

foundation for the suggestion that the priest himself had written the book and the story of its finding was a fabrication. It says that the account is straight forward and natural. It is now generally agreed by the critics that the book may have been written in the day of Manasseh or in the early part of the reign of Josiah. So now you have two ideas: the book was put in there by the people who wrote it in order to pawn it off on the king, so they hid it in order to find it again. Many of the critics say that it was a definite fraud, “a pious fraud.” They definitely say that they tried to make it look like an old book and tried to make the people think it actually came from Moses and thus they palmed it off on the king.

This presents tremendous *moral difficulty*. It is very difficult to believe such a thing actually happened. But if that did not happen, where did the book come from? And how did it get into the temple? And how did these people come to think it was an old book if it was just written by someone else and got in there in some accidental way? That is also extremely difficult to believe. And how did the book come to be written to give these new ideas, as they claim they were, if it was just written by someone who had no thought of it being palmed off on the king with the pretense that it was an old book? You see there is a great difficulty either way! The theory is not a satisfactory theory. Its most satisfactory form is to think of it as a pious fraud, but it runs into a great moral difficulty. It is hard to think that people could thus have written the book of Deuteronomy, one of the loftiest books ever written, as most people admit. So now most of the critics try to figure out how the Deuteronomistic school of writers wrote all this diversity of beautiful material and how they combined and joined it all, and then in some way it got into the temple. Most of them say it was written just at Josiah’s time, though many of them say it was written long before it got in there. And how did this one chapter get into it that dealt with trying to unify the worship? Thus they get into problems that are practically impossible problems. So the very simple idea that it was put in the temple in order to get across the stipulation of sacrifice in one place, when you work into its detail, just does not work out! And I doubt if you will find many critics today that believe that, but they cannot explain in any satisfactory way how it got there.