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PROFESSOR JULIUS WELLHAUSEN AND HIS
THEORY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

JULIUS WELLHAUSEN was born May 17th, 1844, in the province of Hanover, in the quaint and romantic walled town of Hameln on the Weser, where his father was pastor. After attending school three years in the city of Hanover, he entered the university of Göttingen in the spring of 1862. Here he was attracted by Ewald, who held him to the study of theology, with which, owing to some other influences, he might easily have become disgusted. In the autumn of 1865, one year after Ritschl's connexion was formed with the theological faculty,¹ he left the university and was engaged for a time as a private tutor, but returned to Göttingen in 1867, where he remained five years, from the spring of 1868 until the autumn of 1870 as *Repetent*,² and for two years thereafter as *Privat-docent*.³ In 1872 he was called as an ordinary professor of theology to Greifswald, where he became the colleague of Cremer and Zöckler, winning golden opinions by the modesty, vivacity and friendliness of his demeanour, and by the marked ability of his lectures. The estimation in which he was held by his colleagues of the philosophical faculty of Greifswald is indicated in the

¹ Wellhausen is regarded as sharing in the general aims of Ritschl's school, which seeks to combine personal piety, and a firm maintenance of the New Testament basis of religion as divinely revealed, together with the freest criticism.

² This would seem to correspond to the office of a private tutor in the English universities.

³ This is the technical German term for a private lecturer at a university, who has received the professor's right to lecture, without his official position or emoluments.

eulogium¹ of the doctor's diploma which was presented to him on his departure for Halle.

His acceptance of an extraordinary professorship² of Oriental languages at Halle was not a promotion in any sense. But his departure from Greifswald was of his own free will and highly honourable to him. Feeling that he was not adapted to train young men for the ministry, and perhaps on account of the destructive character of his theories regarding the origin of the Pentateuch, he relinquished the position³ which he had held with honour for ten years.

Some of those who know him best speak with warmth of his sincerity, and even of his piety. It is well that we should get an impression of the personality of the man outside of his writings, as they seem to be animated with a spirit that prejudices many against him. They all display marked thoroughness and ability. None of them were prepared to fill a publisher's order. They are rather the ripe fruitage of careful study. His Text of the Books of Samuel,

¹ *Ivlium Wellhavsæn Theologiæ Doctorem et Professorem qui de Libris Sacris et ad Artis Præcepta Recensendis et Felici Ingenio Emendandis Optime Meritis et Regni Hasmonæorum Popvliqve Ivdaici Stvdia ac Simvlitates Ivdicio non minvs candido qvam acri illvstravit et priscam Popvli Hebraici Memoriam e Seqviorvm Cærimoniavm Involveris ad Castam Pristinæ Religionis Sanctitatem Revocavit.*

² An extraordinary professorship is the second step above the position of *privat-docent* in the ladder of promotion. Unlike the ordinary professor, he does not receive a full support from the state, and has no seat in the faculty, nor in the senate. Last spring, however, Wellhausen was appointed an ordinary professor of Oriental languages and history at Marburg.

³ The reason which he assigns in his *Muhammed in Medina* (Berlin, 1882), p. 5, is only partial. He says: "Den Uebergang vom Alten Testament zu den Arabern habe ich gemacht in der Absicht, den Wildling kennen zu lernen, auf den von Priestern und Propheten das Reis der Thora Jahve's gepfropft ist. Denn ich zweifle nicht daran, dass von der ursprünglichen Ausstattung, mit der die Hebräer in die Geschichte getreten sind, sich durch die Vergleichung des Arabischen Alterthums am ehesten eine Vorstellung gewinnen lässt."

It is said that the influence of the minister of worship, both in Germany and Austria, is unfavourable to the appointment of theological professors holding Wellhausen's critical views, and that this fact has a restraining influence upon the younger theologians.

his Chronology of the Book of the Kings after the Division of the Kingdom, his Composition of the Hexateuch, and his contributions to the fourth edition of Bleek's Introduction, all prepared the way for his masterpiece, the Prolegomena to the History of Israel.¹ The data for the arguments contained in this book were in existence before in the writings of a Graf, Duhm, Kayser, and Kuenen, not to speak of an earlier circle, but they were scattered here and there. It was Wellhausen's discrimination which tested them, and his genius which skilfully combined them in an argument which seems to their author, and perhaps to the majority of German Old Testament theologians, invincible, at least if we may judge from the effects. On all sides since this book has appeared we hear of conversions and

¹ The following is a list of Wellhausen's writings, all of which except the first have passed under the eye of the writer.

1. *De gentibus et familiis Judæis quæ 1 Chron. ii.-iv. enumerantur. Dissertatio Inauguralis.* Gottingæ, 1870.

2. *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis.* Göttingen, 1871.

3. *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer.* Griefswald, 1874.

5. *Die Zeitrechnung des Buchs der Könige seit der Theilung des Reichs, in the Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie,* pp. 607-640. Gotha, 1875.

6. *Ueber den bisherigen Gang und den Gegenwärtigen Stand der Keilenschrift,* in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie.* Frankfurt a. M., 1876, pp. 153-175.

7. *Die Composition des Hexateuchs. Jahrbücher, etc.* 1876, pp. 392-405; 531-602; 1877, 409-479.

8. *Die Bücher Judicum, Samuelis, und Regum, further die Geschichte des Kanons and die Geschichte des Textes* in the fourth edition of Bleek's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament.* Berlin, 1878.

9. *Geschichte Israels.* Berlin, 1878. Second edition. *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels.* Ibid. 1883; also in English, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel.* Edinburgh, 1885.

10. Article *Israel* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* New York, 1881, pp. 396-432.

11. *Muhammed in Medina.* Berlin, 1882.

12. *Mohammed and the First Four Caliphs, Encyclopædia Britannica.* New York, 1883, p. 545-565.

13. *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten, Erstes Heft* [pp. 1-102, cover substantially the same ground as the article *Israel* in the *Britannica*, although in a more extended form]. Berlin, 1884.

14. *Pentateuch and Joshua, Encyclopædia Britannica.* New York, 1885, pp. 505-514.

concessions.¹ But while on the one hand Wellhausen adopts the sarcastic language of Isaiah (xli. 6, 7) with reference to his opponents, he scornfully rejects the plan of taking votes as to the progress of the new criticism. Perhaps it is an utter disgust for cant which has led him to employ a style in treating of the Old Testament Scriptures, which, if used in discussing any other subject, would be considered piquant, but which in his earlier productions is flippant, and in the book which we especially have in hand sounds profane and irreverent. It seems as though the author delighted in wounding the sensibilities of his Christian readers. We must however admit that in his Sketches,² one of his latest productions, he omits such offensive language.

In our present discussion of Wellhausen's theory of the

¹ The writer, however, does not know of more than one who publicly acknowledged that his critical views were changed through Wellhausen's History of Israel. This was done by Kautzsch in Schürer's *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, Leipzig, 1879, columns 25-30. The following very general classification may perhaps be made, although it must be remembered that Reuss should be regarded as the father of these views, and that each of those mentioned seeks to hold an independent position for himself: 1. *Supporters of the post-exilic codification of the Priests' Code*: Bonn (Budde), Giessen (Stade), Göttingen (Duhm, H. Schultz), Greifswald (Giesebrecht), Heidelberg (Kneucker), Jena (Siegfried), Leipzig (Guthe, König), Marburg (Cornill), Strassburg (Kayser, d. 1885, Nowack Reuss), Tübingen (Kautzsch), Basel (Smend), Lausanne (Vuilleumier), Zürich (Steiner). 2. *Supporters of the Priests' Code as an older document*: Berlin (Dillmann, Strack, but with concessions), Erlangen (Köhler), Greifswald (Bredenkamp, d. 1885), Kiel (Klostermann?), Leipzig (Delitzsch, with concessions), Dorpat (Mühlau, Volck?). 3. *Mediating critics*: Bonn (Kamphausen), Leipzig (Ryssel), Marburg (Baudissin). 4. *Defender of the Mosaic authorship*: Rostock (Bachmann), Keil is not a professor in any university, but resides in Leipzig. While the above list cannot be absolutely accurate, it is approximately so, and rests not only on the writer's partial knowledge, but also on classifications furnished by two eminent German Old Testament scholars, one of whom has made his mark in Old Testament bibliography.

The writer has received valuable letters from Professors Baudissin, Delitzsch, Dillmann, Kautsch, Siegfried, Wellhausen, and Zöckler.

Wellhausen does not hesitate to claim that the great change in the views of the German professors of Old Testament theology has been brought about by his book. He says that this fact is not weakened by their sudden claim that they have long known what they have learned from him. Cf. *Prolegomena*, p. 1.

² *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*. Berlin, 1884.

Pentateuch, we shall consider two main points. 1. What are the constituent parts of the Pentateuch? And 2. How does Wellhausen justify this division?

On entering Wellhausen's critical analysis of the Pentateuch we find ourselves at once in a labyrinth, in which we seem at first to be hopelessly lost, but he gives us a thread by which we may find our way out. If we would follow the path which he indicates we must dismiss such modern devices as chapters and verses, names of books, and Massoretic sections. While we lose Moses from the Pentateuch, we shall find in it a mosaic, not brought together by chance, but exhibiting the hand of a master.

Perhaps we should form a clearer conception of the critical method in the analysis of the Pentateuch, if we were to suppose that our four gospels only existed in the form of a harmony, as one continuous life of Christ, and that in such a harmony the synoptists had been combined as much as possible, by cutting out passages from one gospel that were found in another, by allowing some parallel passages to stand, and by fitting in passages from John in their proper places. If we now had only Tatian's Diatessaron of the gospels, which began with John i. 1, a similar problem would be presented to students of New Testament criticism as to those of Old, for Wellhausen claims that we may trace four main documents in the composition of the Pentateuch.

Tatian's Diatessaron therefore, as far as we know about it, may serve to illustrate the process by which the critics claim that the Pentateuch, or rather the Hexateuch,¹ came into existence. Sometime during the years 850-770 B.C., or perhaps even later,² two narratives of Israel, from the

¹ This term has been invented by the critics to indicate the five books of the Pentateuch, and the Book of Joshua.

² Cf. *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xiii. New York, 1881, p. 408. Wellhausen affirms that certain collections of laws and decisions of priests were written somewhat earlier than the legends about the patriarchs and primitive times.

creation of the world to the conquest and settlement in Canaan, were written. Which is the older of the two we cannot tell.¹ The last part of one of these, whose author is called the Jahvist, from the name of God which he predominantly uses, breaks off with the blessing of Balaam.² In his narrative he combined the myths, the legends, and the traditional histories then existing. After he had committed his work to writing the legends were still growing beside it, and from time to time were incorporated into it, so that the Jahvistic work may be considered as having passed through at least three editions before it was united with the following book.³

The second narrative, which is not necessarily second in the order of time, is called the Elohist, from Elohim, the name of God which is characteristic of it. We must not confound its author with the Elohist writer in Ewald's Book of Origins, whose work appears at the very beginning of Genesis, (i. 1 ; ii. 4a), and who is called by a misnomer the older Elohist, while the one of whom we are now speaking is called the younger Elohist, thus prejudging the whole question of the relative age of the documents.⁴ The history of the Elohist which Wellhausen has in view is unlike that of the Jahvist in extent, since while it first begins with the patriarchs, it extends throughout the book of Joshua.⁵ It resembles the other, however, in having passed through three editions.

Still later a writer, whom Wellhausen calls the Jehovist,⁶ wished to prepare a new history of Israel from the creation of the world until the settlement of Israel in Canaan under

¹ See *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. Berlin, 1878, p. 178.

² *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*. Gotha, 1876, p. 585.

³ *Idem*, 1877, p. 478. ⁴ Cf. *Idem*, 1876, p. 392. ⁵ *Idem*, p. 602.

⁶ This term must be distinguished from the Jahvist, which is derived from Jahveh (Yahveh), the pronunciation which is commonly adopted by critics for the name יהוה. Wellhausen means by the Jehovist the combination of J (ahvist) and E (lohist) = JE. Cf. *Einleitung, in das Alte Testament*. Berlin, 1878, p. 178.

Joshua. The two works named were his chief, although not his only sources of information.¹ Instead of digesting them as a modern author would do, and writing an entirely new history, he took the existing materials much as a New Testament harmonist would in preparing a life of Christ in the words of Scripture. He made the Jahvistic work the basis of his narrative, and interwove with it passages of the parallel Elohistic book.² In some cases he has sacrificed one writer at the expense of another,³ in others he has allowed two accounts to stand side by side.⁴ There are, too, certain parts where he has made a much freer use of his materials,⁵ and where he has engaged in independent authorship.⁶ This work was mostly narrative, yet it contained a brief legal code, the so-called Book of the Covenant⁷ (Exod. xx.-xxiii.), and Exod. xxxi. the former of which at least was taken from the Jahvist.

The third contribution to the constituent elements of the Pentateuch was mainly legal. Doubtless during the reign of the wicked king Manasseh, the prophets and priests⁸ had become convinced that something must be done to check the growing idolatry of the people, and it is not unlikely that the Decalogue dates from this period.⁹ It seemed to them that a stop must be put to the practice of the Judeans in worshipping on the high places (*bamoth*). This could only be accomplished by limiting the worship of Jehovah to Jerusalem. They therefore prepared a new law-book,¹⁰ a *deuteros nomos* (Deuteronomy), based on the Book of the Covenant, and yet differing from it in its reiterated command that God should be worshipped in one place, and in

¹ *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*. Gotha, 1876, p. 419.

² *Idem*, p. 413.

³ *Idem*, pp. 537, 542.

⁴ *Idem*, pp. 420-423, 428, 429, 535, 536.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 561.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 564.

⁷ *Idem*, p. 557.

⁸ *Prolegomena*. Berlin, 1883, p. 26.

⁹ Cf. *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*. Berlin, 1883, p. 26.

¹⁰ Cf. *Idem*, pp. 69 ff. *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*. Gotha, 1877, pp. 466 ff. Cf. *Prolegomena*. Berlin, 1883, pp. 392 ff.

the position which it assigned to the Levites as the only legitimate priests. This book was at first purely legal, and embraced only Deut. xii.–xxvi. Afterwards there were two recensions of it, one consisting of chapters i.–iv., xii.–xxvi., xxvii., and the other of v.–xi., xii.–xxvi., xxviii. These two were subsequently united and inserted in the legal code of the Hexateuch, when chapter xxxi. was added.¹ This Book of Deuteronomy is the law book which was discovered under king Josiah in the year 621 B.C.

This narrative, which comprised only a fraction of the present Hexateuch, was lacking in the most striking elements now found in the Pentateuch. There was nothing in it about the tabernacle as the central sanctuary around which the twelve tribes were encamped, nothing about an elaborate system of sacrifices, nothing about an Aaronic priesthood. While the priests may well have had a traditional code, it was still unwritten, and was yet destined to great modifications. The Deuteronomic code was not without effect. Its chief polemic brought the worship of the high places into disfavour,² and, as a result which was not designed indeed, the Levitical priests who had served the people there were degraded from their office,³ as we learn from Ezekiel, and became servants of their more fortunate brethren, the sons of Zadok,⁴ at Jerusalem. This centralization of worship and degradation of the Levites, could not but affect the traditional priestly code, but the most important factor was the Babylonian exile, which suddenly cut off the political and religious life of the nation for more than two generations.⁵ The ritual ceased to be practised, it now became the object of study and reflection.⁶ The priests of necessity

¹ *Idem*, p. 464.

² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xiii. New York, 1881, p. 418.

³ *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*. Berlin, 1884, p. 71.

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xiii. New York, 1881, p. 418.

⁵ From the year 586 B.C., when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, until 538, when Cyrus gave the exiles permission to return. *Skizzen*, pp. 75–81.

⁶ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. Berlin, 1883, p. 62.

became scribes.¹ How much their ideals differed from the law already found in the Book of the Covenant and in Deuteronomy appears from the sketch presented in the last nine chapters of the Book of the priestly prophet Ezekiel. A further stage is indicated in the small code Lev. xvii.-xxvi., which was subsequently written in the spirit of Ezekiel's code, although not by Ezekiel himself. Meanwhile a new account of Israel's history from the creation to the settlement in Canaan under Joshua was written from the stand-point of these new priestly enactments. How long the new work was finished after the exile is not indicated. Wellhausen calls it the Book of the Four Covenants.² This book was made the basis of what he calls the Priests' Code, a work whose materials may have extended far back,³ and which grew up among the priests as the Mishna at a later period among the scribes. There were then two historico-legal works in existence, both running parallel from the creation of the world to the settlement of Israel in Canaan.

At last part of the Jews were restored to their own land. In the year 458 B.C., the scribe Ezra came to Jerusalem, and cast in his lot with his Judean brethren. While he was not the author of the Priests' Code,⁴ which had gradually grown up with the Book of the Four Covenants, on which it was based, among the priestly scribes at Babylon, yet he is supposed to be the one who united it with the Jehovistic edition of the Hexateuch which included the Book of Deuteronomy. For fourteen years Ezra did not introduce the new law book, but conducted the congregation according to the Deuteronomic code. What was the reason of this delay in its introduction does not appear.

¹ *Die Phariseer und die Sadducäer*. Greifswald, 1874, pp. 12-14.

² He gives it this name which he indicates by Q[uatuor], because it prepared the way for the Mosaic covenant through the covenants with Adam, Noah, and Abraham. *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*. Gotha, 1877, p. 407.

³ *Skizzen*, pp. 43 f. *Prolegomena*, p. 388.

⁴ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. Berlin, 1883, p. 434.

It is not unlikely that he was adapting this product of Babylonian wisdom to the practical needs of the congregation at Jerusalem, and was perhaps training helpers to assist him in carrying out the provisions of the new code.¹ The book which Ezra introduced in the year 444 B.C. was essentially our present Pentateuch, although various novels and interpolations crept in until the year 300 B.C.²

Such in general is Wellhausen's theory of the origin of the Hexateuch as nearly as it can be gathered from his various writings, although he nowhere attempts the hazardous experiment of presenting a connected picture of the origin of the different parts, but evidently leaves each student of his writings to paint one for himself.

We have next to consider on what grounds Wellhausen adopts this theory of the origin of the Pentateuch. We shall find that it is based on the history of worship, of the Hebrew language, and of the Hebrew literature. As all roads led to Rome, so it will be seen that the result of every investigation presented by Wellhausen tends to establish the position that the priestly portions of the Pentateuch were first codified after the exile.

If we consider the evidences drawn from the history of worship we shall find that they fall under the four heads of time, place, mode, and persons, and that each of the works described reckoning them as the Jehovistic, Deuteronomic, and Priestly, mark three stages in a development. Before the last, a fourth, however, should be inserted, as forming a necessary connexion, which may be called the Code of Ezekiel (xl.-xlviii.). The dates represented are about 850-770 B.C. (Jehovistic), 621 B.C. (Deuteronomic), 573 B.C. (Ezekelian), 444 B.C. (Priestly). We begin in the Jehovistic Code with the simplest ideas of the time, place, and mode of worship, and of the persons engaged in it, we reach a

¹ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels.* Berlin, 1883, pp. 429 ff.

² Cf. *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie.* Gotha, 1876, pp. 441-442.

higher plane in Deuteronomy, a still higher one in Ezekiel, and the highest of all in the Priests' Code.

Let us take the matter in detail with regard to the sacred seasons. Beginning first with the unit seven, which marks off the Sabbath of the week, and of the years, reaching its culmination with the year of jubilee, we do not find this highly developed system of Sabbatical time in the Jehovist, or in the Deuteronomist. The Sabbath in all its strictness is a product of the ascetic spirit of the exile, and the year of jubilee is one of the latest inventions of Jewish scribes.¹

The same principle may be observed with regard to the Hebrew festivals, passover, pentecost, and tabernacles. In the Jehovistic code, all but the first are simple, gladsome feasts of harvest² for individuals,³ in the Deuteronomic they are more elaborate,⁴ although they still possess the same joyful character, but in the Priests' Code all the spontaneity, and gladness have vanished; they are to be celebrated by the congregation as a religious duty.⁵ Thus the motive assigned for their observance is of an entirely different sort from that which we find in the early documents.

The same law of development is illustrated in regard to the place of worship. In the Book of the Covenant, which is a part of the Jehovistic work, the suppliant may build his altar anywhere;⁶ but in the second edition of the law (Deut. xii.-xxvi.), he is distinctly told that he may not worship everywhere, but that he must confine himself to the one place, which the Lord his God shall choose to set His name there.⁷ In the Priests' Code it seems to be taken as a matter of course that there is only one place where worship can be offered, and that is at the tabernacle.⁸ The steps,

Cf. *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. Berlin, 1883, pp. 117-124.

² *Prolegomena*, p. 95. Wellhausen connects the passover with the life of herdsmen.

³ *Idem*, p. 103.

⁴ *Idem*, pp. 86 f.

⁵ *Idem*, pp. 104, 107.

⁶ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. Berlin, 1883, pp. 29-30.

⁷ *Idem*, pp. 33-35.

⁸ *Idem*, pp. 35-37.

then, in this development are: the Jehovist allows worship anywhere, the Deuteronomist limits it to one place [Jerusalem], the Priests' Code does not once debate the question, but assumes that worship at only one place is established usage.

What then is true in regard to the mode of worship, may we not have an exception here? In the first place we find the Book of the Covenant and of Deuteronomy almost barren of the terms which describe sacrifice,¹ which they seem to regard as an ancient institution. If we look again, we notice a childlikeness in the views of sacrifice, which could not bear the scrutiny of the priestly scribes during the exile. Sacrifices were at first evidently spontaneous sacrificial meals, at which the offerers were gathered with their friends, and where in a naive way they considered themselves as God's guests.² The vicarious element was largely if not entirely wanting until after the exile.³ The great day of atonement is a product of Judaism. Here, as elsewhere, the ascending steps from a simple sacrificial meal, which the offerer ate with gladness in company with his friends, to the elaborate ritual of the great day of atonement are clearly marked.

Again, what persons may offer sacrifice, must they be priests? The Jehovist answers, "No; young men may offer the sacrifices"; the Deuteronomist says, "Yes, but any Levite may officiate as priest"; Ezekiel says, "Yes, but of the Levites, those who have served at the high places may not present the offerings, only the sons of Zadok can perform this office"; the Priests' Code replies, "Yes, but only the sons of Aaron may be priests." Here then we have four steps: young men, Levites, sons of Zadok, sons of Aaron,

¹ This is rather implied than directly stated. Cf. *Prolegomena*, p. 54, pp. 72-73.

² *Prolegomena*, pp. 74, 79.

³ Wellhausen does not say this in so many words, but he seems to imply it, pp. 76, 83, 84.

and a complete hierarchy with the high priest at its head.

Now if we regard the Jehovistic, Deuteronomic, Ezeke-
lian, and Priest's Code as forming a pyramid with the Jeho-
vistic work as the base and the Priests' Code as the apex,
we shall find that there are steps on each of the four sides
ascending to the top, and that the apex is four-faced: 1. On
the side of the sacred seasons, ascending to the year of
jubilee; 2. On that of sacred places, reaching the one legiti-
mate place of worship in the temple at Jerusalem; 3. Sacred
ceremonies, which find their culmination in the
sacrifices of the great day of atonement; 4. Sacred persons,
attaining their highest dignity in the high priest, who is at
the same time an ecclesiastical and civil ruler.

It remains for us to inquire whether the history of Hebrew
literature lends its support to Wellhausen's theory of the
origin of the Pentateuch. He claims that it does. He
affirms that, excluding the books of the Pentateuch, and
taking into account the older literature, preserved almost
intact in the historical books of the Prophets, only one half
of the Old Testament is pre-exilic,¹ since the Books of Kings
did not receive their present form until after the exile,² and
the greater part of the third division of the Old Testament
Canon, the Sacred Writings, is post-exilic.³ He holds that
Hebrew literature did not begin before the ninth century
B.C.,⁴ and that the common notion that the exilic and post-
exilic period was comparatively barren of literary productions
is false, since it was really very fruitful.⁵ He holds therefore
that there is no inherent improbability of such a work as
the Priests' Code receiving its written form after the exile.

¹ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. Berlin, 1883, p. 2.

² *Idem*, p. 1.

³ *Idem*, p. 1. Wellhausen says it cannot be proved that any part of the
Hagiographa was written before the exile.

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica*. New York, 1881, vol. xiii. p. 408.

⁵ *Prolegomena*, p. i.

What then is the testimony of Hebrew literature which is known to have been written before the exile with reference to the date of the Priests' Code?

Those parts of the Pentateuch which are known to have been written before the exile manifest only exceedingly problematical traces of it.¹ While the Deuteronomist knows nothing about it,² he evidently derives his materials from the Jehovist.³ There are no distinct traces of Deuteronomy in the prophetic writers before Jeremiah, but he is full of them. There are no indisputable traces of the Priests' Code in any prophetic work written before the exile. Ezekiel manifests no knowledge of the Priests' Code as a code, there are merely correspondences between the last nine chapters of his prophecy and the small code in Lev. xvii.—xxvi.

If it be maintained that certain passages in the historical books, aside from the priestly parts of Joshua, are favourable to the origin of the Priests' Code before the exile, as in Judges, Samuel and Kings, it is affirmed that these cannot be quoted, since they are the product of post-exilic glosses, or of a recension in a priestly spirit. For the same reason the prophecy of Joel, which has been regarded by the great majority of critics as one of the oldest prophecies, may not be quoted as favourable to the antiquity of the Priests' Code, since the latest criticism reverses this opinion, and maintains that it was written long after the exile.

Now while there is no certain trace of the Priests' Code in pre-exilic writings, the Jehovistic history in the Pentateuch represents the patriarchs as freely offering at various places in accordance with the provisions of the law in the Book of the Covenant. Likewise in the historical books, kings and prophets have no thought of displeasing God by offering sacrifice at various places. It is only after Solomon that a Deuteronomic redaction, contrary to the original

¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 12.

² *Idem*, p. 392.

³ *Idem*, pp. 13, 395 f.

form and spirit of the Book of Kings, blames the rulers for worshipping on the high places.

If now we turn to the narrative in the Book of the Four Covenants, we find that it differs remarkably from the Jehovistic record. There, in the Jehovistic record, the patriarchs offer sacrifices freely; here, in the Book of the Four Covenants, they do not venture to do so, and for the obvious reason, that in the mind of the author such a step would be illegitimate, as the true mode of sacrifice was yet to be revealed to Moses. There the patriarchs stand forth in their true colours, exhibiting all the faults and weaknesses of the children of their time; here they are pious Jews whose characters are above reproach. There is the most temperate use of numbers and genealogies; here are found the most exact enumerations of time and peoples, and the authors are never weary of tracing the relationship between father and son.

But these two books, so utterly different in spirit, are not our only means of comparison. The Book of Kings aside from its Deuteronomic and slight priestly redaction is in entire harmony with the Jehovistic parts of the Pentateuch, written with the same spirit and from the same religious standpoint. Running parallel with it is the Book of Chronicles, written long after the exile. The Book of Kings seeks to record the history of Israel, even after the establishment of the northern kingdom. It presents David and Solomon as they are, and does not withhold the dark background which has been a warning to men of all times. There are only the most casual references to worship, priests and Levites are never mentioned as two distinct classes. Beyond the usual scheme which it uses to indicate the royal succession, and the duration of reigns, it is sparing in its genealogies and its use of numbers. In Chronicles all is changed. It has no place for the northern kingdom, it is simply a history of the Jews. It knows only

one dynasty, that of David. From his character and that of his son every dark line is erased. It might almost be called a history of worship. Priests and Levites appear on every hand. It is at the same time a family register of every prominent Jew, and a census report of the Jewish nation. These are indeed striking peculiarities which have their roots in the Book of the Four Covenants in Genesis, and are all the more remarkable because they extend side by side from the creation until the exile, where the Book of Kings breaks off.

Such in the main are some of Wellhausen's reasons, although not stated in his language, or in the order of thought indicated by him, for holding that the Priest's Code was first committed to writing after the exile. It is unnecessary to say that he absolutely rejects the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The same is substantially true of all modern German critics. As he himself claims, the question whether the Priests' Code was written somewhat prior to the work of the Jehovist (800-750 B.C.) cannot be considered essential as affecting the authority of the Old Testament. He cannot conceive why his views should be so objectionable to those who simply date the Priests' Code before the exile instead of after it. The English and American theologian will be likely to agree with him in this.

There is however an undefinable something in his style, as the expression of his animus, which must give pain to every reverent student of the Old Testament as God's Word, for Wellhausen evidently regards it as nothing more than man's words, marking successive stages in a development. He mocks at every effort made to re-establish the Divine authority of the Old Testament, and is evidently out of sympathy with the supernatural view of miracle and prophecy. Whatever may be his feeling toward the Jehovistic writer, for whom he expresses admiration, he shows

his repugnance for the Priests' Code and Chronicles in scornful and sarcastic remarks. This is of course natural from his point of view, when he believes that the genealogies, chronologies, enumerations of armies, descriptions of the tabernacle and of Levitical worship as found in the Priests' Code and Chronicles are the invention of Jewish scribes, and that while the authors of the Jehovistic work and of Deuteronomy are not anxiously careful to show that their books were written upon the settlement in Canaan, the author of the Priests' Code uses every endeavour to make his work appear to have been written in the wilderness.

Such a theory of the Pentateuch, even when cleared of the offensive accessories with which Wellhausen surrounds it, is revolutionary not only of our whole conception of the origin of the Scriptures, but also of the history of Israel, and of Old Testament Theology, nor can it be denied that, if adopted, it must seriously affect our view of the New Testament.

It is indeed a question of fact, and of higher criticism, but other elements must enter into the problem. There are at least two postulates with which we should begin: that God is a factor in human history, and that as such we should expect that He would make a revelation of Himself to man. Egypt, Assyria, Phœnicia, and Babylonia may shed some light on the problem. Indeed light should be welcomed from whatever quarter it may come.

Nothing is to be gained by hasty answers, however well intended, or by attempting to belittle the chain of evidence which Wellhausen presents. From this point of view we have sought to exhibit his position in its full strength. The limits of this article do not admit of a reply, nor are we prepared to attempt one. It is our desire to master the subject in a historical way before taking it up in detail. The answer which may be made that will have weight will not be wrung from the Christian heart by the seeming neces-

sities of the case, but will be recognised as the truth and as such commend itself to evangelical Christian scholars.

Meanwhile if Wellhausen and his school are animated by an evangelical spirit they will sink their own personality out of sight, and cease to jeer at those who feel called upon to seek a view of the origin of the Old Testament, which does not cast such dishonour upon God's Word.

Let us remember, however, that we should not tremble for the ark of God, since a mightier hand than ours has it in keeping, and a wiser counsel than that which prompts our well meant endeavours can use the higher and the lower criticism not as ends, but as means for the furtherance of His plans.

In subsequent articles we may show how these critical views revolutionize the History of Israel and Old Testament Theology.

SAMUEL IVES CURTISS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

XIII.

THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION.

“In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, *I say*, did he quicken together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.”—COL. ii. 11-13 (Rev. Vers.).

THERE are two opposite tendencies ever at work in human nature to corrupt religion. One is of the intellect; the other of the senses. The one is the temptation of the cultured few; the other, that of the vulgar many. The one turns religion into theological speculation; the other, into a theatrical spectacle. But, opposite as these tendencies usually are, they were united in that strange chaos