When, in this historical context, Protestant scholars plunged
into the systematic study of the Bible to discover its exact meaning,
they gradually became conscious of difficulties that placed them in
a serious dilemma as long as they felt obligated to be loyal to the
traditional theory of divine inspiration. They found numerous con-
tradictions in the Bible, where it seemed impossible for both of
two statements to be true. Many of these consist of discrepant
accounts of the same event. For instance, in the story of Noah's
flood the patriarch is first told to preserve in the ark one pair of
every species without distinction of clean or unclean; then he is
bidden to save seven couples of the clean beasts. Jacob's change of
name is located at two different places, first at Peniel, second at
Bethel, and two discrepant accounts are given of the origin of the
name Bethel. Deuteronomy insists upon the restriction of legitimate
sacrifices to the Temple at Jerusalem, whereas in the biography of
Elijah God is represented as dramatically recognizing a sacrifice on
an altar at Mount Carmel, far from Jerusalem. Use of such altars is
clearly approved in other passages in the historical books. Some of
the discrepancies are particularly interesting, because of the fact
that they turn upon obvious presuppositions of the text rather than
upon direct statements. In the later books of the Old Testament and
in the New Testament Moses is regarded as the author of Deuteronomy;
yet in Deuteronomy 34 not only are Moses' death and burial described
but the description ends with the statement: "And no one knows the
place of his burial to this day. The last phrase of this quotation
clearly implies that it was written by someone living at a later date.
Another type of case appears in the topographical references in the books
attributed to Moses. In Deuteronomy 1:1, for example, it is stated
that Moses' words were spoken "beyond the Jordan in the Wilderness,"
which implies that the writer was on the Canaan side of the river,