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THE LIFE AND WORKS OF HEINRICH EWALD.¹

I. THE DEVELOPMENT PERIOD.

It will, I hope, not be thought paradoxical if I associate the names of Butler and Ewald. Different as they are in many respects, I venture to trace a real historical connexion between them. To Queen Caroline's insight was due the promotion of Bishop Butler, and the influence of the same wise queen was not without weight in the foundation of the University of Göttingen. Of that renowned *Hochschule*, Ewald is one of the most typical representatives. History and philology were from the first the most favoured subjects in this emphatically statesmanlike institution, and history and philology constitute the field on which Heinrich Ewald has won imperishable fame. Butler, both as an ethical philosopher and as a theologian, would have been at home in Göttingen, where, both in theology and in philosophy, observation and facts have always had the precedence over *à priori* speculation, and where theoretic theology in particular has ever had a moderate and so to speak Butlerian tinge. Ewald on his side would in some respects have been at home in England, at any rate in the more liberal England of to-day. He had always a tenderness for this country; and even if we can partly justify our predecessors for the suspiciousness of their attitude towards him, we may nevertheless hold that, with all their defects, no books can be more important for advanced Bible-students than those

¹ Inaugural lecture delivered by the writer, as Oriel Professor of Interpretation, in the Divinity School, Oxford, June, 1886.

of Ewald. He may indeed be as useful to us in our present stage as he was in his earlier period to Germany; and if his influence is waning there, let us not be backward to accord him a friendly reception here. The Germans, it appears, would fain annex Richard Bentley; let us retaliate by annexing or assimilating all that is best in the great, the faulty, but the never to be forgotten Heinrich Ewald.

I am not one of those who think it the duty of a biographer to idolize his hero, and shall have, alas! to admit that Ewald failed in a serious degree to attain his high ideal. But he has been to many, thank God! a source of truest inspiration, and the tragedy of his career in no respect diminishes their reverence for his memory. Suffer me to show you this childlike great man in his strength and in his weakness.

He was born at Göttingen in 1803, and there most of his life was passed. A touch of provincialism was therefore native to Ewald, and this was not counteracted by that variety of culture which many German students gain by a change of university. Ewald himself, it is true, saw no reason to desire a change. He was destined to set an example of concentration, and this object could nowhere be better secured than in Göttingen. Did he want recreation? There was that ample library, then not less famous than the university itself. He had no time for that social intercourse of fellow-students which it is so sweet to most to look back upon, his laborious day being divided between his own studies and private tuition. He was never caught up, like even Michaelis,¹ into the contemporary æsthetic

¹ See J. D. Michaelis, *Poetischer Entwurf der Gedanken des Prediger-Buchs Salomons*. (Göttingen, 1751.) In the preface he speaks of amusing himself with poetical composition. Ewald very rarely refers to German literature. Herder is only mentioned as a writer on the Old Testament. Once he speaks of the good fortune of Eichhorn in working during the blossoming time of the national intellect, and once he highly eulogizes Klopstock in a characteristic note, omitted in the English translation of the *History* (see the German edition, iii. 306, note 1).

movement, nor did he ever, like Herder, pass under the spell of philosophy. He had indeed, as his works prove, a sense of poetic art, and even more a deep love of ideas, but art and ideas were to him but the historical manifestations of national life. By one of those strange impulses which so often occur in the history of genius, he chose the East for his field of study while still at the gymnasium. If he studied the classics, it was clearly not as the humanities, but as a necessary part of his historical apparatus; for he well knew that no language or literature can be adequately studied by itself. His Latin is not that of Bishop Lowth, but as a compensation even his early works show a deep knowledge of Arabic literature. Eichhorn and Tychsen, both distinguished Orientalists, were his academic teachers; for both of them he cherished feelings of piety, though he would not own that they had materially influenced his opinions. And yet, though I can easily imagine that Ewald's mind was very early mature, I think he *was* influenced, especially by Eichhorn, to whom his own principles and career present several points of resemblance. Eichhorn, so generously eulogized of late by Dr. Eidersheim,¹ was at least as many-sided though not as profound as Ewald. He loved the Bible as being a literature, as well as the record of a revelation; I say the Bible, because, like Ewald, Eichhorn was not merely an *Old Testament* scholar. He was also, in the best sense of the word, like Ewald an *advanced* Biblical critic. And yet it must be added that, though like Ewald and every other great critic he stood aloof from theological extremes, he yet retained an unflagging interest in the progress of theology. Like Ewald again, he was not merely a Hebraist but a Semitic philologist, and propagated that sound doctrine of the so-called Tenses, which is due especially to that patriarch of Semitic learning, Albert Schultens. He was, like Ewald in his best

¹ *Prophecy and History*, p. 194.

days, a popular and indefatigable lecturer, but not content with this, he acknowledged a responsibility to the world of scholars in general. For many years,¹ following the example of J. D. Michaelis, he published an *Allgemeine Bibliothek für biblische Litteratur* (all his own work), and a *Repertorium für morgenländische Litteratur*, which remind us of the *Biblische Jahrbücher* and the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, the latter mainly founded by Ewald, the former entirely written by him, only that Eichhorn's style is far more lucid than Ewald's, and his tolerance as charming as Ewald's intolerance is painful. Lastly, the influence of Eichhorn on contemporary thought was at least equal in extent, if not in intensity, to that of his great disciple.

Do not think this a digression. Part of the greatness of Ewald's life is its consistency. Such as he was at the opening of his career, such in all essentials he remained to its close. He found much to learn, but very little to unlearn. He tells us himself² that he never had to pass through circuitous paths of gloom, nor through grievous inward struggles; that from the first he perceived that the fearful-seeming New is really nothing but the Old, better understood and farther developed. This consistency is not to be accounted for solely by tenacity of character; it implies also that he fell in with wise and congenial teachers. He was consistent, because he lost no time through being badly taught, and because he found a work ready to his hand. He carried on the work of his teacher, Eichhorn, supplementing Eichhorn's deficiencies and correcting his faults, just as Eichhorn carried on that of Herder on the one hand, and Michaelis on the other. The portraits of Herder and Eichhorn, indeed, hung on the walls of Ewald's study,

¹ I might have added that from Heyne's death to his own, Eichhorn edited the well-known *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*.

² *Die poetischen Bücher des A. T.*, iv. (1837), p. 249.

as if to remind him of the aim and spirit of their common enterprise. That aim was nothing less than the recovery of the true meaning of the Bible, and the spirit in which it was pursued by these three great men was not less practical than scientific. Herder and Ewald especially had a full consciousness of the religious interests staked on the success of their work, and when Ewald speaks, in the *History of Christ*, of the "wondrous charm of a task which germinates out of a Divine appointment and necessity,"¹ it is difficult to think that the words did not flow from the experience of his youthful days. The Church-historian, Hase, has described Ewald, in language suggested perhaps by a famous saying of Hegel, as a prophet with backward gaze.² Ewald's style and manner are often in character with this function, and many a striking passage in his prefaces suggests an inner experience analogous to that of a prophetic call. "Truly," he says in his *Johannine Writings*, "if God did not give us in youth a surplus of boldest enterprise and cheerfullest faith, and thrust us, whether we would or no, into the midst of His truths and everlasting powers, O how should we find the force and the confidence amid tedious temptations and struggles always to be true to that which we have once for all recognised as the True in itself, and also in His goodness and His grace, as our undeniable duty."³

Ewald, then, felt himself called to do a prophet's work for the history and literature of the prophet-people Israel. Called, first of all, to a more special preparation, to which the outer events of his life were to be made subservient. And the very first change which came was advantageous to the future expositor and historian. As a youthful graduate of nineteen, he became in 1823 a teacher in the Gymnasium at Wolfenbüttel (in the Duchy of Brunswick, 37 miles

Geschichte Christus, p. 183.

² *Kirchengeschichte*, p. 582.

³ *Die Johanneischen Schriften*, ii., Vorrede, S. v.

from Hanover), with free access to that fine library of which Lessing had once been the keeper. There he occupied his leisure by studying and making extracts from Arabic MSS., feeling doubtless already the great importance of Arabic, both for the language and for the literature of the Hebrew race. On this subject let me quote to you the words of Ewald in 1831, "*Linguae arabicæ, semiticarum principis, cognitio diligentior ceterarum stirpis hujus linguarum, hebrææ potissimum, studio non utilissimum tantum est sed necessarium prorsus. . . . Tutoque contendas, qui cultissimam stirpis hujus linguam bene perspexerit, hunc demum circa omnes semiticas haud cœcutire incipere*";¹ and for the other part of my statement those of one of Ewald's greatest pupils: "I have no doubt that the original gifts and ideas of the primitive Hebrews can most readily be understood by comparing Arabian antiquity."²

This is not the time to explain the sense in which these two statements are to be understood. Ewald himself used Arabic more for the purposes of philology, than for those of what may be called comparative ethnic-psychology. And no doubt philological purposes are the most important from the point of view of exegesis and of theology. Ewald would therefore have hailed the proposed institution of an Oriental School in Oxford. Himself by taste, though not, I admit, equally by endowments, at once philologist and theologian, he would have insisted on the importance not only of Hebrew to the theologian, but of the other Semitic languages to the Hebraist. He was himself by no means a biassed advocate of the claims of Arabic, though circumstances early drew his special attention to it, and the richness and variety of its literature, combined with the exquisite refinement of its style, made it perhaps his

¹ *Grammatica critica linguæ Arabicæ*, Pref. p. lii.

² Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, Heft i.

favourite among the Semitic languages. His own position on the relationship between the Semitic languages is best seen from his *Abhandlung über die geschichtliche Folge der semitischen Sprachen* (1871), with which compare his remarks in § 7 of his Arabic Grammar.

Ewald was now a schoolmaster. But he had no intention of remaining in this profession. He wished to think his own thoughts away from Eichhorn, and to make researches in a fresh library, preparatory to another book. To *another* book, you will say? Yes; for his first book, though published at Brunswick, was the fruit of his student leisure at Göttingen; he must have begun to print almost as soon as he arrived at Wolfenbüttel. It was called *Die Composition der Genesis kritisch untersucht*, and bears the date 1823. Ewald's acuteness and ingenuity are already abundantly displayed in this volume; he seeks to show that there is a unity in the Book of Genesis and a well-ordered plan which of itself forbids the literary analysis of Genesis, whether into documents or into fragments. It was certainly dangerous for so young an author to publish his results; for how few are able to retract what they have once said in print! Happily at this early period Ewald had still the power of self-criticism, and upon further reflection retracted the main position of his book. His words are, "So ergreife ich gern die Gelegenheit dieser Recension, um zu erklären, dass jene Schrift, was diesen einzelnen Punkt betrifft, nur noch historische Bedeutung habe." This was in a review of Stähelin's *Kritische Untersuchungen*, published in the *Theol. Studien und Kritiken* in 1831, the same year, it is not irrelevant to remark, in which he published his critical Arabic grammar. A deeper study of the phenomena of Genesis had shown him the complexity of the critical problem, and the inadmissibility of a simple and, from a purely Western point of view, a natural solution, and a wider acquaintance with the Arabic historians had revealed a

process of composition which made him repent his precipitate rejection of both the hitherto current critical hypotheses. I am thankful however that Ewald wrote this book. It helps us to refute the charge that he deals merely in fancy-criticism. It shows that even in youth, when the fancy is generally at its strongest, he was fully aware of the dangers which beset critical analysis, and if at the age of nineteen he could not fully realize the nature of the problem of Genesis, much less solve it, yet he did contribute both to a better statement of the problem and to a somewhat more adequate solution. It is pleasing to be able to say that, though the youthful Ewald freely criticized not only Vater but Eichhorn, the latter did not withhold his commendation, and in the following year (1824) procured Ewald's recall to Göttingen as Repetent or Tutorial Fellow in the Theological Faculty.

This, however, as might be expected, was only a transition; in 1827 he was promoted to a professorship. Just as Eichhorn, when called to Göttingen, had three years and no more to work with Michaelis, so Ewald, in the like circumstances, had but the same space of time allotted him as the colleague of Eichhorn. The veteran's work was done. He had sketched the main outlines of the right method of Biblical criticism, and had himself brought out by it not a few assured results; but an infinite amount of *Detailforschung*, of minute research, had yet to be gone through, before that historical reconstruction for which he longed could safely be attempted. The captious and arbitrary procedure and unrefreshing results of less able and less sympathetic critics than Eichhorn had disgusted very many with the Old Testament, and we hear Tholuck saying in his inaugural lecture in 1821, that "for the last twenty or thirty years the opinion has been generally prevalent, that the study of the Old Testament for theologians, as well as the devotional reading of it for the laity,

is either entirely profitless or at least promises but little advantage."¹

The prejudice lingered on in Germany, and exercised a pernicious influence on the historical and theological views of such eminent personages as Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Baur, the Gnostics of modern times, as Ewald severely styles them. See how much hangs on the completeness of a theological professoriate! If Halle and Tübingen had had Old Testament professors like Eichhorn, or if those three great men had finished their theological studies (for Hegel, as you know, began as a *theologe*) at Göttingen, upon how much sounder a basis in some respects would their systems rest! Would the youthful successor of Eichhorn be the man to destroy this prejudice? He aspired to be this and even more than this; we shall see later on what it was that hindered his complete success. But we shall do well to remember at this point that other chosen instruments were in course of training simultaneously with Ewald. I need only mention Umbreit, Bleek, and Hengstenberg, the former of whom became professor at Heidelberg in 1823, and the two latter professors at Berlin in 1823 and 1828 respectively. To all these men we in England are, in various degrees, directly or indirectly indebted. Nothing shall induce me to take a side with Ewald against Hengstenberg, or with Hengstenberg against Ewald. Sixty years ago the prospects of the Old Testament in England seemed hopeless; Pusey, who became professor in 1828, did all that he could, by setting an example of a scholar in the grand style, and by insisting on a sound linguistic basis for exegesis, but without the help of German scholars of all tendencies the work of

¹ *Einige apologetische Winke für das Studium des A. T.'s, den Studirenden des jetzigen Decenniums gewidmet*, translated under the title, "Hints on the Importance of the Study of the Old Testament," in *Philological Tracts*, edited by John Brown, D.D., vol. i. (Edinburgh, 1833).

regenerating Old Testament studies in England would still be almost as hopeless as when Pusey, not with greater learning but with more judgment than Lee, began it.

I am now approaching the most important part of Ewald's life, and am anxious to show that the subject of my lecture has a living interest for English students. Ewald's success or failure in Germany meant, though few doubtless knew it at the time, the success or failure of the cause of the Old Testament in England. I appeal to our young students to regard the life and work of Ewald with something of the same reverence with which they regard that of our own Pusey. Of the religious spirit in which Ewald entered on his career I have spoken already. That inner experience which I have referred to as a call, gave a sanctity, if I may say so, to the most abstruse questions of philological research. In 1825 Ewald published a small treatise on Arabic metres, the results of which were incorporated into his Arabic Grammar, and in 1827 made his first incursion into the domain of the Aryan languages by an essay on some of the older Sanskrit metres. The young scholar, you will see, chafes already at restrictions; he will not be outdone by the great English theologians of the seventeenth century; he will be an Orientalist, and not merely a Semitic scholar. Soon you will see that he is not content with being in the bare sense an Orientalist; he will be a comparative philologist. And yet we cannot doubt that the religious interest animates all his philological work. He has a deep sense of the wonderfulness of "God's greatest gift"¹—language, and none of the Biblical conceptions does he appreciate more than that of the Logos. He will delight ever afterwards to trace the resemblances and the differences of the Biblical and the other religions, and in his great series of annual

¹ Max Müller, *Science of Language*, i. 3.

Biblical reviews he is careful not to omit illustrative works on Oriental subjects. In all this he did but act in the spirit of his predecessor Eichhorn, who had a true presentiment of the future importance of the comparative study of sacred books. In 1826 this taste of his was strengthened by a literary journey to Berlin, where he had fruitful intercourse with one of the older Sanskrit scholars, F. A. Rosen. One incidental result of his Sanskrit studies was the discovery (as it seemed to him) of the manifold use of Sanskrit for the correct explanation of Hebrew. It is, in fact, in this early period that he allowed himself the widest range. In 1826, the year of his Berlin visit, he began to lecture on Sanskrit, to which he afterwards added Persian, Turkish, Armenian, Coptic: I need not mention specially the various Semitic languages.¹ It is as if he had taken to heart the saying of Bp. Pearson, "Non est theologus nisi qui et Mithradates." He even formed the plan of a work exactly agreeing with that undertaken, but only in part executed, by M. Renan, of a history and comparative grammar of the Semitic languages.² His taste, however, was chiefly for Arabic, though the only text which he published was that of Wakidi on the Conquest of Mesopotamia, in 1827. He once hoped to compose a history of the intellectual movement among the Arabs, closing with the death of Mohammed;³ a task, it would almost seem, for which the materials are still too scanty. I should suppose that a vast number of ideas were continually arising in his fertile brain, and slowly taking shape in lectures, articles,

¹ Among the Orientalists who passed through the school of Ewald may be mentioned Schleicher, Osiander, Dillmann, Schrader, and, one of the latest, Stern the Egyptologist.

² *Grammatica critica linguæ Arabicæ*, vol. ii. Præf. p. iii.; comp. *Vorrede* to the Hebrew Grammar of 1827.

³ *Abhandlung über die geschichtliche Folge der Semitischen Sprachen* 1871), p. 61, note.

and reviews. But none of them, I am sure, was allowed to obscure the master-project on which he said, in 1859, that his mind had been working for far more than thirty years—the project of a history of the growth of true religion in the midst of the people of Israel.

It is remarkable that the first Old Testament book to which Ewald devoted himself in the maturity of his powers, was one “in less direct connexion with lofty interests”—the Song of Songs. By selecting it, he not only evidenced his firm adhesion to the view of the Old Testament as a literature, established by Lowth, Herder, and Eichhorn, but took the first step towards ascertaining that frankly human basis of a sound and healthy popular life on which alone the superstructure of what he loves to call the true religion could possibly be reared. He is proof against the temptation to which another great Semitic-Aryan scholar (E. H. Palmer) succumbed, when he said, “If you would feel that Song of Songs, then join awhile the mystic circle of the Súfis.” The extravagant mysticism to which Tholuck had not long before introduced the European world,¹ was alien to the thoroughly practical, and in this respect Jewish mind of Ewald. The Song of Songs is to him not the work of a theosophist—that is too high a view, nor yet is it a mere collection of love-poems—that is too low a view; it “is one whole, and constitutes a sort of popular drama, or, more correctly speaking, a cantata,” describing the victory of true love, and thus, without the least sign of conscious purpose, promoting the highest ends of morality. This is not one of Ewald’s greatest works. He had several predecessors, especially Umbreit, who had recently defended the unity of the Song of Songs in a way which called forth the high approval of the illustrious author of the *Westöstliche Diván*. He is doubtless too in-

¹ *Saufismus s. theosophia Persarum pantheistica*, 1821. Comp. Vaughan’s *Hours with the Mystics*, vol. ii.

genious in restoring what he thinks the proper form of the poem, and yet, though neither in this nor in any other book of Ewald has the last word of criticism been spoken, his very freshly written first edition marks a real step in the explanation of the Song.

All this was most creditable work, but not enough for an aspirant to the chair of Eichhorn. There was an older scholar who had strong claims on the appointment, himself a pupil of Eichhorn, and a former Göttingen Repetent, Wilhelm Gesenius, at that time professor at Halle. The too general and æsthetic treatment of the Old Testament, introduced by Herder, was profoundly repugnant to this somewhat dry commentator, but most accomplished master of the Semitic languages. Herder was for soaring into the infinite; Gesenius was perfectly satisfied with the finite. Ewald had in his nature something of both, reminding us of those lines of Goethe :

Willst du in's Unendliche schreiten,
Geh nur in's Endliche nach allen Seiten.

Ewald might well expect that the chair of Eichhorn would be offered, as in point of fact it was in the first instance, to Gesenius, but he would also seek to strengthen his own claims by competing with that scholar on his own ground. Great as were the merits of Gesenius's Hebrew grammar, or rather grammars, from the point of view of the learner—their clearness and simplicity, in fact, left nothing to be wished—there was still a demand for a grammar more independent in its relation to the older systems, more philosophic in its explanations, more in harmony with the scientific principles of Franz Bopp and his distinguished colleagues. As an English friend and pupil of Ewald said in 1835, "The elements of a further development of Hebrew grammar were already ripening in silence; but the honour of effecting the reformation was

reserved for Prof. Ewald.”¹ The *Kritische Grammatik* (1827) at once drew all eyes upon its author, and it may safely be said that with this book in his hand he won his professorship. Gesenius himself had no mean jealousy of his young rival; in 1826 he had even sent one of his most promising pupils to Göttingen to complete his studies under Ewald, who, he said, was “ein exquisiter Hebräer, auch ein selten gelehrter Araber.”² In 1828, hungry for fresh distinction, Ewald actually brought out a second Hebrew grammar, “in vollständiger Kürze bearbeitet,” which appeared in 1835 in a second edition, thoroughly revised, as the preface states, and greatly improved. The most important addition consists of a treatise on the accents, based upon a previous essay of Ewald’s published in 1832 in his *Abhandlungen zur Oriental. u. Bibl. Litteratur* (part 1; a second part was never issued), in which the relationship of the Hebrew to the simpler Syriac accentuation is pointed out. Throughout his life Ewald continued to improve his grammar, to which in 1844 he gave the title *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments*. The earlier editions are however of much historical interest, and a few passages from the preface to Ewald’s second Hebrew grammar may be quoted, as illustrative not only of the views of the author, but of his modesty at this point of his career. He is speaking of the new period in the study of Hebrew grammar. “I myself may have only the merit of the first impulse to improvement, if even that may be called a merit, since the idea of an improvement in this science is less owing to me than the claims of our time, and this idea has perhaps only been awakened somewhat sooner and more vividly in me. Even after the firmer form which I have

¹ Preface to the English translation of Ewald’s Hebrew Grammar, by John Nicholson (Lond., 1836), p. xi.

² *Wilhelm Vatke, in seinem Leben und seinen Schriften*, von H. Benecke, p. 27.

been able to give the Hebrew grammar in this new work, there nevertheless remains, as I partly confidently believe and partly suspect, much for future inquirers, or, perhaps, for myself to add or to define more strictly, not only in the syntax, which follows logical laws and is therefore more easily thoroughly understood by a consistent thinker, but also in the doctrine of the sounds of the language.”¹

It is no part of my plan to estimate with precision the services of Ewald to Hebrew grammar. The very interesting preface of Dr. John Nicholson to his translation of the second edition of the *Grammatik*, well describes some of the most valuable characteristics of the book, and the impression which they produced on acute and well-prepared students like himself. Other schools of grammarians have arisen since Ewald's time, and his successors can certainly not afford to imitate him in what König calls the assertive style. Much which Ewald in his later years considered himself to have settled, has now become very properly a subject of debate. But the stimulus which he has given to the study of Hebrew grammar is immense, and a general indebtedness, visible in most if not all of his successors, is quite consistent with many differences in points of detail. You will not accuse me of speaking as a partisan. Even in that part of Ewald's grammar which I admire most—the syntax—I cannot follow him unreservedly. But by his devotion to Hebrew grammar he is worthy to be set up as a model to future interpreters. The Hebrew writers have too often been regarded in England as almost incapable of consecutive thought, and the atomistic mode of treating the Bible is now so deeply rooted as to have become an enemy to the popular religious life. Is there any better means of correcting this evil than by a thorough study of

¹ Nicholson's translation (see above), p. xii.

Hebrew syntax on the part of those who are called upon to be theological or religious teachers? Now that we have not only Ewald's Syntax translated, but a special English monograph on the use of the tenses, which needs not to be recommended here, there can, at least for many of us, be no valid excuse for ignorance of the subject. I at any rate, as an appointed teacher of exegesis, hold myself in no way bound to the Authorized or Revised Version, but by continuous exegesis on the principles of Ewald, will do my best to roll away what has too long been a national reproach.

This was what Ewald, more than any other man, did for Germany. I do not, of course, say that his interest in grammar was solely theological. He loved grammar for its own sake, as the most wonderful product of the human faculties. To Arabic grammar he devoted himself at first with almost as much zeal as to Hebrew grammar; and the pages of his linguistic works¹ testify to his keen interest in the most outlying languages, from which indeed he often drew illustrations for Hebrew. The composition of his Arabic grammar (vol. i. 1831; vol. ii. 1833) falls between the first and second editions of the second or smaller Hebrew grammars, and must have contributed greatly to the improvement of the latter work. The book is written in very clumsy Latin, but contains much interesting matter for a Hebraist or a comparative philologist, its object being not merely to register phenomena, but to give simple and consistent explanations.

The author never had leisure for a second edition, in which perhaps he would have given more detailed criticism of the Arabic grammarians. Writing the book was a recreation. From Arabic grammar, from the *Mu'allagât* and the *Qur'ân*, he returned with renewed energies to Hebrew

¹ See especially the two first of his *Sprachwissenschaftlichen Abhandlungen*, 1861-62.

grammar, to the psalmists and the prophets of the Bible.

I speak of this as a return, for you will remember that Ewald is already well known to Biblical scholars. Both on Hebrew grammar and on Hebrew poetry he has published results which have been found worth hearing. A grand ideal beckons him onward, but he has the self-restraint to listen to the warnings of an inner voice, which bids him proceed slowly, *ohne Hast ohne Rast*, trusting that God will grant him time enough to finish his work. In 1826 he began the investigation of the poetical books; in 1835 he resumes this by the publication of a book on the Psalms, which is followed in 1836 by Job, and in 1837 by Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. These volumes form parts 2-4 of a series called *Die poetischen Bücher des Alten Bundes*; the first part, containing introductory matter on Hebrew poetry in general and on the Book of Psalms in particular, did not appear till 1839. He takes, you see, a different line from that recommended by Abraham Kuenen. He thinks it safest to begin his Old Testament researches, not with the prophets, but with the poets, as bringing us nearer to the primitive spiritual forces at work amidst the people of Israel. Thus he hopes to gain a vantage-point for comprehending as well the far loftier speech of the prophets, as the recollections of the spiritual movement (using the word "spiritual" in a wide sense) of Israel's bygone times recorded in the historical books.¹ There is something to be said for this plan. That peculiar spiritual state which we call inspiration is less distinctly visible in the poetical than in the prophetic books; not less truly, but less distinctly visible; and it is perhaps a good exercise to study this

¹ See p. vi. of *Vorrede to Die poetischen Bücher*. Compare Ewald's view of the right plan for those who would read the Bible for instruction, *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, i. 465-6. Here again note Ewald's consistency from youth to age.

phenomenon first of all as displayed upon the frankly human and popular groundwork of poetical compositions. The only danger is that such a course is liable to prejudice the investigator unduly in favour of an early date for the poetical books; for if these books are very late, they seem to become a mere reflection of prophecy, a sort of substitute for the living oracle. It was, at any rate, very unwise of Ewald to hamper his future course as a critic by venturing thus early on a chronological rearrangement of the psalms. It is however, in my opinion, much to his credit that he recognises so fully a large captivity and post-captivity element in the Psalter. In fact, he stands aloof both from the extreme conservative and from the extreme liberal party; nearer, however, as could easily be shown, to the former than to the latter. The fault of the book is of course its fragmentariness. But as a supplement to other works, it still has its use. Ewald's view of the connexion of thought in the psalms is always worth considering, and his emotional sympathy with the psalmists is altogether unique.

But I think that his book on Job is, if not greater, yet more complete and freer from faults. If we look at the translation, how many brilliant examples of grammatical tact occur to us! while the commentary shows equal skill in tracing out the often subtle connexions between the speeches. The introduction is brimfull of insight, and stimulates even where it fails to convince, and Ewald's "higher criticism" is here, I think, for once final and authoritative. The study of the wonderful character-drama of Job has, I trust, a great future before it, but only on condition of our starting from the point where Ewald has left it. I cannot stop to speak of his Proverbs and Ecclesiastes—works less fruitful, as it seems to me, in suggestions of permanent value; and of the opening volume of the series I can only give the general verdict of Biblical scholars

that, putting aside the meagre pages on the Psalms, strange to say, the only part accessible in English,¹ it is one of Ewald's most original and satisfactory works.

But now to return to the personal history of the author. We have seen him in his greatness; we are soon to sympathize with him in his trials and infirmities. He has had the discipline of prosperity, but has shown a strong imaginative sympathy with those in the depths of affliction. The *Book of the Trial of the Righteous One* has found in him a congenial interpreter; soon the question of the poem is to come back to him with a personal application, "Dost thou serve God for nought?" Looking back on this early period, Ewald was in the habit of idealizing it, just as the patriarch idealized the "months of old" in that most touching elegiac retrospect, the 29th chapter of Job. Still there is no doubt that Ewald was more firmly rooted in Göttingen, and his relations with scholars both in and out of Göttingen more agreeable at this time than afterwards. A truly noble band of professors, especially historical professors, illustrated the *Georgia Augusta*. There was Lücke the commentator on St. John and Church-historian, Gieseler the Church-historian, Dahlmann the historian of Greece, Ritter the historian of philosophy, Gervinus the historian of literature, Otfried Müller the archæologist, Jakob Grimm the Germanist; among others may be added the two friends, Weber the great electrician and Gauss the celebrated mathematician, the latter of whom in 1830 became Ewald's father-in-law. None of these was more distinguished than Heinrich Ewald. Honours crowded upon him; he had large classes, attracted by his enthusiasm and his thoroughness, and exercised a wide and salutary influence on the critical movement.

True, there was already a root of bitterness in his self-

¹ Dr. Nicholson's translation of the general introductory portion is buried in the Old Series of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*.

concentration. That same spiritual "recluseness" which, in the words of Edward Irving, led "that soul of every excellence, the glorious Milton" into "the greatest of all intolerance,"¹ was the bane of Ewald. He had a noble and unselfish ambition, but he had it too absorbingly. It bade him "separate himself" from his kind and "intermeddle with all wisdom,"² forgetting that more than one prophet is wanted to accomplish a Divine purpose, and that he himself, no less than Eichhorn, needed the support of independent fellow-workers. At first there was only a vague danger that a naïve self-confidence might develop into a tormenting intolerance. His expressions of feeling were too childlike to irritate, and as yet he left the world and its rulers to take care of themselves.³ In 1836 however there are indications of a change; the conclusion of the fourth part of *Die poetischen Bücher* contains, among much very interesting matter, full of rude but striking eloquence, a very painful attack on that sweet-natured, conscientious, and gifted scholar, De Wette. Ewald had, it seems, been spending a holiday in Italy, but it was a holiday against his will; his mind preyed upon itself, and even the historical treasures of the Eternal City gave out no balm for his wounded spirit. Ancient art scarcely speaks to him; he writes epigrams in verse,⁴ breathing a Luther-like scorn of the Romans and their Church, and of those who, tempted by false promises, have become converts to Rome. Except where his faith darts upwards, as for instance in the last lines, which remind us of Arthur Clough's "Say not the struggle nought availeth," his pen is dipped in gall, and he seeks a much-needed excuse in some wrong which has been done him at home. I cannot

¹ *Miscellanies from the Writings of Irving*, p. 153.

² Prov. xviii. 1, A. V. I need not criticize the translation.

³ "Ich schrieb dort mit leichtem um die Welt bekümmertem Sinne." *Die poet. Bücher des A. B.*, Bd. I. Vorrede, S. vii

⁴ "Mussestunden in Italien," *Ibid.*, iv. 231-2.6

myself understand his obscure allusion to a "speech of tyrannous cruelty," but certain it is that in the following year a grievous wrong did befall him, which threatened for an indefinite period to thrust into idleness—"in thatenlose Musse zu versetzen"—one whose spirit was wholly academical, and who viewed with perfect justice even his authorship as an outgrowth of his professional position. In 1833, as a consequence of the attempted revolution of 1831, King William gave his sanction to a *Staatsgrundgesetz* or Constitutional Statute; in 1837 King Ernest Augustus signalized his accession to the throne by refusing to recognise this as binding. It was an event which deeply stirred academic society, and not to Otfried Müller alone may these words of a scholar-poet be applied:

Und als der Donner zürnend eingeschlagen,
 Wer hat den Muth mit tapferm Wort erregt,
 Dem Manneswort: "So wir uns selbst nicht fehlen,
 Wie mag uns Furcht vor Drang und Unbill quälen?"¹

But what could academical teachers do, knights of the pen and not of the sword? Seven at any rate found their duty clear; they addressed a solemn protest to the Curators of the University at Hanover. Their names deserve to be chronicled; Dahlmann was the leader, the others were the two Grimms, Gervinus, Weber, Albrecht, and the subject of this sketch. The consequences were serious for themselves, for in December of the same year they were all dismissed from their office. Upon Ewald, not merely a patriot, but essentially a provincial, the blow fell with double force. No exile ever felt his banishment more. For the moment he found occupation in the English libraries;³ but it seemed at first as if the Guelphic bann

¹ From a memorial poem on Karl Otfried Müller, by Dr. Ellissen, Hellenist and Liberal politician.

² This is strictly accurate. Blenheim could not tempt him from the Bodleian. Some of his Oxford acquisitions are to be found in vol. i. of *Beiträge zur ältesten Auslegung des A. T.*, by Ewald and Dukes. Stuttgart, 1844.

were to exclude him and his friends from academical office anywhere. Fortunately indeed such fears were groundless; the reputation of the seven professors was as much enhanced by a protest against arbitrary power as that of our own seven bishops, and Ewald was the first to receive an appointment.

Ewald's call to Tübingen in 1838 opens a fresh chapter in his history; it brought him, we must add, face to face with his second great trial. Would the recluse scholar be enriched or impoverished by transplantation? Would he catch something of the characteristic warmth of Wurtemberg religious life, and communicate in return that earnestness and questioning reasonableness which he had inherited from his fathers? And looking to his new university relations, would the man who could so well give their due to the different types of teaching in the Bible show equal flexibility in dealing with a colleague so unlike himself as Ferdinand C. Baur? It was a difficult position for Ewald. Even Carl Hase, as he has told us in his charming autobiography, found it a work of time to get thoroughly naturalized in Schwabenland. One so awkward as Ewald in social intercourse, and so conscious of his own merits, could not but experience in some respects even greater hindrances than Hase. He was thus thrown back more than ever on himself, and his old infirmities gathered such a head that they made life a burden both to himself and to others. He had even before 1837 begun to express himself with unjustifiable positiveness on the errors of contemporary theologians, not indeed as a rule mentioning their names; but after that date things went from worse to worse. The fundamental differences between himself and Baur seemed to him to demand an ever-renewed protest on his part.¹ I need not say how painful such a feud

¹ Contrast the respectful language of Dorner and Ullmann to Baur at this same period.

between colleagues must have been, and I have no doubt that, even more than in the case of Ewald's quarrel with Gesenius, the fault was on Ewald's side. But indeed no one was safe from this self-appointed censor. The English nation came off best; but our own Pusey, who never retaliated on Ewald, had the fortune to be joined with Hengstenberg and Delitzsch in the same unqualified condemnation. Political errors, too, were now equally obnoxious to Ewald, as a political martyr, with theological. With unmeasured violence, but without any of that wit which redeems the violence of great satirists, he chastised by turns most of "the powers that be," and when no notice was taken, it was a proof to him that he was in the right. Alas for a true prophet who mistook his functions, to the injury not only of his own fame, but of the truth which it was his privilege to make known! Alas, that instead of gratefully learning wherever he could, and appreciating high moral purpose, when he could do no more, he at once rejected all but his own results, and imputed intellectual divergences to moral defects! "Woe to that study," says the gentle Spenser's too fiery friend, Gabriel Harvey, "that misspendeth pretious Time, and consumeth itself in needlesse and bootlesse quarrels."¹ For Ewald's "railing accusations" were fully avenged on Ewald himself. Had he but taken his proper place as an honoured member of Truth's household, how much more would he have effected, and how much more easily could we estimate the comparative value of his work!²

I have omitted as yet to mention one great blow which

¹ *Four Letters, and certain Sonnets, etc.* (1592), p. 27.

² The controversial treatises of Carl Wex and August Knobel may be here mentioned, the one entitled *Herr Prof. Ewald als Punier gewürdigt* (1843), the other *Exegetisches Vademecum für Herr Prof. Ewald* (1844). Literature of this kind justifies the remark of a French-Swiss scholar, "Les philologues allemands du xix^{me} siècle ont souvent le tempérament aussi batailleur et la critique aussi âpre que les érudits de la Renaissance" (pref. to Pictet's *Les origines indo-européennes*).

befell Ewald, too great to be referred to in the middle of a paragraph. It removed from his side the one softening influence which remained to him in his banishment. In 1840 his wife died, a more serious loss to him, as he himself says, than any of which his foes had been the cause. His only comfort was in high ideas, and he became more and more sensitive to any supposed disparagement of them. He had quenched his burning thirst for religious truth at the fountain of the Bible, and it both grieved¹ and angered him when some critic of large gifts misused them, as he thought, to the detriment of the Bible—that is, of Ewald's opinions about the Bible. It is true that the grief in Ewald's mind was too commonly overpowered by the indignation. But, we may ask, have there been no instances of this confusion of truth with opinion, and of intellectual error with moral obliquity among critics of another school and divines of another Church? If I had a right to be intolerant of the intolerant, I would quote those words of the ancient seer :

O my soul, come not thou into their council ;
Unto their assembly, O my glory, be not thou united.²

In Ewald's case, however, this inability to do justice to other workers detracts in only a slight degree from the comfort of the reader, for as a rule he confines controversial allusions to his prefaces. None of his writings is more bathed in the peace and sanctity of the spiritual world than the two volumes on the Prophets, which appeared in the opening years of the bitter Tübingen period. What can I say that would be sufficient of this grand work, the treasures of which are still far from exhausted, and which, as a specimen of exegesis, has extorted the admiration of

¹ "Ich möchte vergehen vor Schmerz, sehend dass ein so armseliger Zustand von Exegese von Männern fortgesetzt wird, welche vielleicht Besseres leisten könnten." *Die poet. Bücher*, IV. (1837), p. 253.

² Gen. xlix. 6.

a critic who so much dislikes Ewald's believingness as Eduard Meyer?¹ Full and free as is my own appreciation of Gesenius, Knobel, and especially Kuenen, I cannot help noticing in Ewald's *Die Propheten* a power of sympathetically reproducing primitive experiences, *Nachempfinden*, as the Germans call it, which is altogether unique, and which I ascribe partly to Ewald's possession of a deep spiritual theistic religion, uncoloured and undistorted by non-Semitic formulæ, partly to that peculiar personal experience which I have ventured to call, by analogy, prophetic. The first edition of the work appeared in 1840 and 1841; the second only in 1867—an instance of self-restraint and noble dissatisfaction which may mitigate our disapproval of the author's dogmatism. "Not as though I had attained," he seems to say, "either were already perfected." The two editions deserve to be compared; philologically, I am not sure that all Ewald's corrections are improvements; though the study of the higher criticism is in several ways advanced by the new edition. But let all of us theological students, however strong our prejudices against the critical analysis of ancient texts, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest that noble introduction which, by what might seem a miracle, deals evenhanded justice both to rational criticism and to the realities of faith.

T. K. CHEYNE.

¹ *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. (1884), p. 204.