

we should know within certain limits what inspiration is ; in the other we might not unreasonably doubt whether there was any inspiration at all but that of the unknown romancer, for that he was a romancer it is self-evident. Of course, it is impossible for me now to enter into details. That there are certain difficulties of detail either way is clear ; but it is principle—broad, comprehensive, and essential principle—for which I contend ; and as no one can maintain that the theory of late authorship does away with all difficulty, we must be content here, as in so many other cases, to be guided by the *balance* of proof ; and surely the theory of the law as ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator, and that mediator Moses, is encumbered with fewer difficulties (always supposing the initial difficulty of a supernatural revelation surmounted) than the theory of no angels and no mediator, but only a designing priest in the time of Josiah, who combined the characters of iconoclast, puritan, and reformer, and was unscrupulous as to the means employed to accomplish his end ; for that he successfully imposed upon the king and the chancellor, and the prophetess and the priests, and the nation at large, or that they were all in league together to impose upon the world, is apparent on the face of it. Moreover, to conceive of Moses' career and character, gigantic and colossal as it was, without the closing scene on the top of Pisgah, is to deprive history of one of its sublimest chapters ; and to suppose that this consummation was the subsequent addition, after many centuries, of a late and unknown inventor, is to suppose that the conception and work of Michael Angelo could be worthily taken up and completed centuries afterwards by an unknown and inferior artist.

The nature and origin of Deuteronomy is one of the most crucial cases, and, curiously enough, it is not very unlike that of the authorship of St. John's Gospel. The internal evidence of St. John's Gospel is very strong ; so also is that of Deuteronomy. If St. John's Gospel is the work of the second century, it must be a romance—"idealized history," as we are now taught to call it ; and if a romance, inasmuch as it purports to be, by the beloved disciple, a