

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE IV.

OLD WINE IN FRESH WINE SKINS.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. HOWARD OSGOOD, PROFESSOR IN ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

ALL criticism is an incitement to criticism. In the democracy of literature there are no lords with feudal rights and there ought to be no boors. All have equal rights to life, liberty, and the printing of opinions. It is an international democracy in which each one owes allegiance and service only to the truth as he sees it; even in his service respecting the rights of those who do not agree with him. Whatever is said in the following criticism pertains solely to the opinions expressed in the works reviewed, and not to any supposed further opinions by the authors.

These works in many respects have much in common. They both represent the same school of criticism. Their authors are eminent men who have won high rank by their abilities, attainments, and productions. These volumes were written in the past few years under limitations of space by the publishers, and were issued from the press about a year apart. It is not too much to say that both in England and Germany the best man of his school was chosen as the author. If one wishes to learn what is the present accepted criticism of the Old Testament in English and European

<sup>1</sup> An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, by S. R. Driver, D. D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1891. (Pp. xxxi, 552.)

Einleitung in das Alte Testament, von Carl Heinrich Cornill, Dr. theol. et phil., ordentlichem Professor der Theologie an der Universität Königsberg. Freiburg, i. B. 1891. (Pp. xii, 325.)

Protestant Universities, he must master these volumes, not merely for their agreements, but still more for their contradictions.

The most cursory reading will show that, contrary to the usual result, when equally learned Englishmen and Germans are compared, the palm for facile grasp of the most important points and their correlatives, for compactness of thought and expression, for vigor and clearness, for logical consistency, for square facing of the abysses inherent in this criticism, for a full view of the situation, must be awarded to the German, who accomplishes all this in less than two-thirds of the space occupied by the Englishman. The German has the great advantage of being on his native heath and moves freely in all this criticism. The Englishman labors under all the disadvantages of a foreigner. The highest praise that can be given to his work is that it is a serious attempt to soften and adapt Kuenen's method and results to the foreign soil of English thought. Cornill and Kuenen have no qualms at all in declaring large parts of the Old Testament to be literary fictions, and also in denying truth to the historical narratives of the Pentateuch and early biblical books. Driver, on the contrary, pleads that "Deuteronomy does not claim to be written by Moses," etc., etc., and that it was customary in the Hebrew historians to put speeches made up by themselves in the mouths of their putative authors. But even in this case Deuteronomy would be what Kuenen says it is, a "literary fiction" and fraudulent. Driver gives the impression that there is somewhat of historical truth remaining in the Pentateuch and early books. He would save something out of the wreck. Here he is at war with his own "scientific method," and at war with every master of that method in Europe. Kuenen says their science brings them "to form a conception of Israel's religious development totally different from that which, as any one may see, is set forth in the Old Testament, and to sketch primi-

tive Christianity in lines which even the acutest reader cannot recognize in the New." The student of only Driver's "Introduction" will, as Cheyne has shown, obtain but a meagre and mistaken view of what this criticism is in all its masters in Europe.

Among the adherents of this school, substantial agreement has been reached as to separation of some of the larger parts, while there are still more contradictions between them respecting other parts of the Bible. The contradictions between Driver and Cornill on the present initial point of this criticism, Deuteronomy, cover more than one-third of the book. Their contradictions on Isaiah are equally great. These contradictions refer to the grounds for, as well as the assignments of parts to authors and dates. And when we pass on and compare these differences with those of Wellhausen, Kuenen, Dillmann, Cheyne, Duhm, *et al.*, we obtain a maze of contradictory statements by equally learned men that is bewildering. While these authors are thus absolutely contradictory in many most important instances, yet they are at one with all their school in the main assumptions of this criticism. As Dr. Driver says, "The age and authorship of the books of the Old Testament can be determined (so far as this is possible) only upon the basis of the internal evidence supplied by the books themselves, by methods such as those followed in the present volume; no external evidence worthy of credit exists" (p. xxxi). The concrete dogmatism of this statement does not at all hinder its being traditional with all of this school.

What are the methods followed by this school? Cornill states the whole method in a few words: "Numerous parallel, double, triple narratives, accounts of the same event, which, far from being harmonious, often directly contradict each other; further, numerous anachronisms, express chronological data in certain narratives which cannot be harmonized with the facts and with the complete statement in other

narratives. And, above all, to use Goethe's words, 'the wretched, incomprehensible editing' of the whole." This is said with regard to the Pentateuch, but it equally applies to all the other books. In short, that the assumed contradictions of the text are the mainspring of this criticism is proved by every page of these Introductions where they are ever relied upon as the main point, as well as by the fact clearly stated by Kuenen: "The extant Jewish literature is too limited in extent to enable us to determine the age of any work with certainty from mere considerations of language and style."<sup>1</sup>

No external evidence worthy of credit; the Hebrew language and style insufficient in proof; there remains to them no other means of determining the age and authorship of the books but by comparing their contents; which, it may be added, in this case can be done quite as well in English as in Hebrew. Driver asserts that this method "rests upon reasonings the cogency of which cannot be denied without denying the ordinary principles by which history is judged and evidence estimated." But those who, whether English or German, write on historical method, tell us that history is founded on, first, correct texts; second, right appreciation of the contents of the texts. The historian has no right to alter a text proved correct by all the laws of textual criticism, however he may dissent from its teaching. This criticism assumes the right to alter the only text we have, or for the present can have, on every page of the Bible. In other words, it is the method of conjectural criticism wherever the text does not suit the critic. The proof of this is found on every page of these Introductions and in every work of the Graf-Kuenen school. Cornill has given perhaps the most wholesale instance of it in his edition of Ezekiel.

Now conjectural criticism is open to any and all who

<sup>1</sup> Hexateuch, p. 268.

wish to try it: but as the permanent results of conjectural criticism during eighteen hundred years bear the relation of a few drops to the ocean, a few grains to mountains of straw, it would seem that the history of criticism commends immense work, great caution and modesty in suggesting conjectural emendations, rather than rushing them on in cyclones. So far from being strictly historical, this method is the canonization of conjecture.

Looking back over more than a century of immense progress in all knowledge, and more than a century of this criticism of the Bible that has minutely scanned its every sentence, every word, every letter, and culminated in these Introductions, we cannot fail to ask, What progress in results for the general public do these works give us? The public is not, cannot, and ought not to be interested in the critical processes by which results are reached. If one starts out to multiply two by two and expends a tome of algebraic formulas upon the computation, the public wants to know only the results reached by the expert, to judge of the value of his unseen and unknown proofs. If he makes  $2 \times 2 = 3$ , or,  $= 5$ , the public will use its own judgment as to the validity of his reasonings. What progress in results as to the Bible these Introductions manifest may be learned by the following conclusions of a fine scholar, "by far the most important and resolute member of the whole school" of Leibnitz.<sup>1</sup>

"The law written by Moses was only the 'book of the covenant' [Ex. xxi.—xxiii.] which contains no history, only fundamental laws. The present five books of Moses, with numerous other commands, especially the whole Levitical ceremonial, the history of creation, of the patriarchs, of the Israelites under Moses and the genealogies, come from Ezra [i. e., post-exile], who used for this purpose many ancient and contradictory sources, and put them together without much criticism and with interpolations. As to the other Old

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer's *Leibnitz u. seine Schule*, p. 531.

Testament historical books, it is apparent that their authors lived long after the events related by them, and consequently these books are not sources of history, but only compilations from annals and other original writings. Not a single one of the Old Testament historical books receives its name from its author, but from the most notable person or persons mentioned in its history. All have a later author than the name indicates, and the latest books extend to the time of the Maccabees (B. C. 160). The authors had before them various older archives, acts, annals, comments, out of which they composed their history. In this they did not apply the greatest care and faithfulness, but put many things together inaccurately, as well as allowed their imaginations to add other things, through their inclination to the miraculous.

“The book of Psalms is a collection of poems by various authors, assigned by a very late hand from mere conjecture in the superscriptions to suppositious authors. These Psalms survived the oppressions of the people, and were collected after the exile at the restoration of the temple.

“Proverbs is a collection of uncertain origin with many repetitions. Ecclesiastes cannot be by Solomon. The Song of Songs is not by Solomon, but is the work of a late writer who ascribed the play of his sensuous imagination to a renowned name. Job is a didactic drama. Various evidences, especially the philological, point to a late date of composition.

“The prophetic books are collections of spoken and written prophecies of various times and occasions, later than, and not made by, their authors. The disorder prevailing in the prophecies, especially of the three great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, betrays the collector, who was later than, and different from, the author. The question arises, whether much that is spurious, invented after the event, has not entered into the collections. The suspicion of a proph-

ecy after the event becomes more pressing, the closer prophecy and fulfilment agree. The book of Daniel was composed in the time of the Maccabees, during the religious wars against Antiochus, by a Jew, for the purpose of inspiring the Israelites with courage and hope, that, after so many foreign rulers, a Messiah would arise in the family of the Maccabees." <sup>1</sup>

Excepting the attribution of Ex. xxi.—xxiii. to Moses, and making Ezra the chief compiler, everything else in this epitome tallies precisely with the final results brought out by Driver and Cornill. After one hundred and thirty years the most elaborate scholarship of this school in England and Germany returns us to Hermann Samuel Reimarus,<sup>2</sup> author of "The Apology or Defence of the Rational Worshippers of God" (Hamburg, 1767), from which the above extracts are taken, and from which Lessing drew the celebrated "Wolfenbüttel Fragments," which he published from 1774 to 1778. Observe that Reimarus finds the redactors or compilers, the contradictory sources, the interpolations, the failure in critical accuracy, Moses not the author and the late date of the Pentateuch, the Psalms as the hymn-book of the post-exile temple and of varied and uncertain authorship, the compilation and untrustworthiness of the prophetic books, the exclusion of Solomon from the authorship of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, the late date of Job, and Daniel a late literary fiction. Here are all the tools by which the vaunted new "scientific method" professes to discover its results, and yet the only difference between the new and the old is in the way of using the old tools to chisel out precisely the same results.

<sup>1</sup> D. F. Strauss's *Hermann Samuel Reimarus* (1877), pp. 111 ff.

<sup>2</sup> "Reimarus, the author of the 'Wolfenbüttel Fragments,' by the publication of which Lessing threw German theology into a ferment, occupies the same position as the English deists, and indeed owed much to their influence." —Professor O. Pfeiderer of Berlin, Introduction to new edition of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, 1893, p. viii.

None of these results were new even in the time of Reimarus. The very same points are iterated and reiterated by Voltaire in his works, as any one can see by consulting the sixth volume of the Didot edition of his works. This view of the Old Testament was not new with Voltaire, for he got all his knowledge of Old Testament criticism at second hand. His masters to whom he refers, are "Lords Herbert, Raleigh, Sidney, Shaftesbury, the wise Locke, the great Newton, who denied so boldly the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Collins, Tolands, Tindals, Trenchards, Gordons, Woolstons, Wollastons, and, above all, Lord Bolingbroke;" of whom he says, "Many of these have advanced so far in the spirit of investigation and criticism as to doubt whether Moses ever existed."<sup>1</sup> This list might be largely extended. These were some of the writers, who, in the last part of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, were the favorites of the press, whose works sold by tens of thousands. They came mostly from the higher classes of society, from Oxford and Cambridge; many of them wrote admirable English. A contemporary tells the story of the popularity and doctrine of one of these:—

" Here's Wolston's tracts, the twelfth edition;  
 'Tis read by every politician;  
 The country members, when in town,  
 To all their boroughs send them down;  
 You never met a thing so smart;  
 The courtiers have them all by heart;  
 Those maids of honor who can read  
 Are taught to use them for their creed.  
 . . . . .  
 He shows, as sure as God's in Glo'ster,  
 That Moses was a grand imposter;  
 That all his miracles were cheats,  
 Performed as jugglers do their feats."

In France, during the same period, no author compared in popularity, in court and higher circles of society, with Vol-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vi. p. 239 f.

taire. His works ran through many editions, and were read with avidity in every country in Europe. The fulsome adulation that was poured upon him by kings, the nobility, the scientific world, by many of the Roman Catholic clergy and of the Protestant ministers of Switzerland and Germany, is disheartening reading for one who would think better of human nature and common intelligence.

Voltaire is true to his sources. All the main results concerning the Old Testament, offered by these Introductions, by Reimarus and Voltaire, are also found in these writers for a century before Voltaire, and are proclaimed by them as unmistakably proved. But these writers do not claim that these views are new. Some of them were historical scholars, and they find the line of witnesses for these views extending far back through the centuries. They find that the Middle Ages had men who believed no more in Moses and Jesus, than in Mahomet, as prophets of God: that Julian (363 A. D.), Porphyry (305), Celsus (200), held these same main views of the Old Testament. To these may be added another early witness against the Mosaic authorship, the "Clementine Homilies." Voltaire was so delighted with the discourse of Julian against the Christians that he published a translation of it, with multitudinous notes against the credibility of the Old Testament by himself.<sup>1</sup>

The method of criticism pursued by Reimarus and his precursors was essentially the same method pursued in these Introductions, that is, the urging of the internal contradictions which they found in the Bible; the denial of all external evidence worthy of credit; and presuppositions of what must have been the state of society in Palestine and Western Asia in the centuries before the exile of the Jews (B. C. 600). By that method they obtained the same results found in these Introductions. They further declare that these results absolutely preclude the belief that the Bible was in any sense

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vi. p. 303 f.

from God or a revelation of religion; that it was anything else than a "growth and compilation, in accordance with the ordinary laws, and subject to the ordinary errors of the human mind."

At the same time with these writings of Voltaire and Reimarus, there sat on the throne of Prussia the confessedly deistic king, Frederick II., the greatest conqueror and governor Germany had known for centuries. He had, between 1740 and 1750, established in Berlin an academy directed by French deists, which gave the keynote of the royal preferences in religion and philosophy. Thither Voltaire was called in 1749-51. The haste of preachers and professors to be found on the crest of current opinion, modern thought, the new ideas, which were made the test of the Bible, was fast and furious. Every chair in the German universities, which the king could fill, was sure of receiving a professor holding his opinions; so that in the latter years of his reign there was unanimous teaching by all the Protestant theological professors in Germany that the Bible was only a human book, full of errors and contradictions. The fashion was as absolute in literature as in politics. The "Universal German Library" was established at Berlin, in 1765, to applaud every rationalistic book, to condemn with overflowing bitterness, as beneath the contempt of men of sense, any voice raised in defence of the hand and word of God in the Bible. It ran its course of profit, and died in the year that the "dechristianization" of the churches, the public worship of Reason, and the guillotine began in France. But this current thought of the throne, universities, pulpit and people, had not accomplished its work until all the church hymn-books were scraped clean of every thought or expression offensive to a deist. Then Voltaire in Napoleon and his French legions blew his bugles in every palace of Frederick, in every university of Germany, in every hamlet and church, and the German Samsons, kings, profes-

sors, preachers, poets, soldiers, shorn and blind, ground and made sport for him in their prison house, their land.

The truth of God, the divinity of the Bible, moral laws, are not determined by majorities or current opinion, however learned and powerful.

If the results concerning the Bible which Reimarus and these Introductions teach are true, then, who are right as to the necessary inferences to be drawn, Reimarus and Voltaire? or those who would still strive to prove that a Bible destitute of claim to history or straightforward narrative is in some tenuous sense the revelation of God? As between the two, Reimarus and Voltaire are most in accord with cause and effect. And with them are the consistent leaders of this criticism in Europe. Kuenen, himself a deist,<sup>1</sup> says: "So long as we derive a separate part of Israel's religious life directly from God, and allow the supernatural or immediate revelation to intervene in even one single point, so long also our view of the whole continues to be incorrect. . . . It is the supposition of a natural development alone which accounts for all the phenomena."<sup>2</sup>

Against the decision of the European universities for a century, we simply set, as a sufficient reply, the immense growth during all this century of those churches which have believed and taught the Bible as the veritable word of God. They have fringed the world with missionaries, who have translated the Bible into other languages, and hundreds of thousands of heathen have by the Bible turned from idols to

<sup>1</sup> Kuenen's position is thus stated by his friend and biographer: "It was an attempt of singular boldness and vigor to shake the tradition of Christian piety free from every trace of supernaturalism and implied exclusiveness. It involved the absolute surrender of the orthodox dogmatics, of the authority of the Scriptures, of the divine character of the church as an external institution; and of course it based the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to our affection and gratitude solely upon what history could show that he, as a man, had been and had done for men."—Wicksteed, in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for July, 1892, p. 596.

<sup>2</sup> *Prophets*, p. 585.

serve the living and true God. Bible societies, Tract societies, Sunday-school societies pour out from the press their issues by millions every year. The annual increase of the Protestant churches in America has been for many years an average of four hundred thousand per annum. Moody, to name only one, has been the means of persuading more people to trust and follow the Bible, to stake their lives and hopes upon it and go forth to persuade others to do the same, than the number of all the theological professors and students at the German universities for a half-century. While all this would not be received in some European theological lecture-rooms as valid proof, it is a valid proof according to the test given by a higher teacher, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The history of this school of criticism brings before us many facts which would never be supposed unless proved by so many witnesses. But among all these facts there is none more astounding than that, while professing to be above all things historical and to utter the voice of history, it has persistently shut its eyes from seeing, its ears from hearing, and its pages from telling, the history with which it is most concerned. By the side of these Old Testament professors in their own universities, there have been for decades professors of Egyptology and Assyriology. These sciences are represented by men as learned and as numerous as the Protestant professors of Old Testament literature in Germany and England, who do not number sixty, all told. They have established stately reviews in French, German, and English. The literature of these sciences is greater than that of this Old Testament criticism, as the texts on which they work are far greater than all the Old Testament and the Greek and Latin classics combined. The press during most of this century has poured forth works of the highest class of scholarship in these sciences. These works treat of extra-biblical history parallel with the Old Testament, a history founded

upon monuments so numerous in certain early periods that there is a veritable *embarras des richesses*. They treat of the history of these languages, of religion, education, civilization, ethics, law, poetry, architecture, archæology. Now we should suppose that this criticism which professes to be historical would take all this as, at least, one of the factors of its problem. But its volumes will be searched in vain for the first evidence of any acquaintance with this most learned and scientific help to the understanding of the Old Testament. From these Introductions one would never imagine the existence of this vast sphere of knowledge, which has revolutionized the whole idea of ancient history, and gives us the environment of Palestine from at least a thousand years before Moses to the time of Christ. The assumptions of ancient Asiatic history presented in both these Introductions are those of the age antedating the discoveries and scientific history of this century.

What, then, are the teachings of these sciences on fundamental points of history in the works of their chief representatives, of Lepsius, Dümichen, Brugsch, Erman, Meyer, Stern, Leemans, Pleyte, Lieblein, Fried. Delitzsch, Hommel, Tiele, Wiedemann, De Rougé, Mariette, Chabas, Maspero, Deveria, Naville, Oppert, Menant, Lenormant, Babelon, Lefébure, Pierret, Heuzey, Grebaut, Loret, Virey, Bouriant, the Rawlinsons, Birch, Renouf, Pinches, Petrie, Griffiths, and many more?

1. That, as far back as we know anything of man on the earth by his monuments, language was fully formed in power of expression and in written characters. The inscriptions of Tello in Babylonia, and of Medum in Egypt, the earliest known, are as perfect in the characters employed as those of any succeeding age. They are cut by the hands of masters in their art and are interspersed with bas-reliefs, statues, paintings, etc., on the same plane of facile ability and knowledge. Men may argue as to the origin of lan-

guage, but language, as we first meet it on the horizon of known history by monuments, is already a complete and polished instrument in the hands of man. The beginning of our knowledge of Semitic languages is not with Moses, but many centuries before Moses or Abraham, in the numerous monuments of Southern Babylonia. From that early time till after the time of Christ, the Semitic dialects held sway over Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, and Palestine. Long before the Exodus the royal families of Babylon and Mesopotamia, the very Egyptian prefects in Palestine, corresponded with the Pharaoh, not in Egyptian, but in Semitic dialects, proving that Semitic was the diplomatic language of Western Asia.<sup>1</sup>

2. The earliest inscriptions of Medum and Tello and the pyramids are religious. The main doctrines of Egyptian religion are as positively asserted at Medum and in the inscribed pyramids as at any later time. Polytheism is abundant, but there, too, is the son of the gods, Osiris, who had come to earth to do good and been slain by the god of evil, had risen from the dead and become in the other world the judge of living and dead. The beautiful pictures of Medum show us the earliest known Egyptians looking out upon their resurrection life. The interior of the pyramid of Unas assures us of the union of the deceased with his god, and his joy and power in the other world of heaven. The epitome of all Egyptian theology is found on these earliest monuments, which, we are told, were, at least, as long before Moses as Moses was before Christ.

3. Naville's critical edition of the "Book of the Dead"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a startling instance of ignoring the plain results of monumental history in Egypt and Western Asia, we refer the student to Cornill, sect. 4, on the Antiquity of Writing among the Hebrews. See also sect. 49. Has he never read of the twenty-four campaigns of the Egyptian army in Syria before Merenptah, or of the three hundred and thirty-six Tell-el-Amarna letters, or that Palestine was under the government of Egypt for centuries before Merenptah? See, to same effect, Driver, pp. 34, 83, 90, 117.

<sup>2</sup> In three volumes. Berlin, 1885-86.

founded on seventy-seven MSS., all prior to the Exodus, is a scientific proof of the care exercised even by heathen Egyptians in the preservation of their sacred texts, though these texts had little or no logical connection with each other. The same laws which govern the textual criticism of the New Testament are found to govern the textual criticism of the "Book of the Dead" (1200-1700 B. C.). The rough and handy assumptions of utter carelessness, of frequent wilful interpolations, of intentional fraud in sacred texts, are proven as baseless against the heathen as they are against the Christian copyists. Carelessness there is, as in all human work; interpolations there are, coming from the margin or otherwise, but they are in the interest of preserving the text and not in the interest of fraud. No chapter of the "Book of the Dead" was dearer to the Egyptian than the seventeenth, and none more commented on. As Renouf says: "It must be sufficient here to give the earliest forms known to us of the text and of the first commentaries. These are printed [by Renouf] in characters which show the difference between text and later additions; all of which, it must be remembered, are of extreme antiquity—some two thousand years before any probable date of Moses."<sup>1</sup> Not only the MSS., but the monuments, prove the accuracy of the transmission of sacred texts from the pyramid of Unas to the Deir-el-Bahari of Hatasu, i. e., for seventeen hundred years before the Exodus.<sup>2</sup> Erman says: "This literature was made at an epoch that lies almost beyond our historical knowledge, and later times did no more than pass it on." And Naville himself tells us, "Literature was not a slow fruit of the development of Egypt, but it goes back to the first dynasties." And in their literature they were well aware of the difference between an accurate and an inaccurate copy.

4. We are told by all these authorities, as by Erman, that, "At the time when the oldest monuments now extant

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, June, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, *Rec. d. Travaux*, Vol. iii. p. 195.

were erected, the Egyptians were a people of high civilization: they had a complete system of writing, a literature, a highly developed art, and a well-ordered state;" and by Lepsius, that before 3000 B. C. "there is found a people highly instructed in all the arts of peace; a state completely organized; a hierarchy, firmly founded, minutely divided, and organized even to the smallest external matters; an universally diffused system of writing, and the common use of papyrus; in short a civilization which in all essential points has already attained its full maturity, and only by sharp investigation is the further development in some directions discovered." This civilization was not in mere externals, but is illustrated by a comprehension and teaching of ethics superior to anything we find in Greece or Rome till after the time of Christ; so that Chabas and Renouf tell us "the recognized Egyptian code of morality was a very noble and refined one. None of the Christian virtues is forgotten in it; piety, charity, gentleness, self-command in word and action, chastity, the protection of the weak, benevolence towards the humble, deference to superiors, respect for property in its minutest details, . . . all is expressed there, and in extremely good language." Not only ethics of this high standard, but firm and just laws and obedience to them are asserted to be the safeguard of the state.

5. In entire accord with the foregoing, all who have studied the art of the earliest ages in Egypt and Babylonia assert that art had reached its master-pieces in those days. Perrot and Chipiez, Soldi, Blanc, Brugsch, Maspero, Wiedemann, Fergusson, Petrie, Mariette, Ebers, Lenormant, Renouf, Rhoné,—all agree that, "the more ancient their works, the more beautiful they are." "Every artistic production of those days in picture, writing, or sculpture bears the stamp of the highest perfection of art." And the same holds good of Babylonia.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Comptes Rendus. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Sept.-Oct., 1892), pp. 340-349.

6. Maspero, Meyer, Erman, Brugsch, tell us that the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, of which Palestine forms a third part, was always during historic time the natural and necessary *entrepôt* of Asiatic and western commerce. It stood on the same plane of civilization as Babylonia and Egypt, and was bound to them by constant commerce. It was thoroughly known in all its parts and inhabitants to the governments of both countries. Its art was as refined as that of Egypt, and its productions were the prizes of commerce or of the royal treasuries. The land was densely inhabited, and all the strategic points were strongly fortified. There was unceasing coming and going between Asia and Egypt, through Palestine, of royal embassies, of travellers, of the bearers of commerce, of troops of the dominant suzerain.

Now whether these results are true or not, they are the unanimous teaching of historical scholars of the first rank, and on that account alone they should be considered, but are not, by these writers who also profess to be historical critics of a contemporaneous history. But if these results are true, as the monuments prove, on what ground can these critics justify their complete silence and exclusion of all this testimony to the conditioning environment of the Old Testament? The Old Testament can no longer be fairly treated under conceptions of history which are antiquated and denied by the monuments of every museum in Europe. The new view of ancient history must come in and be made a part of the problem. And when that occurs, the foundations of the theory of these Introductions will pass away with the rushing stream, as sand with the flood.

If these results of Assyriology and Egyptology are true, then what shall be said of the Hebrews and of the Old Testament as represented in these Introductions? Were they not far below the surrounding contemporaneous heathenism in civilization, development of language, religion, morals,

care for their sacred texts? Undoubtedly they were. They were Semites, but while, as history elsewhere proves, the brightest and best of all their family of nations, these Introductions would make them appear, in view of their known environment, to lag thousands of years behind the other Semitic nations. Then the common-sense conclusion would be that it is far better to study and follow heathen Egypt in religion and morals than to follow Abraham and the Old Testament.

If these results of Egyptology and Assyriology are true, as these scholars believe, then there is far greater reason for placing the composition of the Pentateuch in the classic age than in the age of the decline and abasement of Western Asiatic and Egyptian literature. Both Driver and Cornill imagine a state of society and religion before the age of David that is in blank contradiction to the facts shown by the monuments. Without this purely imaginary society and religion their theory could have no basis. If the Pentateuch written in the most classic Hebrew, if the Psalms and Prophets, the Old Testament as we have it, was to a large extent written, edited, and issued only from 650 to 160 B. C., then the miracle of its appearance is still greater than at earlier dates, for the decadence of all Western Asiatic and Egyptian literature was in full course. The literary sceptre had long passed from Asiatic to Greek hands. And if by all the analogies of environment there is no reason why the Pentateuch should not have been composed 1400 B. C., there is also no reason why the principal actor in the history should not have been its historian. When we have a document claiming to narrate contemporary history by an apparent or asserted author, we are told by those who write on historical method that it must be tested by the following questions: (1) Was the apparent author a contemporary? (2) Was he a participant or eye-witness of the events? (3) What was the author's ability to observe and conceive, his education, his

understanding of the matters related, his position in life, the theme and form of his narratives, his tendency and party? (4) Does the author show in his writings and in his acts that he prefers truth above all things? (5) Are there any reasons why he should deceive?<sup>1</sup>

Now no "concision" of the Pentateuch can efface from it the noble character of Moses. If, then, the Pentateuch is in a fitting literary environment only in the age of Moses, are not all these questions best answered by the character of Moses, by his education, understanding, position in life and relation to the events? Are there any reasons conceivable why he should deceive?

This criticism lays claim to an advance on all previous criticism in being pre-eminently psychological, that is, consonant with the known laws of the mind, and by these laws it claims to investigate the phenomena of the Old Testament and to reach its results. No objection is offered to assumptions of this sort, for we are far more concerned with undoubted facts for which this psychological criticism offers no explanation. Among all educated races of all centuries the creation in literature of unique, noble, self-sacrificing human characters ruled by the highest ideals of faith, hope, and love, human in many a weakness, yet conquerors of themselves in life's struggle, is the supreme stamp of that inexplicable power we call genius. Not one of these great creations of the human mind has been of composite origin, any more than the works of Praxiteles or Angelo or Rubens were the composite construction of many minds and hands of ages far separated. Hamlet and Lear sprang from one mighty brain, not from a symposium of mediocrities spread over four hundred years.

Among the greatest characters of the world's literature, who live from age to age, and excite the veneration of all who know them, are Abraham, Joseph, Moses. They are

<sup>1</sup> Bernheim, *Hist. Methode* (1889), p. 345 ff.

our brothers by their weaknesses, for they are human, but they are our noble examples by the virtues that soar heavenward in them. Each one is unique in surrounding and in character, and none of them has had a second in the world's history. We put away every other consideration of this literature than its human side, and ask if it is credible that these creations of literature, that rise above others as the Himalayas above the hills, were the exceptions in the work of genius, the slow accretions of many hands through many ages? Are "narratives that directly contradict one another," anachronisms, interpolations, poor compilation, numerous redactors, and "the wretched, incomprehensible editing of the whole," sufficient to account for the majestic character of Abraham that rises from the narrative clear to every reader? How does it happen that a narrative, so contorted and so false, pattered everywhere with the daubs of incompetent hands, gives us, firm as the everlasting hills veined with precious metals and jewels, and covered with the abundant, tender harvest of the sun, the character of Joseph?

Do J and E and P, with Kuenen's additional fifteen and Wellhausen's additional nineteen redactors, editing, re-editing, subtracting, adding, misplacing, using sagas, legends, myths, traditions, and accommodating them to the ideas of their several periods far apart,—do these furnish any basis for the massive, colossal, patient, humane, self-sacrificing character of Moses? Not until we see an ant heap become a granite mountain can we believe in the psychology that sees in such a composition a sufficient explanation for the creation of these characters.

On the contrary, these characters as they rise from the narratives, prove, as was said of the Gospels, it would require a Jesus to imagine a Jesus, that it would require more than an Abraham to imagine an Abraham, more than a Joseph to paint his alluring portrait, more than a Moses to draw the lines, from the lowly, hidden cradle to the splendors of

Pharaoh's palaces, to the desert exile and back to Pharaoh, an opponent on equal terms, through the long-drawn sorrows of forty years, that unfold the grandest character in four thousand years of the world's history. No; so long as these characters stamp those pages, by all the known laws of psychology these characters are the guinea stamp of minds as exalted as the characters they drew. The only possible way of recommending the criticism of these Introductions is by depreciating these unique characters. The denial of miracle, the assertion of falsehood in the narrative, is of no avail; for, after all, there is the character, and the creation of the character must be explained, it cannot be explained away.

As this criticism has excluded from its problem the light which the sciences of Egyptology and Assyriology throw on the times and environment of the Old Testament, it also has positively excluded the New Testament from giving any witness on its main problems. The New Testament is mentioned in Driver's preface only to be put aside as incompetent to bear testimony. Cornill does not mention the witness of the New Testament as to the age and authorship of the books. It does seem strange to read eight hundred pages of criticism of the Old Testament by two Christian theological professors and never meet once with a mention of Christ or of the Holy Spirit or of the witness of the New Testament.

Kuenen, the master mind of this school, tells us clearly why the New Testament is not admitted. He first gives a thoroughly fair epitome of the New Testament teaching as to the Old Testament's being the word of God spoken through the prophets, and that word being, in many instances, exactly fulfilled in Christ and others and in events of the apostolic era; and then adds: "Its judgment concerning the origin and nature of the prophetic expectations and their relation to the historical reality, may be regarded as *diametrically opposed to ours.*" He also adds, what is the

naked truth, "We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly-bought scientific method, or must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament *in the domain of the exegesis of the Old*. Without hesitation we choose the latter alternative."<sup>1</sup> Professor Strack, of Berlin, also states the point bluntly, but all out of logical joint: "As regards the passages from the New Testament, we must protest against their use, for the twofold reason, that, if they prove the Mosaic authorship, all other proofs are superfluous and a derogation from the authority of our Lord; and that the use of such proofs removes the whole question from the historical and critical domain."<sup>2</sup> The simple, common-sense method would be to examine these passages fairly, find out what they assert, and take them as part of the general investigation. To lock them out on *a priori* grounds is certainly not scientific. Now no intelligent student would preclude criticism of the Old Testament by reference to the New Testament; but they would make the New Testament statements a factor in the problem. And they will ask, Can that criticism of the Old Testament be healthy, open-eyed, unprejudiced, judicial, which utterly excludes from its consideration the New, the most important work of all by the Hebrews and separated from the Old Testament by less than two hundred years, according to this criticism? Can that criticism be historical and judicial which ransacks for proofs the pseudographs and apocryphal literature before and after Christ, and never sees the New Testament in its search? Yet this is precisely what this criticism does. Where this is done it can be justified on the only possible ground, that of Kuenen, that the testimony of the New Testament cannot be trusted. Kuenen also says, in effect, that if one believes the New Testament he must believe from its teaching that the Old is equally the word of God. The two Testaments stand on

<sup>1</sup> Prophets, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, p. 1791.

the same plane, so far as genuineness, preservation of the text, and their claims to faith are concerned. Driver, against Kuenen and all his school, says: "The same canon of historical criticism which authorizes the assumption of tradition in the Old Testament, forbids it (except within narrowest limits, as in some of the divergences apparent between the parallel narratives of the Gospels) in the case of the New Testament." He had also previously remarked, "that while in the Old Testament, for example, there are instances in which we can have no assurance that an event was recorded until many centuries after its occurrence, in the New Testament the interval at most is not more than thirty to fifty years." But Kuenen is far more exact to the results of this criticism and to the present view of the majority of German New Testament critics when he puts both Testaments on the same plane of untrustworthiness. "In ancient times, and specifically in Israel, the sense of historical continuity could only be preserved by the constant compliance on the part of the past with the requirements of the present; that is to say, its constant renovation and transformation. This may be called the law of religious historiography. At any rate it dominates the historical writings alike of the Israelites and of the early Christians. To the three stages of the development of religion in Israel, the prophetic, the Deuteronomic, and the priestly, answers a threefold conception of Israel's history. Again in the apostolic and post-apostolic age, the Judæo-Christian, the Pauline, and the Alexandrine conceptions of Christianity followed each other, and not unfrequently came into collision; and, accordingly we find in the Gospels a Judæo-Christian picture of the Christ, a modification of it in a Pauline sense by Luke, and then, as a result of the application of the Logos-idea to the *traditional* materials, a complete transformation and glorification of the teacher of Nazareth in the fourth Gospel. So it is, and so it must be."<sup>1</sup> We refer students to Wendt's, Harnack's and

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Review*, Oct. 1880, p. 705.

Pfleiderer's latest criticism of the Gospels for proof that leading German critics teach not only that there is tradition but abundance of myth and legend in the New Testament. The two Testaments, then, according to the highest authorities of this school of criticism, stand on the same plane of doubt, disorder, and tradition. According to them the teachings of the New Testament concerning the Old are radically erroneous; the Saviour in his hundred quotations and references to the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit in Peter (Acts ii.), in Stephen (Acts vi.), in Paul (Acts xiii.; Rom. iv.-v.), and in Hebrews (xi.), honestly but ignorantly take the airy web of legend and tradition as solid historical ground and encourage seekers after God to rest their faith upon it.

The method of this criticism is narrow in the extreme. It is confined to comparing and aggregating the contradictions appearing to each critic within the Old Testament. It is oblivious to well-ascertained history parallel with the Old Testament. It refuses to take cognizance of the chief Hebrew witness outside of the Old Testament. It offers no common-sense, sufficient proofs of its main assertions. It exalts conjectural above severe textual criticism, and carries its own tradition and dogma to the highest power. Without pretence to prophecy, on the ground of the inevitable laws of the human mind, we are sure that a broader, fairer, more historical criticism will come in, and open its eyes, and patiently consider every evidence from every source to the constitution of the Old Testament.

For the past one hundred years specific phases and theories of rationalistic criticism in Germany have each lived about twenty-five years. The Graf-Kuenen theory began in 1867. It reached its zenith in 1876-80, in the publication of Kuenen's "Prophets," his strongest work, and of Wellhausen's "Prolegomena." Then Wellhausen left his theological professorship, because, as he says, his theological

position was "polytheism and monotheism together."<sup>1</sup> Then Kuenen's lecture-room was less and less attended, until but few listened to him.<sup>2</sup> The students who followed Kuenen's views could not find churches to employ them. Against the protest of the professors the hated evangelical faith was again represented in the University of Leiden.<sup>3</sup> Yet Kuenen was the real inventor of the form of criticism presented in these Introductions, the master mind of the whole movement, as Wellhausen in his torso, the "Prolegomena," was its most popular delineator. After them there is no leader, none to compare with them. Their theory has taken possession, in greater or less degree, of every Protestant professor's chair of Old Testament literature in Europe, just as deistical views had done a century before, just as Hegel's views had done fifty years ago. But unanimity in teaching is a sign of stagnation in Germany. Already the signs of abating interest in the Old Testament are apparent. The extreme attacks now are against the New Testament and have been for six years or more. These attacks were laughed at as the Graf-Kuenen theory was laughed at when it first appeared. Wendt's criticism of the Gospels is on the same lines as that of Kuenen, i. e., of a "natural development which accounts for all the phenomena." Harnack has declared against belief in the miraculous birth of Christ and in most of the statements of the Apostles' Creed. Germany is ringing from end to end with the noise of this battle. Pfeiderer takes from the mould of the tomb Strauss's first "Life of Christ" (new edit., 1893), and recommends it as "amongst the standard works which are secure of a permanent place in literature for all time," for "every individual who determines to make his way from the bondage of a naïve trust in authority and tradition into the freedom of

<sup>1</sup> Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Vol. iii. p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Jewish Quarterly Review, July 1892, p. 597.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. de Theol. et de Philos., 1889, p. 612.

mature thought, must pass through precisely that stage of thorough-going, logical, negative criticism which is represented by Strauss's work in an unique manner." He believes that "the miraculous narratives of the Gospels are myth and not history." He fears lest "the old doctrine of miracles may be re-admitted into Lives of Jesus;" hence, "In this danger appears the necessity for the continued prosecution of the negative work of criticism" and of a newer psychological criticism.<sup>1</sup> The New Testament has been, and is to be, attacked on the same lines as the Old Testament has been attacked by Kuenen. The fight for the next few years is to be around that centre, and, when it returns to the Old Testament, though the same principles will direct, the method of this criticism will be vastly changed. In England and America we are experiencing the waves of a storm that has now lost its power in the German ocean. Some strong and some frail barks may be caught in a cross-sea and lost in these swells, but there is not the slightest danger that our working evangelical churches will be affected by these contentions, for they will not understand or be interested in them more than they are interested in the last treatises on the discovery of Lemuria or whether Bacon wrote Shakespeare.

There is another and a better school of Old Testament criticism. It, too, is pre-eminently psychological, and its psychology begins, where the truest science begins, in the consciousness of each individual. They know that they have sinned and do sin against God; that their sin deserves the wrath and punishment of the holy and just God. They have heard that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life;" they have believed on Christ as the only and absolute Saviour, and through him have found pardon and peace with God. They know, from their

<sup>1</sup> For the exact character of the deistical psychology, see Pfeiderer on "The Essence of Christianity," in the *New World*, Sept., 1892.

own experience and from the witness of the Bible, and both corroborated to them by the experience of multitudes through the centuries, that Christ, their Saviour, is God. All that they are except their sin, all that they hope to be, they know that they owe to the infinite love and the free gift of Christ, their God. With this experience and certain knowledge, the outgrowth of experience, they have found the whole Bible instinct with the love of God to them, a fountain of life-giving strength to their souls. There are many questions about the Bible which they cannot answer, many discrepancies which they cannot harmonize. They are not quick to pronounce these errors, for the common-sense reason that in order to detect positive errors one must know both sides and all the circumstances, and these they do not know. Reverence, love and gratitude to Christ, who, they believe, created all things, who alone reveals God, and who is the final judge of all men and all teaching, cause them to ask first of all, What does Christ teach? To trust Christ for pardon of sin, and for acceptance with God, and then to refuse to hear him when he teaches on lesser points; to believe him God, and then exclude him from testifying about the Bible, would be, to men of this belief, treason and hypocrisy of deepest dye. What Christ plainly teaches about the Bible he came to fulfil and explain, the Old Testament, or about the Bible he came to give, the New Testament, is to men of this belief, the norm of all truth about the Bible. With this standard they go forth to explore all recesses, seek to uncover all darkness, bring to the light of day all facts, acknowledge the deep abysses of their remaining ignorance, and work on in hope of gaining more light and knowledge.

Before Jesus Christ, the final Judge, all theories, all criticism, all teachings, concerning his word must be brought. Only his decision will end all controversies.