

## INTRODUCTION

### I. NAME AND CONTENTS OF DEUTERONOMY

FOR those who desire to understand fully the growth of Hebrew religion and the origin of Judaism, the Book of Deuteronomy is of the very greatest interest and importance. The three most powerful and aggressive religions of the world, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, are closely related to the Old Testament; and in the Sacred Canon there is no book of larger historical importance and deeper spiritual significance than this. The name is due to a mistaken translation of a particular text, and yet it turns out, as we shall see, to be wonderfully appropriate. In the Greek version of 17:18 the phrase "a copy of this law" is rendered "*this deuteronomion*," which means this *second law*, hence the name Deuteronomy, just as we use "Deutero-Isaiah," for a second writer of the Isaiah school, or a second part of the book of Isaiah. The Jews sometimes used this name, though it was their usual custom to take the first words of a book as its title; in this case, *these words* or simply *words*. Modern versions give it the heading: The Fifth Book of Moses.

In its present form, this book has a slightly dramatic or rather oratorical structure, arising from the fact that all its parts are related to the person of Moses. All its varied material, except the last chapter, which contains the narrative of his death, appears as the deliverances of the great Hebrew leader. On closer examination, this may turn out to be superficial, but it is the first thing that we have to take note of in considering the form and structure of the book. The first three chapters contain a historical retrospect delivered by Moses to the assembled host of