bring this out, is the description in our English version of the place where the speeches recorded in Deuteronomy were delivered: "On this side Jordan, in the wilderness;" "On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab;" and "On this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon." By the words, "On this side Jordan," he meant the east side of the river, beyond which Moses was not allowed to go. That this is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase few will perhaps now seek to deny; but it was once common to regard it as a blunder the author had fallen into, as if it should be translated "on the other side Jordan." The fabled writer of the "programme" was himself on the west side in the land of Egypt or Canaan. He might therefore speak of Moses as being on the other or farther side of the river. Formerly, then, the critics, imagining he meant this, said, Truth is leaking out through these small blunders. And so truth would have leaked out, had there been small blunders, and had the author been the fabled, not the real Moses.

Joshua i. 15, xii. 6), while in but one place is the word certainly used of the tribes on the west of Jordan (Joshua xii. 7). The tenth passage, the one quoted in the text (Deut. ii. 12), may thus apply to the whole nation; but does it not more probably refer to the two tribes and a-half on the east of Jordan? Instead of "did," there must then be read "has done."

But if the writer of the book of Deuteronomy was not Moses, he takes far greater liberties with truth than an unlawful use of Moses' name. He speaks and acts as Moses would have done; he puts himself in the lawgiver's place and exercises the lawgiver's right, as the messenger of God, to add to the law that had been already delivered. There are new laws and new facts in Deuteronomy,¹ which a writer, who lived eight centuries after Moses, could not have invented and called Mosaic without being laughed at by the whole nation. However, it may be said, he did not invent these laws and facts. On the other hand, he found them prevalent among the people, or floating about as tradition. Perhaps he did nothing more than commit to writing what was known to everybody of intelligence. While we can neither prove nor disprove this floating of facts and laws for eight centuries down the stream of time, we can say that they took a long time to come to land. If the same kind of floating had taken place in our own history, Domesday Book might have existed as a tradition from the reign of William the Conqueror, till its existence and nature were fixed in print by a collector of popular beliefs a few months ago. Few will be disposed to accept a theory hampered with such difficulties.

¹ For example, in chap. xii. 11, 17, &c., about tithes; in chap. xiii. about false prophets; in chap. xvii. about the kingly office, and chap. xviii. about the prophetic; and in chap. xx. about matters of war.

CHAPTER VIII.

STYLE AND AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY.

Style and authorship of Deuteronomy—Proof of difference of style in Five Books—Mistakes in distinguishing style: Swift—Fixity of Style: Shakespeare, Carlyle, Hallam—Materials in first Four Books unlike those of Fifth—Writer, reporter, speaker—Moses as “a popular orator”—His slowness of speech—No Hebrew forger could overlook this—Aaron the speaker or reporter for Moses—The chief scribe: the clerk of court—Different styles in the Five Books—Two views of Moses’ slowness of speech—May have thrown it off—May have had a successor to Aaron as spokesman—Joshua, Eleazar, Phinehas—Deuteronomy a popular handbook of law—Great sagacity of the arrangements made—Comparison with the Pandects—Three thousand years in advance of its time.

THE chief argument against the Mosaic authorship of the book of Deuteronomy used to be drawn from the alleged difference in style between it and the other books of Moses. A man’s style is like his face; it is his own, and no other body’s. His mark is on it, just as his features are signs that he is who he is, and no one else. But the style of writing in Deuteronomy is altogether unlike the style in Exodus, or Leviticus, or Numbers.

Even the youngest reader may discover, or at least feel the difference between the constant occurrence of the little word "and" in Exodus, and the comparative want of it in Deuteronomy. But this difference is more marked in our English translation than it is in the original Hebrew. The word "and" occurs

21	times in Exod. i. 1-10, or in 30 lines ;	in Hebrew 23 times.
16	„ Deut. i. 1-10, or in 43 lines ;	„ 18 „
32	„ Exod. xxxiv. 1-10, or in 53 lines ;	„ 35 „
18	„ Deut. xxxi. 1-10, or in 50 lines ;	„ 26 „
31	„ Exod. xiv. 19-28, or in 54 lines ;	„ 37 „
18	„ Deut. xiv. 20-29, or in 55 lines ;	„ 28 „

In other words, our English "and" occurs once in every line and a-half of Exodus, but only once in every three lines of Deuteronomy. This feature of style indicates greater freedom of handling details in the writer of Deuteronomy than is shewn by the writer of Exodus. It may also lead us to look for richer colouring, and a more flowing narrative. But of the fact there is little doubt that, at the first blush of the matter, the man who wrote the book of Exodus writes a different hand from him who wrote the book of Deuteronomy. Once formed, a man's style is as peculiar and as much his own as a man's face, unless the style be as colourless or as insipid as a face that neither speaks nor thinks.

This argument against the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy is little used by the followers of the newest phase

of thought. If Moses wrote nothing that has reached our times but the Ten Commandments, we can recognise no feature of his style from which it may be known whether he wrote Deuteronomy or not. But it is of value even in their eyes as a proof that more than one hand was engaged in writing the five books. Nor is that a fact which believers in the Mosaic authorship of all these books can set aside, or ought to undervalue. It must be looked full in the face, and with open eyes. It is marvellous that they have not long ago recognised their duty simply "to go forward."

Arguments drawn from an author's language and style are not reckoned of much weight by those who have had experience in the matter. Dr Bentley, one of the greatest critics of modern times, expresses himself so doubtfully on the value of these arguments, that smaller men who followed him in this field of research ought to have learned from his words a lesson of caution. "The censures that are made from style and language alone are commonly nice and uncertain, and depend upon slender notices. Some very sagacious and learned men have been deceived in those conjectures, even to ridicule. The great Scaliger published a few iambics as a choice fragment of an old tragedian, given him by Muretus, who soon after confessed the jest that they were made by himself. . . . So that, if I had no other

“ argument but the style to detect the spuriousness of Phalaris’s epistles, I myself, indeed, should be satisfied with that alone, but I durst not hope to convince everybody else.”¹ This was the judgment of the great scholar on arguments from style and language; it is not always the judgment passed by inferior men. Writing on this subject, and, indeed, giving a summary of Bentley’s views, a modern writer thus misrepresents the great critic: “The proofs of this, derived from the glaring anachronisms in which they (the Epistles) abound, the allusions to tragedies and comedies as things well known and of ordinary occurrence, the introduction of sentiments and expressions manifestly derived from later writers, such as Herodotus, Democritus, and even Callimachus; and, above all, the dialect of the Epistles themselves, which is the later Attic, such as was the current language of the learned in the latter ages of the Roman Empire.”² “Above all” may suit modern views; but it was not the judgment of Bentley.

Arguments against the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy drawn from the words and phrases found in the book may thus be safely set aside, even if the host of them that bear witness to its antiquity be kept out of sight. The attack at least has made no impression on the defence in this quarter. And it would be a useless

¹ Bentley, *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris* (1699), pp. 19, 20.

² Smith’s *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography—Phalaris*.

parade of Hebrew words to refer farther to a phase of the question, which proves nothing but the eagerness of an assailant to establish his theory, while his method of argument, that old-fashioned words were put into the book on purpose to deceive, renders disproof worse than useless. Everything in the language that tells in favour of the Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy must be rejected as proving nothing, while every molehill on the other side is magnified into a mountain.

That an author's style may be copied precisely as a man's face may be copied by a painter is perfectly true. But the one is as difficult as the other to copy correctly in all its features. Some little point is sure to be overlooked or forgotten by the most skilful, from which the least skilful may discover a want about the copy, which stamps it as not the original. Copying the style of Moses, however, may be left out of consideration, so far as Deuteronomy is concerned. There are pieces in the other four books which undoubtedly resemble the writing in the fifth; this is allowed by all thinkers, but it is nothing to our present purpose. Between the style of the fifth book and that of any one of the other four there seems to be a difference too striking to escape an intelligent reader's notice. It meets us broad in the face; it challenges every passer-by in this strife between the old and the new. Advanced criticism has claimed it as a friend; the defenders of the Mosaic authorship have

sometimes seemed to shrink from it as from a foe. Perhaps both sides are wrong in the estimate they put on this difference of style, if only the five books be allowed to speak for Moses and for themselves. However, one thing is clear; whoever wrote the book of Deuteronomy made no attempt to imitate the style of Exodus, or Leviticus, or Numbers. Nor did the writer of any of these latter trouble himself to imitate the style of the former.

On the other hand, it is worthy of remark that even a great writer has been sometimes refused the credit due to his best work, because its style was pronounced another's and not his. Our own literature supplies us with an example in the *Tale of a Tub*, "one of the most masterly compositions in the language, whether for thought, wit, or style." That Jonathan Swift wrote the book is now well known; but Samuel Johnson, a greater critic than any of the advanced school of thinkers in these days, declared it "so much superior to his other writings that one can hardly believe he was the author of it; there is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life." A controversy raged on the subject, without much reason perhaps, but sufficient to shew that a doubt once started grows in bulk as it passes from mouth to mouth, like a rolling snowball. Swift's biographer adopts the very argument in reply to these attacks, which defenders of the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy may

adopt towards their opponents. "Nowhere," he says, "is there proof of the authorship so irresistible as in the reasons against it thus expressed by Johnson: 'There is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life.' These words exactly describe it. Swift could have desired no better to vindicate the claim." "In the life, also, Johnson remarks, that it is not like Swift. . . . More than once the same was said to Boswell. It was said at one of their earliest meetings at the Mitre, when they were together in the Hebrides, and when they met at the club. Often as it was repeated, no question was made of its reasonableness or fairness. Swift was to lose a bishopric in one generation because a piece of writing was thought too witty to be fathered on anybody else, and in the next he was to lose the credit of having written the piece because it was thought too witty to be fathered on him."¹

Though it is useless to speak of copying the style of Moses, since there may have been nothing to copy, or at least nothing that is known to have been his, it may be of great moment to ascertain whether the style in a man's first attempt at a finished composition will remain unchanged in every attempt he may afterwards make. Our features change, our bodily presence changes, so that in many cases the boy cannot be recognised in the youth,

¹ Forster, *Life of Jonathan Swift*, vol. i. pp. 156, 157.

nor the youth in the man. Does a like change ever take place in style? Is it possible that the handiwork of to-day, when put side by side with the same author's handiwork done ten or twenty years ago, may seem to be the writing of a different man? And may his readers commit the blunder of imagining that what is not stamped with his latest style cannot have been his? Shakespeare may be referred to in illustration of our meaning. "His *Troilus and Cressida* and *Pericles* were printed in 1609. The title pages of both attribute them wholly to Shakespeare; but that some parts of the former, and the greater portion of the latter play are from another and a very inferior hand is unquestionable."¹ As the poet did not die till 1616, we might think he would have had more regard for his own good name, than allow the offspring of some wretched playwright to be fathered on him. This was Drake's view, who has placed *Pericles* "under the year 1590, as the earliest of Shakespeare's plays, for no better reason apparently than that he thought it inferior to all the rest." Hallam's judgment is more balanced, but may not be more just. "From the poverty and bad management of the fable, the want of any effective or distinguishable character . . . and a general feebleness of the tragedy as a whole, I should not believe the structure to have been Shakespeare's. But many passages are far more in his manner than in

¹ Dyce, vol. i. p. 103.

“ that of any contemporary writer with whom I am
“ acquainted; and the extrinsic testimony, though not
“ conclusive, being of some value, I should not dissent
“ from the judgment of Steevens and Malone, that it was,
“ in no inconsiderable degree, repaired and improved by
“ his touch.”¹

But it is not necessary to go so far a-field for a witness in answering these questions about a change of style between the first and future attempts at writing. Thomas Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* was given to the world in 1825; the first volume of his *Life of Frederick the Great* was written in 1854. An extract from the beginning of each of these lives will satisfy every one, that his way of writing underwent a considerable change in the thirty years that intervened.

“ Among the writers of the concluding part of the last
“ century, there is none more deserving of our notice than
“ Friedrich Schiller. Distinguished alike for the splendour
“ of his intellectual faculties, and the elevation of his tastes
“ and feelings, he has left behind him in his works a noble
“ emblem of these great qualities; and the reputation
“ which he thus enjoys, and has merited, excites our
“ attention the more, on considering the circumstances
“ under which it was acquired. Schiller had peculiar
“ difficulties to strive with, and his success has likewise
“ been peculiar. Much of his life was deformed by

¹ Hallam, *Literature*, Part III. ch. vi. sec. 43.

“inquietude and disease, and it terminated at middle
“age; he composed in a language then scarcely settled
“into form, or admitted to a rank among the cultivated
“languages of Europe; yet his writings are remarkable
“for their extent and variety, as well as their intrinsic
“excellence; and his own countrymen are not his only, or
“perhaps his principal, admirers.”

“About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen
“sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short
“time in the afternoon, or you might have met him else-
“where at an earlier hour, riding or driving in a rapid
“business manner on the open roads, or through the
“scraggy woods and avenues of that intricate amphibious
“Potsdam region, a highly interesting lean little old man,
“of alert though slightly stooping figure; whose name
“among strangers was King *Friedrich the Second*, or
“Frederick the Great of Prussia, and at home among the
“common people, who much loved and esteemed him,
“was *Vater Fritz*—Father Fred—a name of familiarity
“which had not bred contempt in that instance. He is a
“king every inch of him, though without the trappings
“of a king. Presents himself in a Spartan simplicity
“of vesture; no crown, but an old military cocked-hat—
“generally old, or trampled and kneaded into absolute
“softness, if new; no sceptre, but one like Agamemnon’s,
“a walking-stick cut from the woods, which serves also
“as a riding-stick (with which he hits the horse ‘between

“ the ears, say authors); and for royal robes, a mere
“ soldier’s blue coat with red facings, coat likely to be old
“ and sure to have a good deal of Spanish snuff on the
“ breast of it; rest of the apparel dim, unobtrusive in
“ colour or cut, ending in high overknee military boots,
“ which may be brushed (and, I hope, kept soft with an
“ underhand suspicion of oil), but are not permitted to be
“ blackened or varnished; Day & Martin with their soot-
“ pots forbidden to approach.”

It may justly be maintained that the latter of these two pieces of writing differs in style from the former more than Deuteronomy differs from Exodus or Leviticus. But what has happened in our own day and among our own people, in the full blaze of the world’s enlightenment, and in spite of the crystallising influences of modern life, might have more readily happened among a people still un moulded to definite shape, and with a language only beginning to be weighted with the most momentous message ever delivered to men. Even then, though we regard Moses as the writer of Exodus and Leviticus, the difference of style in Deuteronomy is no reason for refusing to call him the author of that book. The former, dealing with the first years of the wilderness wanderings, must have been committed to writing eight and thirty years before the latter. A change of style during that long period might well have been looked for. Exodus, when put side by side with Egyptian records of the same

or an earlier age, is so grandly written that Moses, if we assume him to have been the author, had clearly improved on the models he studied at the court of Pharaoh. But, Deuteronomy is not written with a freedom of pen so far above the severe simplicity of Exodus, as Exodus itself excels older books. Even in the book of Exodus there is, at times, what looks like a struggle between a spirit wrestling to be free from the trammels of uneasy composition, and the frigid laws by which it felt itself constrained. In those passages which describe the interview of the elders with the God of Israel, and the revelation of His glory to Moses, this struggle may especially be seen.

It is also known that a man's power of expression is sometimes more and sometimes less happy. An even flow of lofty sentiment is expected from no writer, however profound his understanding, or however brilliant his imagination. If he rise to the clouds of heaven in one place, he may be surely reckoned on to make a descent to the depths of ocean in another. Much depends on the nature of his own judgment, much more on the matters he is writing about, and not a little usually on the time and place. Even when the surroundings of a writer cannot tell on his works, it is manifest that the subject he is handling may enliven or may dull his pen and fancy. A glance at the following extracts from one of our ablest critics will shew both the ennobling and the enfeebling influence of the matter on style.

“Lear himself is perhaps the most wonderful of dramatic conceptions, ideal to satisfy the most romantic imagination, yet idealised from the reality of nature. Shakespeare, in preparing us for the most intense sympathy with this old man, first abases him to the ground; it is not *Œdipus*, against whose respected age the gods themselves have conspired; it is not *Orestes*, noble-minded and affectionate, whose crime has been virtue; it is a headstrong, feeble, and selfish being, whom, in the first act of the tragedy, nothing seems capable of redeeming in our eyes; nothing but what follows, intense woe, unnatural wrong. Then comes on that splendid madness, not absurdly sudden as in some tragedies, but in which the strings that keep his reasoning power together give way one after the other in the frenzy of rage and grief. Then it is that we find what in life may sometimes be seen, the intellectual energies grow stronger in calamity, and especially under wrong. An awful eloquence belongs to unmerited suffering. Thoughts burst out more profound than Lear in his prosperous hour could ever have conceived; inconsequent, for such is the condition of madness, but in themselves fragments of coherent truth, the reason of an unreasonable mind.”¹

“His leading principle is, that solids are composed of an infinite number of surfaces placed one above another as their indivisible elements. Surfaces are formed in like

¹ Hallam, *Literature*, Part III. ch. vi. sec. 41.

“ manner by lines, and lines by points. This, however, he
“ asserts with some excuse and explanation ; declaring
“ that he does not use the word so strictly as to have it
“ supposed that divisible quantities truly and literally
“ consist of indivisibles, but that the ratio of solids is the
“ same as that of an infinite number of surfaces, and the ratio
“ of surfaces the same as that of an infinite number of lines ;
“ and to put an end to cavil, he demonstrated that the same
“ consequences would follow if a method should be adopted,
“ borrowing nothing from the consideration of indivisibles.”¹

The difference of style between the first four books of Moses and the fifth may thus be owing to a difference in the matters handled by one and the same writer. Much of Genesis may be based on ancient and authentic records, which Moses may have treated precisely as Luke seems to have treated the family papers of Zecharias and Joseph. The Evangelist informs his readers that he “ had perfect
“ understanding of all things from the very first ;” and, that there might be no dubiety about the sources of this thoroughly reliable knowledge, he describes them in the words, “ Even as they delivered them unto us, which from
“ the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the
“ Word.” But it is equally credible that the lawgiver derived the materials for much of the history in Genesis

¹ Hallam, *Literature*, Part III. ch. viii. sec. 12. The ratio of the conjunctions used in these two extracts from Hallam is not unlike the same ratio pointed out already between Deuteronomy and Exodus.

from records preserved in the families of Jacob's sons. The contents of the three following books—Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers—are so various and often so technical, that it is not just to decide from the writing in them what the author's style may have really been. A large body of legal decisions, a mass of architect's plans and specifications, a volume of ceremonial observances and priestly customs, offer small room for freedom in handling the pen. Homer gets tiresome in the "catalogue," Hallam becomes altogether unreadable on the theory of limits, and Macaulay's brilliance is quenched in the dry-as-dust details of the Indian Penal Code.¹

Most justly, therefore, may we conclude that the severe simplicity of Exodus, or the dryness of the law's technical details, is no reason for suspecting that the writer could not have composed with the flowing pen and the brilliant rhetoric of Deuteronomy; especially if more than thirty years' experience in governing a nation, and in discharging the duties of an ambassador from God, had given him a breadth of view and an insight into the near as well as the distant future, which ordinary men never enjoy. Who would expect a recital of laws and rites and ceremonies to shew the same style of thought and expression, as a highly wrought speech delivered on one of the greatest occasions

¹ "I should be glad to see an article on the Penal Code in the *Edinburgh Review*. But I must stipulate that my name be not mentioned, and that everything may be attributed to the Law Commission as a body."—*Life*, vol. ii. p. 13.

in history, to a people destined to play the leading part in the life of our race. Such surroundings would have inspired the tamest speaker to flights of oratory far above his own, or his dearest friends' idea of his ability. We must, in justice to Moses, allow the same considerations to hold in his case that we find at work in far smaller men, and in far less serious times. He was lifted high above his usual flow of thought and speech; there was an inspiration from the time and place alone, such as no other man has ever felt in equal volume or in equal strength. If, therefore, any one chooses to hold that Moses was not only the speaker but the writer of Deuteronomy, he has reason for putting wholly out of view this unmistakable difference of style. We have said *speaker* and *writer*, for it is possible that he may have been the former without being the latter. On the other hand, he may have been the *writer* and not the *speaker*, while some even imagine that he was neither, and yet the *author* of Deuteronomy.¹ Scripture has something to say about all three suppositions, but most about the first and second. But before pointing out the bearing on this inquiry of the well-known distinction between the *speaker* and the *reporter* of a speech, we shall return for a little to the theory of the "programme."

¹ By editing a book a man may become responsible for it quite as much as if he had written it with his own hand. "General de Todleben's" "book (on the siege of Sebastopol) purports not to have been written "but edited by him, and I imagine he would be much more likely to "allow mistakes to occur in the words of the narrative compiled under

We shall shew in the outset that it rests on a basis entirely unhistorical. And this is the more pleasant a task because Ewald has classed all of us, who believe in the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, with "those who ignore history." A charge so sweeping as this is not worthy of a historian; it may be turned on himself. Besides many other statements regarding the book and its writer that no unbiassed reader can call history or criticism, Ewald informs the world that "the author desired to introduce Moses as a popular orator, speaking pretty much as the prophets of that age used to speak before the assembled thousands."¹ Why the author of the "programme" should have thought of introducing Moses as the speaker at all is a riddle that is ever growing harder to read; for the same critic says: "Some, and in other respects by no means contemptible writers of our own day, have turned the light of history into total darkness over the head of this—next to Christ—greatest founder of a religion; and some among us have doubted whether Moses ever lived, or whether anything certain can now be asserted respecting him."² Ewald considers

"his auspices than to suffer any grave faults to appear in the elaborate maps and plans of fortifications, which form so valuable a portion of the work."—Kinglake, *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iii. p. 40. Author and editor may thus become blended into one, which some imagine did happen with parts of the Pentateuch, in Genesis as well as the other books.

¹ *History of Israel*, vol. i. p. 119. He means the age of Josiah (630 B.C.).

² *History of Israel*, vol. ii. pp. 16, 17.

the author of the book of Deuteronomy a "popular orator," but not a "poet." Kuenen's view of the addresses in the book is highly flattering to its unknown writer. "*Moses himself* appears as the speaker in Deuteronomy; " we read this not only in the titles, but also again and " again in the addresses themselves. . . . Not to a chosen " few, to priests or elders, but to his whole people does " he address himself, with all the earnestness and all the " authority with which the venerable envoy of God could " speak to those who knew him, and who owed him so " much. . . . It is as if he were afraid of saying too little, " and again and again resumes the thread of the exhorta- " tion, in order, if possible, to win some. His exhortations " breathe a spirit of fervour and love which is very " affecting. His pathos is the natural expression of a " warm heart."¹ It is allowed, then, that the Moses of Deuteronomy, though not introduced perhaps as a poet, for Ewald denies him the possession of poetic fire, is what may be called next best, a "popular orator." A romancer presents the great Hebrew hero in this new and unhistorical light.

Taking it for granted that we know something about the Hebrew leader, and that what we do know most minutely is mainly got from the book of Exodus, we have a difficulty, that no reasoning can overcome, in reconciling this knowledge with the idea of Moses as "a popular

¹ *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii., pp. 17-22.

“orator,” addressing the assembled thousands of Israel. This is not the view of him that even an ordinary reader gathers from his recorded life and acts. If the words put into his mouth in the book of Exodus be received as truth—and no purpose could be served by setting down falsehood—it is beyond doubt that Moses then felt himself to be neither a popular leader nor a popular speaker. He shrunk from the task laid on him of leading his nation in their conflict with Pharaoh; he shrunk also from the duty of speaking to them in the name of God. When he was eighty years of age he bewailed his unfitness for the office thrust upon him by heaven—first, because he could not speak, and second, because he felt his inability to lead the multitude. The latter he had tried to do when he was forty years of age, and had failed, signally failed in the attempt. It was such a failure as a man never forgets; it changed his whole life, and thoughts, and hopes. Ability to speak in public he knew to be above his power; and no one knew it, or could know it better. But, in the face of these well-known facts, the “programme” introduces Moses as “a popular orator,” addressing to the thousands of Israel a speech of surpassing power with the most brilliant rhetorical effects. Could a Hebrew romancer in the age of Josiah have so laid himself open to instant discovery? Or, could a prophet have shown himself so ignorant of the sacred books?

Let this idea of "a popular orator" be compared with the words written in the book of Exodus:—

EXODUS IV. 10-16, 28-30.

10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant : but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee : and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth : and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people : and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel :

30 And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

EXODUS VI. 28-30.

28 And it came to pass on the day *when* the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt,

29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I *am* the LORD : speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee.

30 And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

EXODUS VII. 1, 2.

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh : and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee : and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

On the meaning of the words used in these passages no reasonable doubt can rest. Moses was "slow of speech, " and slow of tongue;" in other words, speaking was a hard and unthankful business to him, precisely as the burden of judging the nation was "heavy" or "hard" when the whole work fell on him alone. The same word is used in both cases;¹ a weight rested on his tongue as a speaker, a weight rested on his shoulders as a judge or leader. What this weight may have been, the writer forbears to say; or, it may be, the word he uses had a definite meaning in those days which we cannot recover from forgetfulness now. The "weight" may have been such as care and practice could remove, even in a man eighty years of age; just as an indomitable will removed the stammering and indistinctness of utterance, that were breaking the heart of the young Demosthenes. Plutarch tells us that the Greek orator "had a weakness and a " stammering in his voice, and a want of breath, which " caused such a distraction in his discourse that it was " difficult for the audience to understand him. . . . " Demosthenes lamented that drunken seamen and other " unlettered persons were heard, and kept the rostrum, " while he was entirely disregarded." A long experience in dealing with men who listened to him not for his eloquence, but to receive his Master's message, may have done for Moses what care and practice did for the stam-

¹ Exod. xviii. 18; Numb. xi. 14.

mering Athenian. But, be that as it may, it is indisputable that this "slowness of speech" was an outstanding defect in Moses, which at first unfitted him to speak to and for his countrymen. He retires into the background when public speaking is required; Aaron, his brother, then steps to the front.

Between the idea of "a popular orator" and this historical view of oratorical inability in Moses, the disagreement is broad and clear. But no prophet or scholar of Josiah's age was ignorant of this recorded defect in the lawgiver. It coloured the whole of the most minutely detailed events of Moses' life. Would a romancer, knowing this as he must have known it, have ventured to represent a man, so notoriously slow of speech, addressing assembled Israel in words of burning eloquence that flowed in a copious torrent from his lips? Often enough Moses is said to speak to the King of Egypt and to the Hebrew people; but, when the context is examined, Aaron is seen stepping to the front, and speaking as his brother commands. That spokesman was no longer alive to stand before the people when the long addresses in Deuteronomy were delivered. Moses stood alone. At eighty years of age, he is slow of speech, and slow of tongue; at one hundred and twenty he is supposed to be represented as uttering one of the most impassioned and lengthy speeches, that ever fell from the quickest tongue and the most brilliant orator. Would either prophet or scholar, had he been so

inclined, have dared to perpetrate a blunder like this? We need take no thought for the opinions of the man's friends and associates in a matter as well known to them as to him. But there is another and a nearer judge, ever acting and ever feebling the guilty pen. Respect for the promptings of his own common sense, at an absurd misrepresentation of his greatest countryman, would alone have made him fling away the pen and paper that were engaged in so ridiculous a service. It was no ordinary man who wrote the book of Deuteronomy. While the "programme" allows this, it makes him do what none but the commonest and meanest of men could have done, outrage the story of Moses' life and doings. Our great scholars have fallen into grievous error in this representation. They must revise their programme, or maintain that the life and acts of Moses were fables invented after the book of Deuteronomy was published. At any rate, the mere fact that Moses appears in the altogether novel light of "a popular orator" after Aaron's death, proves that the hand which wrote the book was not a forger's.

But it may be said that if Moses' slowness of speech be fatal to the idea of a "programme," it must equally overthrow the credibility of the history given in the book. Moses is said to have delivered long and earnest addresses to the people he was soon to leave. But he could not play the orator; therefore the story of these addresses is a fable. Well then, on this shewing, we are driven back

to the untenable position that they were forgeries. That, however, is not the way to regard the matter. A forger is always careful to avoid setting down aught which might cause suspicion. Moses' slowness of speech stood forth to all readers as a fatal barrier to addresses delivered by him after Aaron's death. Therefore a forger would avoid that difficulty; it was not a sunken rock, but it was a great mass rising clean out of the water, and on which a shipwreck in broad daylight was impossible, if ordinary care were exercised. The case is different with a historian. Posterity, from the imperfect knowledge it possesses, may doubt or deny his statements. But if he be an eye-witness or an ear-witness of facts, it is seldom that he thinks of the hard points which puzzle after ages. Everything is set down in his book without thought of the misconceptions that may arise when he is dead. This was the case with the writer of Deuteronomy. What a forger would have avoided as a clear and insuperable objection to his programme, a historian took no thought of as an objection to the truth of history. Moses' slowness of speech may have been a thing past and gone to the latter; to the former, whether living in Josiah's age or in our own, it was or is an ever present feature in Moses' life.

If a Hebrew romancer had written the book of Deuteronomy, it is thus incredible that he did not avoid making shipwreck on that boldly-outlined rock, Moses' slowness of

speech. Whoever affirms that the part of Moses' life in which that defect is recorded was written after the Captivity, only shifts a heavy burden from one shoulder to another. Deuteronomy may then be right; but Exodus is so stupidly wrong that there is nothing gained by the transfer, even if the theory could be proved. In either case the romancer's blundering is without excuse. Oversight it could not be called; it is pure invention, purposeless, and without reason. If, however, the slowness of speech in Moses and his oratorical power be alike facts, the recorder of the latter may never have bethought himself of the former. His silence proves nothing. How often have authors recorded facts, which puzzle or bewilder posterity, till some lucky turn discloses the missing link, and vindicates the historian's accuracy. One such instance occurs in the writings of Isaiah so singular that it stamps his book with the seal of truth, and teaches all gropers into the darkness of the past a lesson of profoundest humility. It is worth recording.

A prince named Sargon is mentioned as King of Assyria in the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah: "In the year " that Tartan¹ came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the King " of Assyria sent him)." But the commentators on these words could find nothing about this ruler in ancient books. Instead of taking Isaiah's word for it that a king of that name once governed Assyria, they were so wise as to set

¹ An Assyrian title of honour, commander-in-chief. Isaiah xx. 1.

their own ignorance above his knowledge. And they were so rash as to make known their conjectures on the point, some imagining that Shalmaneser was meant; others Sennacherib; and a few at once clinging to the prophet's statement, and yet offering the world something that savoured of an apology for his mention of the man at all. However pardonable this may have been, it was unsafe. And so difficult is it to root out error when it has once taken hold, that a well known scholar, revising in 1865 a popular commentary on Isaiah, allows all this blundering to stand. "These suppositions," he says, "are less probable than the obvious one that Sargon was a king of Assyria mentioned only here, because his reign was very short, and this was the only occurrence that brought him into contact with the Jews. . . . The most plausible hypothesis, and that now commonly adopted, is that he reigned three or four years between Shalmaneser and Sennacherib (718 to 715 B.C.)."¹

Sargon is now known to have been the first of a new line of princes, in which his son Sennacherib was the second. But the father was the mightier king, perhaps the mightiest of all who sat on the throne of Assyria. East and west, and north and south, he carried his conquering arms, repelled by none, thwarted by none, feared

¹ Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah*, revised by Dr Eadie. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, under Sargon, gives a true account of him. It was published in 1863.

by all. His reign was not short as "the most plausible hypothesis" imagines, for, though advanced in years when he seized the throne, he ruled from 722 to 705 B.C. Nor did he invade Palestine only once. At the beginning of his reign, according to his own account, he stormed Samaria, and carried into foreign lands 27,200 of its people. A second time his vengeance fell on the Holy Land, throughout its whole length, from Hamath to Beersheba. A third time, five years after, he passed through Samaria, planting in its cities several Arabian tribes whom he had brought from his conquests on the east of Jordan. Four years later he is again measuring swords with a confederacy of kings in the south of Palestine, backed in their rebellion by the ruler of Egypt. Ashdod was taken, the defiers of their Assyrian lord were ruined, and the promises of help from Egypt proved a deceitful staff to lean on. It is to this fourth and last campaign of Sargon in Palestine that Isaiah refers.

We can now more freely discuss the question of the authorship of the book of Deuteronomy. At the outset a distinction of vital importance presents itself; the speaker is not always the reporter of his speech. We know from history that Moses shrunk from undertaking the mission to Egypt without some one to speak publicly for him. We may, if we please, call Moses the real speaker, and the other only the reporter of his words. But the story of his mission is at once complicated by this view of the

case. Do the books that were written contain the words Moses taught his brother, or those spoken by Aaron as his reporter? Precisely as each of the four Gospel writers is acknowledged to have imparted somewhat of his own way of apprehending truth to the account given of our Lord's sayings and doings, while these sayings and doings are allowed to be the Lord's, much also of what is recorded in the book of Exodus may be coloured by the peculiarities of Aaron's style of thought and expression. The story of the mission to Egypt leaves us in a position of doubt between our debt to the one brother and our debt to the other. Practically, therefore, the question of style has no place in this inquiry. From the nature of the case, as detailed in the history, it is put out of court altogether in discussing the earlier of the Five Books. For anything we know to the contrary, the real style of Moses may be seen, not in Exodus, but in Deuteronomy, even while we justly maintain that he was the author of both.

But the known facts of history enable us to go a step farther. After the discomfiture of Amalek, "The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in *the* book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua."¹ "The book" referred to has been the source of much fruitless speculation among scholars. That a book of record was kept in the Hebrew camp, the passage quoted proves beyond doubt. That Joshua was not the writer of it is also clear,

¹ Exod. xvii. 14.

for a reader rehearsed the words in his hearing. But it is not said, and it is very unlikely that Moses was the writer. He may have had as little to do with writing these memorials of the wanderings in the wilderness as he had with delivering speeches before the King of Egypt, and yet been the author of both. The whole question turns on the difference between the speaker and the reporter of his speech. That distinction is clearly laid down in Exodus; it lies at the root of the mission to Pharaoh; it runs through the whole narrative of the wilderness journeys. Again, therefore, we find reason to believe that the peculiarities of style belonging to the chief scribe in the Hebrew camp might leave their mark on "the book" he kept. That Moses was the scribe himself may be a mistake we readily commit, from not observing that he had far more serious duties to discharge than keep the annals of the nation. That he was responsible for them, and thus the author of the book they are found in, is another matter; but it may not be his style of expression we have a right to look for.

But the book of Exodus also records "that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening." When remonstrated with on this waste of effort, Moses replied: "I judge between one and another; and I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws."¹ Are we to

¹ Exod. xviii. 14-16. It will not be denied that the statutes and laws of God made known to the people were the decisions given on the

suppose that a man with the experience Moses had could have gone on day after day deciding cases among the people, without having a clerk of court to record the decisions given? No one could have sat on the judge's bench for a couple of days without finding the same classes of cases recurring, and without having to pass the same judgments. "The book" would again come into use. But however much the authorship of it belonged to Moses as the giver of the decisions, or as the speaker of the statutes of God, and the reviser of what was entered on the record, the writing of it out might not be his. He had other work to do. His spoken words would be caught by his trusted clerk or scribe; they would be written down, and they would be revised by the nation's judge. Again, therefore, we are face to face with a different writer from either Aaron or Moses, and may expect to find a style unlike theirs in the Five Books. The Pentateuch may thus proclaim, if its voice would only be listened to, that it was not written by one hand, but by several. It is penetrated by the spirit of one great master, having helpers under him, even as the Four Gospels exhibit four different reporters of the same mighty speaker, four reporters agreeing, and yet different.

cases brought before Moses, at least in the passage quoted, though all these statutes and laws were not given in this way. Hence a book of record was necessary. Hence also the laws, like the decisions, would follow no particular order, but would often seem jumbled together, as we know they do seem. This is a proof of real life.

There remains then the book of Deuteronomy. When Moses delivered the addresses recorded in that book, Aaron was dead. At eighty years of age Moses could not appear before Pharaoh, or the Hebrew people, without a prophet to speak for him. At one hundred and twenty he is represented as "a popular orator" addressing assembled Israel. There are thus two views to take. On the one hand, it may be held that his slowness of speech and of tongue had been got rid of by care and practice. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," notwithstanding his great age. His tongue may have been set free from the weight that clogged it forty years before. And the closing act of his life may exhibit Moses to us speaking as he really did speak when fired with love to his people, and alarmed at the dangers that brooded over their path. Certainly the time and place were well fitted to rouse the most sluggish heart, and to wake into life the heaviest tongue. They may have had these effects on Moses. They may have drawn out in him the fire of an eloquence which that weight had long suppressed. And the historian, if such were the case, never troubled himself to explain what he knew was fact, because Moses' recorded heaviness of speech might make it look like fiction.

It ought also to be borne in mind, that forty years of a shepherd's life in the desert was a totally different training from forty years of kingly rule over a mighty nation. Lonely, shut out from the great world, given to contem-

plation, Moses during his time of exile—whether it lasted forty years or less—nursed to maturity whatever was reflective in his soul. From a recluse, such as he then was, a song like the ninetieth psalm full of mournful sweetness and of sadly attractive thoughts on the brief life of feeble men, might be expected. But that training made him shy and timid, as he certainly was when told to return to Egypt. A bold and successful policy as the deputy of God for forty years, in ruling more than two millions of people, could not fail to change this retiring shepherd-chief into a sagacious statesman. Men are called, and often justly, the creatures of circumstances; only, if ability of an uncommon order be crushed for a season by its surroundings, it will surely blossom into an unlooked-for life as soon as these change. Moses the shepherd-chief, may thus have been, in many respects, very unlike Moses the great leader and lawgiver. Powers, that lay dormant while he fed his father-in-law's flocks, found scope for exercise at the head of the vast host of Hebrews.

But there is another view possible. Moses always appears attended by a prophet or servant. Sometimes Aaron is with him; sometimes Joshua; his scribe or secretary, another state attendant well known from monuments far older than the days of the Exodus, is never mentioned. Aaron was dead when the Deuteronomic addresses were delivered. Joshua was still alive. On examining the book, it will appear that though Moses

speaks in the first person, thus seeming to put himself forward as the author of the book, in several passages he is spoken of in the third person, as if another were writing about him. We have become so strictly grammatical in our age and country, that this difference between the first and third person is regarded as almost decisive against the Mosaic authorship of the book. Three of these passages are:—

DEUT. XXIX. 1, 2.

These *are* the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land.

DEUT. I. 1.

These *be* the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

DEUT. XXXIII. 1, 4, 5.

And this *is* the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

Moses commanded us a law, *even* the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.

And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people *and* the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

The last chapter of the book, containing an account of the death of Moses, cannot all have been his handiwork.¹

¹ Such remarks as “no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day,” and “there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses” (vers. 6 and 10) do not prove that many years elapsed between the death of

But we ought not to attach much, if indeed any, weight to this mixing up of "I" and "he." In the three middle books Moses is introduced in the third person, except when he is engaged in conversation, in prayer, or in speaking to the people. Besides, our custom is different from the ideas of grammatical propriety that were then common. In the Sallier Papyrus the glory of Rameses II. is sung by the royal scribe, Pentaur, as we learn from the concluding line, but there is the same mingling of "I" and "he" in the body of the record that we find in Deuteronomy.¹ We cannot, therefore, attach any weight to this circumstance as telling against the Mosaic authorship. Our learned men may call it ungrammatical. All we can say is that, what they call bad grammar, may have been good grammar with Moses and his contemporaries or predecessors, Rameses II. and Pentaur.

In weighing the possibility of Moses³ having written the book himself, we must not forget that long addresses by kings and great chiefs have come down to our time from those days. The Harris Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian book about as long as Deuteronomy, is a speech put in the mouth of King Rameses III. The pronoun "I" occurs in

Moses and the writing of the words in verse 6. It was a Hebrew custom to speak in these terms; witness the words in 1 Macc. xiii. 30, "This is the sepulchre which he made at Modin, and it standeth yet unto this day." The sepulchre was built by Simon about 143 B.C., the book was written not long after 120 B.C.

¹ *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 78.

almost every verse. That Rameses himself wrote this long tale of his gifts and greatness no one is expected to believe. But that he was perhaps the author of it, in so far as he ordered it to be written, and was responsible for its statements of fact, can scarcely be questioned. Who the scribe or reporter was is another matter, of small consequence. Deuteronomy may be similar. The "I" occurs so often as to leave no doubt on the authorship; but Moses may have been his own reporter.

Some may think it safer to maintain that Moses at the end of his life continued to be "slow of speech and slow of tongue." In that case his speeches to the people may have been delivered by a prophet like Aaron, unnamed in the book. This view is not inconsistent with what we know of the lawgiver. But who shall decide whether it be the right view to take, or one of those will-o'-the-wisps that are ever befooling critics in the ill-lighted past. There was such a vigour of bodily life about Moses that, even at the great age he attained, his natural force may have thrown off the weight which once tied down his tongue. Nor is it clear that the loosening of the bands which had chained its utterance was contrary to the workings of nature. But, if it were not the case, a great difficulty arises in seeking to ascertain who the prophet or spokesman of Moses may have been after Aaron's death. Joshua is the name that comes unbidden into

one's thoughts and almost one's lips. But Joshua was clearly not the writer or reporter of Moses' dying commands. If there were no other reason for this conclusion, it would be sufficient to read the short dialogue between the two as they neared the Hebrew camp, when the festival was proceeding in honour of the golden calf. "And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they "shouted, he said unto Moses, 'A noise of war in the "camp.' And he said,

"Not the noise of crying out, Victory,
"And not the noise of crying out, Slaughter;
"A noise of singing do I hear."¹

Joshua's few sharp words indicate the soldier, and not the scribe; the man of ready hand and short utterance, not the man of ready tongue and of many words. Moses' reply looks like what the author of Deuteronomy would have given. Modern discoverers have found that his answer is but a stave from some old battle song or some festival piece, which so charmed the ear of a writer of one of the many "programmes," that he could not put it to better use than insert it for ornament in this bit of ancient history. Whether Moses was "a popular orator" or not, he was a poet, and this answer to Joshua's remark is certainly his. It is odd, however, that the praise of the Hebrew general is omitted from the account of the return and doom of the spies in the book. Caleb alone is named

¹ Exod. xxxii. 17, 18.

as a faithful soldier, and to him alone is the reward of faithfulness and valour given. It looks as if Joshua had shrunk, with the modesty of a true soldier, from putting down his own name as sharing with Caleb in the glory and the reward :—

DEUT. I. 35-38.

35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers,

36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh ; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children,

because he hath wholly followed the LORD.

37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.

38 *But* Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

But if Joshua was not the reporter of Moses' words, it is vain to speculate farther. Of Eleazar, the son and successor of Aaron, almost nothing is known. Of Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, this much is known, that in fiery patriotism, in impassioned energy, in readiness of hand, he was worthy to speak for Moses before assembled Israel. But we are here brought to a standstill, if we venture to advance a step beyond the possibility that this youthful priest may have taken his grandfather's place at his grand-uncle's side. A fanciful criticism may confidently slip from the known to the unknown, and glorify its imaginings as truth, but a careful inquirer knows that between these two poles of thought, however little they may seem to lie apart, there often stretches a vast waste of barren land.

It is not pleasant to lose the road in that wilderness, as the advanced school of thinkers have all done.

The sum of our results is that, according to the statements of Scripture, there may have been several hands engaged on the five books, although they were but underworkers to one chief, whose their work really was. More than one style not only is, but also ought to be, detected in their pages; but the difference may have arisen from the gradual growth of one man's mind, or from several unlike men working under him, or from the variety of subjects discussed, or from all these causes together. Whether any part of the books is the unaided handiwork of Moses, beyond those pieces which he is expressly said to have written, such as his songs and prayers, he appears throughout as the master to all these underworkers. They were his spokesmen, his reporters, his writers out. Most justly then shall we regard him as the author of the five books, even though he may have had four or five helpers in the penning of them, all of whom may have left traces of their own styles of thought and expression. To discriminate what may have been the unaided handiwork of Moses from what he superintended and revised of the handiwork of others, is now a hopeless task. If we are not content to let darkness rest on the narrative in this respect, our groping can only lead us far astray. Such has been the fate of the advanced school of thinkers, and such also will be the fate of those in the opposite camp who, not content with the general

words, "The Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him "out of the tabernacle of the congregation," insist on knowing whether Moses took the words down in writing and preserved them exactly as they were uttered, or whether he recalled from memory all he heard spoken out of the cloudy pillar. These are questions we have no right to seek a solution of, but must leave them as they have come down to us, content to know that the words are not man's but God's.

It may be said that if Moses worked up the five books by the aid of under-helpers, the value of the writings as an inspired message from heaven is seriously impaired. Aaron's hand and Joshua's may be allowed to pass equally with Moses' own, but a scribe, a clerk of court, and a Phinehas, cannot be introduced without detracting somewhat from the worth of the five books. Not at all. Luke was an underworker to Paul the apostle, Mark to Peter, and Matthew was a reporter of the Master's great address on the Mount. Even Baruch, the helper of Jeremiah, has shared somewhat of the lustre of his master's inspiration; and Elisha is named as the servant who poured water on the hands of Elijah. Masters and pupils, headworkers and underworkers, are mixed up together in the writing of inspired books in ways that may seem incomprehensible to those who are in search of facts, and who value theories only in so far as they have facts for a foundation. Nor is the inspiration found in their books such as adorns the

writings of Homer or Shakespeare. Where the one ends and the other begins may not be easily set down in words, but none the less is it easily felt in fact.

The book of Deuteronomy was intended for a people's handbook of Hebrew law. Unlike the bulk of the three preceding books, it is wholly popular; it was not meant for use among the learned only, whether priests or laymen. Once every seven years, during the feast of tabernacles, it was ordered to be read before the assembled people, that every one might know what was to be done, and what was not to be done. Most solemn words of warning and entreaty were added, that the Hebrews might see it was no earthly king to whom their allegiance was due, but the Judge of all the earth, who would demand from them a sharp account for treason done to his greatness. A repetition of the law for general use and in popular language was a boon to the nation at large. But it was more. It was a monument to all ages of the divine leadings of the lawgiver. Handbooks of this nature are not uncommon now; but they were so uncommon then, and for thousands of years afterwards, that the fifth book of Moses is a proof that he was guided to the task by more than human sagacity and foresight. The idea of such a blessing to a nation stamps the man, in whose mind it first woke into life, as standing head and shoulders above his fellows. Many a century had to pass away before the great lawyers of the Roman Empire

bethought themselves of drawing up even a scientific digest of imperial law. A people's edition was a step far beyond their imagination. But Moses took that step three thousand years ago and more.

Assailants of the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, while rendering something like justice to the grandeur of the work in itself, do not render justice to the sagacity which produced it, and placed it at stated times before the whole Hebrew people, men, women, and children. Never has the world witnessed anything more complete or more just. The Romans have been honoured by the voice of all historians as having carried off the palm in the cultivation of law, "not only from the Greeks, but from "all the other nations of antiquity." But twelve hundred years passed, after the founding of the city, before an attempt was made to codify the whole of the vast body of laws that ruled the empire. In 530 A.D. a commission was appointed by Justinian, to which "full power was "given to select what only was useful, to omit what was "antiquated or superfluous, to avoid contradictions, and to "make such alterations or corrections on the original "works as they might think expedient." But with all the care the most learned and cautious lawyers could exercise, contradictions and discrepancies crept in: "If "there be a discrepancy between the Institutes and the "Pandects, it is not easy to solve the difficulty, as they "both received the force of law on the same day. No

“ general rule can be laid down: each case must be considered with reference to its own particular circumstances; and a similar course must be followed when contradictions are found between passages occurring in the same part of Justinian’s collection.”¹ Compare this with the books of Moses. An appearance of contradiction or discrepancy is laid hold of by modern thinkers to prove that Moses never wrote the books at all, that perhaps he never lived, that his writings and acts are a fable from beginning to end. If the mere shadow produce a flutter like this among learned men, what effect would the substance have if it existed? But it is only the shadow of contradiction or discrepancy that they are able to detect: the thing itself remains as far as ever from being found.

¹ Lord Mackenzie, *Studies in Roman Law*, pp. 1, 23, 28.

CHAPTER IX.

EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Does the New Testament take a side or not?—Meaning of the word “Moses”: a man or a system—The man Moses always referred to, not a code of laws—Moses contrasted with David, and with the Prophets—A prophet like unto me: who is “me”?—Is sinless ignorance a possible explanation?—Christ’s personal knowledge of Moses, and interview with him on the Mount of Transfiguration—Summary of results.

HITHERTO we have treated the authorship of the book of Deuteronomy as a matter to be settled by the ordinary rules of historical criticism. On this common ground of literature men of all shades of opinion meet to differ, or to agree. Equally must those who hold and those who do not hold the divine inspiration of the book appeal to its recognised laws. But there is also a witness in the case, whose evidence lies, so to speak, outside of and above them. Sometimes the New Testament quotes from the book of Deuteronomy. In doing so, what does it say of the writer and his work? Is it silent on the doubts and difficulties that are puzzling and perplexing our age? Does it seem to remain neutral in the strife, or does it take a side?

A thorough sifting of the chief passages in which Moses and the law are mentioned by the Gospel writers, leaves no doubt on the truth of the following positions—*First*, that Moses is spoken of as a *man* and not as a *system*, precisely as David and Solomon are spoken of; and *second*, that the Hebrew law, as a whole, in other words, the Five Books, are ascribed to him. A quotation from Justinian means, as everybody knows, a quotation from the system or body of laws compiled by that emperor's orders. His name has thus come to stand for a system as well as for an emperor. Did Moses in the same way mean a body of laws as well as a lawgiver? And when the Gospel writers used the name, did they indicate by it the code of Hebrew laws supposed, whether rightly or wrongly, to have been delivered by him, or did they mean the man Moses as one who formerly lived and acted on the earth, who spoke to and ruled over the Hebrews, and who wrote five well-known books? Was Moses, as used by them, a name for a book universally read among the Jews, or for its universally received author? On the answer to this question depends the attitude we must suppose the New Testament to assume towards the deniers of the Mosaic authorship of all, or any of the Five Books. If Moses be but a name for a body of laws, the New Testament may be considered silent in this strife between the old and the new; its voice may be raised neither for nor against either side in the conflict. But if its writers

regard Moses as the name of a man, and not of a system, its voice may no longer be viewed as hushed; it may appear to speak clearly and strongly against one side and in favour of another.

Of the personality of Moses in those passages of the New Testament in which his name and writings occur, it is scarcely allowable to entertain a doubt. Moses the man, and not Moses the system, is always in the thoughts of speakers and writers. When we compare, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness"¹ with "Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole;"² or, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven"³ with "Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat;"⁴ or, "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept"⁵ with "Let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house;"⁶ or, "Did not Moses give you the law"⁷ with "I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws,"⁸ it is clear as noonday that the man Moses, regarded as we now regard him, and having the same halo of glory round his name with which it is still crowned in our thoughts, was present to the mind of both speaker and hearers. That speaker was Jesus Christ. Could we imagine that he was using popular

¹ John iii. 14.² Numb. xxi. 9.³ John vi. 32.⁴ Exod. xvi. 15.⁵ Mark x. 5.⁶ Deut. xxiv. 1.⁷ John vii. 19.⁸ Exod. xviii. 16.

language and speaking only as the untaught people spoke, that, in deference to human weakness, it was the ordinary view of Moses as a lawgiver he was taking, and not the view which a deeper knowledge might have taken even while it was justified in humouring the prejudices or the ignorance of the vulgar, we might say that, according to the "accommodation" theory, Jesus Christ adapted his statements to popular apprehension, and of set design did not frame them according to scientific accuracy. It need scarcely be doubted that he spoke about sunrise and sunset, though there are in reality no such things. But is it possible that he spoke of the man Moses when perhaps no such man ever lived; or of works and writings as his, in which he had little or no hand? We deny the evidence of sense in denying sunrise and sunset. We cannot do otherwise than speak of them as realities not among the vulgar only, but even in the innermost circle of science. It is otherwise with Moses the man and Moses the system. To speak of the latter as if it were the former is not to humour our deceived sense of sight, but to set truth aside. Had our Lord not meant to put forward the man Moses according to the common ideas of that time, it was open to him to have used other modes of expression without offending popular prejudice. He was not compelled to speak of Moses as he did, unless he chose; nor would a change in his mode of expression have impaired the force of his arguments. That he did speak of him in the

manner already quoted proves that he regarded Moses as a man and a lawgiver, precisely as the common run of humanity regarded him then and regard him to this hour. There is no approach to what is known as the modern scientific view in the representation of Moses given in the words of Jesus Christ.

There is one passage in the New Testament about which some debate may be raised. It is this: "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers)."¹ Moses in the first clause may seem to mean the *system* of laws in the five books: but that idea is at once corrected in the next clause, in which it means the *man*. However, it may be affirmed that the words within brackets are not the words of our Lord, but of some one, such as the writer of the gospel, who wished to have literal accuracy. Whatever view may be taken of the words, it is doubtful whether Moses be rightly interpreted as standing for his book of laws in the beginning of the quotation, and it is clear from the end of it that the gospel writer was careful to avoid even the appearance of a mistake about the name.² The man Moses stands forth as the only meaning he wished the words to carry; it was the flesh and blood of mortal life, not the abstraction of a book or a code of laws.

¹ John vii. 22.

² "Moses in his well known law gave you circumcision," seems to be the meaning.

But a scrutiny of other sayings of Jesus Christ brings the truth of this view into a clearer light. He contrasts Moses with David as a man and a writer. In the course of a conversation between him and some chiefs of the Jews, they say, "Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die," &c., and he, accepting their statement, refers them to a well known passage "in the book of Moses." A little after, our Lord himself introduces David as having written one of the Psalms "by the Holy Ghost."¹ But it is not with David only that he contrasts the law-giver. "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them," he said in one of the parables.² If David and his writings, or if the prophets and their writings are to be taken in the ordinary acceptation, as they must certainly be taken in these passages, Moses cannot fare otherwise. It is vain to think of defining him by the rules of modern thought, while David and the prophets are left to be defined by the sentiments of the crowd. This refining away of Moses' flesh and blood is too nice; the coarser sentiment of humanity is liker the truth.

But the testimony of Jesus Christ to Moses is far from being exhausted. The law is expressly said to have been given by Moses in the passage quoted above. Of that law he describes the two supporting pillars on which the whole structure rests, as built, the one on Deuteronomy, the other on Leviticus. "The first and great commandment"

¹ Mark xii. 19, 23, 36.

² Luke xvi. 29.

is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."¹ Our Lord has quoted the words from Deuteronomy.² "The second like unto it" is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."³ These words are found in the book of Leviticus.⁴ Is it possible to believe that Jesus Christ quotes these weighty sayings, these brightest jewels in the crown of a true humanity, from "programmes," coined in an Egyptian exile-home, or in a Babylonian village, ages after the time his hearers thought they were flashed from the heart's depths of a man who had stood face to face with God? Is it possible to discern in the view of them given by our Lord a trace of the scientific refinement, that has turned the common sentiment of humanity regarding Moses upside down? He would have more than ordinary boldness who should answer, *Yes*.

Last of all, our Lord appeals to the testimony of Moses in his favour, precisely as in other passages he appeals to the testimony of Isaiah: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."⁵ Nor ought there to be any doubt on the meaning of these words; for, on the road to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."⁶ Clearly,

¹ Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

³ Matt. xxii. 39.

⁶ John v. 46.

² Deut. vi. 5, xxx. 6.

⁴ Lev. xix. 18.

⁶ Luke xxiv. 27.

if there is a reference here to any one passage in the five books more than to another, it is to the prediction of The Prophet:¹ "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth."

If then our Lord taught his followers that Moses ever spoke directly of him, the part of the Five Books to which he refers must be found in these words of Deuteronomy: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken." Nearly all readers of the Bible may be said to agree on this, that the Prophet foretold was Jesus Christ, and the "me" to whom he should be like was Moses. But if Deuteronomy be only a "programme" written eight centuries after the lawgiver's time, who is the "me" in this likeness? It must be the romancer, "a kind of prophet," as he is called by Dr Davidson. There is a profound meaning in likening Christ, the deliverer, the lawgiver, the prophet, the king of men, to Moses, the deliverer, the lawgiver, the prophet, the king of the chosen people. But there is no meaning in comparing him to an unknown writer of fiction. We may be told that tradition, with rarest fidelity to truth, preserved this prophecy unchanged from the days of Moses to the reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, a space of eight hundred years. It is as probable that a

¹ Deut. xviii. 15-18.

tradition of momentous import may have floated down unchanged to our own day from the age of Harold the Saxon. Tradition, then, has no right to a place here. The "me" is the writer of the book, whoever he was. If it was not Moses, then it was a man utterly unknown to history, "a kind of prophet, speaking in a moralising tone," in other words, a writer of fiction!

Evidence so clear and so full cannot be lightly discarded, except by those who believe themselves as well qualified as the New Testament speakers and writers to form an opinion on the subject. All who receive the word of an apostle or an evangelist in matters of faith, as a scholar receives his master's in things above his knowledge, must pause at this testimony to Moses and his writings. It speaks for itself with such might that no words of counsel and judge—for what else are all men at one time or another in this inquiry?—can add to its weight or make its meaning more plain. For Moses, substitute a number of romancers, writing imaginary sketches of what never had been before and might never be afterwards; for Deuteronomy, substitute a clever invention, skilfully laid past to be discovered at the proper time eight centuries after Moses was dead; and imagine then that Jesus Christ, his apostles and evangelists, speak of Moses and his writings as we do, of the one as a man who did a great work on earth, of the other,

as bearing the impress of his hand—what are we to think of their teaching and their right to be heard if the tale of romancers, programmes, and a skilfully hidden scroll be true?

Perhaps those who regard Deuteronomy as a book that was written eight hundred years after the time of Moses may still have somewhat to say. Our Lord was in outward look a man like other men. His natural weaknesses were theirs—hunger, thirst, toil, and tears. But the line is nowhere sharply drawn at which this likeness to ordinary men stopped. Bodily likeness, as shewn by his feelings of hunger and thirst, will be allowed at once. Mental weakness, in some measure, cannot be denied; for an over-mastering sorrow, finding relief in a flood of tears, befell Christ, as it has befallen every true-hearted son of Adam. But did this form of human frailty extend so far that our Saviour shared with the people of that time the ignorance, often attributed to them in our own day, regarding the writer of the Five Books? Clearly it was not a sinful weakness in them, any more than it was sinful to think the sun moved so as to rise and set each day. It was but a dimness of sight, arising from man's inability to rid himself of the view he had drunk in, first at his mother's knee, and afterwards in the schools of learning. Can we attribute a mental frailty of this sinless nature to the Redeemer?

It is clear that all who regard him as a man and

nothing more are entitled to reply in the affirmative. But it is not possible for others to occupy the same ground, without making Him less than the man of loftiest intelligence he undoubtedly was. General reasoning is of little avail to settle the point one way or another, for it draws its whole strength from our own feeling of the knowledge our Saviour must have had amid all the surroundings of feeble humanity. As one man will think one thing, and another man another in the matter, facts must be appealed to, and these facts are decisive of the case.

Our Lord's appeal to Moses as a witness in his favour runs in these words: "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."¹ This appeal to Moses was not merely an appeal from a living man to one long dead. Unquestionably the people to whom it was made regarded it in this light. We have seen this already, and do not require to repeat the argument. But our Lord did not put himself on the same footing with the people. His right to make that appeal rested on the ground of personal knowledge of the dead man. He had a personal acquaintance with the long-departed lawgiver, which justified the claim he

¹ John v. 45-47.

made to quote his words. And he was conscious as a man of that former personal knowledge. At any rate, the Gospel writer who recorded these words also wrote: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him."¹ A distinct claim to personal acquaintance with Abraham was so clearly implied in our Lord's words, that the bystanders first asked him if that was his meaning, and then prepared to stone him when he not only did not put them off the thought, but plainly told them they were right. If personal knowledge of Abraham be allowed, how can the same be denied for Moses?

But the argument does not end there. Two of the Gospel writers, Matthew and Mark, inform us that our Lord had an interview with Moses some time before his death. "After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart; and was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."² Manifestly, then, when our Lord quotes from the Five Books the words of Moses,

¹ John viii. 53-59.

² Matt. xvii. 1-3.

he is not quoting the words of a man whom he did not know, except as the people of Nazareth knew him, from the faint echo of a long removed past. He quotes the dead man's books as one would quote the works of a friend whom he knew in the body and had but recently spoken to. His language either has this meaning, or it leaves an odd feeling in our minds, that he should have gone from an interview with the sainted lawgiver to speak of him as a once living man who wrote well-known books, when we are now assured that it is doubtful if Moses ever lived at all, and that it is certain he had little or nothing to do with the books he is thought to have written. Is this view of the matter not very like a reducing of Christ's human nature below that of an average man? The dim knowledge of an easily blinded humanity explains nothing in this case; a sinless ignorance has not so much as a foothold. The claim of a personal acquaintance with Moses is supported—*first*, by the fact that Christ lived in Moses' day, and, during his own life on earth, knew that he then lived; and *second*, by the interview he had on the Mount of Transfiguration with the long departed lawgiver. Better proof than this for the reality of Moses and the genuineness of his books cannot be advanced in favour of any work whatever.

We are now in a position to sum up the results that have been arrived at. On the one hand, those who deny

the genuineness of Deuteronomy build their theory of its origin on assumptions that cannot be allowed. The discovery of a book of the law during Josiah's reign in some part of the Temple, whether in its subterranean chambers or elsewhere, is the only solid ground they have. It is assumed that this book was Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy only or in part. An unknown writer, whom they call a prophet, or "a kind of prophet," is next assumed as the author. He is a creature of their own imagination, for they know neither who he was, nor when he lived, nor where he wrote. Among other guesses, Egypt or Canaan is thought to have been the place of writing, and Hezekiah's reign or the middle of Manasseh's the time. When history fails them, as it speedily does, in their efforts to find standing ground on its statements, they assume a tradition to take them out of straits; not the vulgar tradition which increases in bulk and changes in colour as time rolls on, but a tradition handed down with unrivalled closeness to historic truth for three or four or even eight hundred years. A printed book could not have preserved the small facts of Solomon's greatness with more accuracy than did the gossips and story-tellers of ancient Israel from one generation to another! Hebrew history in the hands of these writers thus becomes a tangled web of fact and fiction, so strangely jumbled together that no one can tell where fact ends and fiction begins. Fables, myths, legends are bound up with

traditions of marvellous truthfulness and with sober history. But if the strength of a chain be measured by the strength of its weakest link, then the worth of a history so indefinitely composite must be measured by the value of its most worthless part, if it claim to be not the work of men merely, but a revelation from God.

What is there on the other side of the argument? There are a few historical difficulties in the book, as we have seen, but not more or graver difficulties than might justly have been looked for in a book so ancient, and in a summary, perhaps an enlargement, of national law so brief. But if it be allowed that the book of Deuteronomy was the handiwork of Moses, then we have a fountainhead from which all Hebrew thought and history are seen to flow. Once every seven years this book was read in the hearing of the people, men and women. That this neither was nor could be always done is acknowledged; that it was done as often as the times allowed is proved by the impress Deuteronomy has left on the literature of Israel. So well does everything in Hebrew history hang together, if the Mosaic authorship be granted, that the denial of that authorship is as ruinous to the history as the removal of the keystone would be to the strongest arch.

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