

THE MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD by Arnold B. Rhodes. Covenant Life Curriculum

except Genesis. In certain passages of the Law he is said to write particular materials (Exod. 17:14; 24:4-8; 34:27; Num. 33:1-2; Deut. 31:9, 22, 24). The witness of the remainder of the Old Testament presupposes the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (for example, Joshua 8:31; 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 6:18; Dan. 9:11-13). Jesus and the writers of the New Testament accepted Moses as the author of the Law (for example, see Mark 10:4-5; Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 15:5, 21; Rom. 10:5).

3. Writing was available; Moses was well educated; and we know of no one better qualified to produce this work. This unity of the Pentateuch presupposes a great mind.

4. It is unnecessary to contend that Moses wrote his own obituary.

5. Discrepancies in the narratives may be textual errors. The laws concerning slaves deal with different kinds of slaves.

6. So-called duplications are not doublets but separate events.

7. Differences in style and language are best accounted for by differences in subject matter.

8. If Deuteronomy originated in the seventh century B. C., what is the point of exterminating the Canaanites?

9. If Moses did not write the Pentateuch, how could such a strong tradition that he did have ever arisen?

A Personal Word

When I read a book, I not only want to know what others think but I also want to know what the writer thinks about certain issues. You are of course free to accept or reject what I say, in fully or in part.

Today the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch is more of an open subject than it was some years ago. There are many versions of the documentary hypothesis. Much more attention is being paid to oral tradition (that is, the handing down of biblical materials by word of mouth before they were written down). The fact that certain materials are assigned to P, for example, does not necessarily mean that they originated late on that account. People of antiquity depended on oral tradition far more than we do. There were both oral and written traditions, some of them very ancient, prior to the writing of any major part of the Pentateuch.

Although any form of the documentary hypothesis is theory and not proved fact, the cumulative force of the evidence suggests strongly that there is some truth in it. Some duplications may be separate events, but it is highly improbable that they all are (see, for example, Gen. 6:19-20 and 7:2-3). The differences in style and language are too great to be accounted for by any simple formula. The unity within the Pentateuch can be accounted for by the skillful editing of the history of the One People of God. The books of the Law do not