

THE PENTATEUCH

THE five books ascribed to Moses have a peculiar place in the structure of the Bible, and an order which is undeniably the order of the experience of the people of God in all ages. Genesis is the book of origins of the beginning of life, and of ruin through sin. Its first word, "In the beginning God," is in striking contrast with the end, "In a coffin in Egypt." Exodus is the book of redemption, the first need of a ruined race. Leviticus is the book of worship and communion, the proper exercise of the redeemed. Numbers speaks of the experiences of a pilgrim people, the redeemed passing through a hostile scene to a promised inheritance. Deuteronomy, retrospective and prospective, is a book of instruction for the redeemed about to enter that inheritance. That Babylonian and Assyrian monuments contain records bearing a grotesque resemblance to the majestic account of the creation and of the Flood is true, as also that these antedate Moses. But this confirms rather than invalidates the inspiration of the Mosaic account. Some tradition of creation and the Flood would inevitably be handed down in the ancient cradle of the race. Such a tradition, following the order of all tradition, would take on grotesque and mythological features, and these abound in the Babylonian records. Of necessity, therefore, the first task of inspiration would be to supplant the often absurd and childish tradition with a revelation of the true history, and such a history we find in words of matchless grandeur, and in an order which, rightly understood, is absolutely scientific. In the ^aPentateuch, therefore, we have a true and logical introduction to the entire Bible; and, in type, an epitome of the divine revelation.

a) Cf. Mt. 8. 4; 19, 8; Mk . 12. 26; Lk . 5. 14; 16. 29-1 ; John 3. 14; 5. 45, 46; 7. 19.