

from “The Bible Under Trial.” (1906AD.)

by

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### Chapter 3

#### *“Presuppositions” in Old Testament Criticism*

I HAVE indicated that the severest trial to which the Bible has been subjected in recent years has come from the side of Old Testament criticism. To this phase of the trial, therefore, I shall now, in a few papers, address myself. So wide is the field, and so complex the subject, that it will be understood that I must content myself with touching only the larger issues. But I shall try to glance at most of these.

#### I.

“The Higher Criticism,” it is well known, professes to dissect the Bible into its elements: to determine approximately the dates and circumstances of the composition of its component parts; then, from the materials thus analysed and readjusted, to construct a living picture of the history of the people of Israel, and of the development of their religion, laws, and institutions.

It has already been made clear that not one word will be said in these papers against

#### LEGITIMATE CRITICISM.

Provided it be done reverently, by all means let the Bible be subjected to the most careful scrutiny anyone can apply to it on its literary and historical sides; and if any light breaks out from the process, as, under God’s guidance, there is every reason to hope it will, let it be faithfully followed, even if old ideas and time-honoured conclusions have to some extent to be modified or abandoned. This is not, indeed, the highest way of studying the Bible. Taken by itself, it is poor fare, this critical business, for any human soul to nourish itself upon. Still, criticism has its rightful and necessary place, and I have not been stinted elsewhere in my acknowledgment of the gains we owe to it. I gladly own that, as the result of criticism, many things in the Bible are far better understood than they were before, and that the study of the Old Testament, especially in its historical and prophetic parts, has undergone a remarkable freshening. Only it is fair to note that many other causes in the progress of knowledge and in the spirit of the time have contributed to this result, and criticism must not be allowed to carry off the whole credit of it. It is not, therefore, every criticism, but

## THIS CRITICISM,

which has for many years almost exclusively usurped the name, which is impugned as injurious to faith. It is often said, when attention is called to the minute dissection of the books of the Bible, and to theories of age and authorship, What, after all, does it matter? Is faith bound up with questions of doubtful disputation like these? Frequently the remonstrance is added that, in any case, it is wrong to appeal to the “harmful consequences” of a theory in disproof of its truth, when the sole question should be, Is it true? It is necessary, however, very carefully to discriminate. It is freely granted that there are many inquiries in criticism which faith can afford to look on with equanimity.<sup>1</sup> There are books in the Bible—for example, Kings and Chronicles, compilations from earlier materials, and admittedly of late date—the authorship of which is unknown. Yet their authority is not destroyed, and it is a legitimate question how far this process of compilation may extend.

Or, take the question of

## THE PENTATEUCH.

I myself take a high view of the connection of Moses with the Pentateuch. I believe this to be the view borne out by internal evidence, by the later testimony of the Old Testament, and by unbroken tradition since. Yet there are parts of the Pentateuch which we know Moses did not write—e.g., the account of his own death (Deut. xxxiv.); and if it should prove (as I think probable) that different hands co-operated in the composition of this large work, that it embodied older or later records, and that it underwent repeated revision and re-editing, our faith in its essentially Mosaic character and truthfulness would not be sensibly affected.

It is a very different matter, as pointed out at the commencement, when the late dates assigned to documents are employed as leverage to destroy the credibility of the history, and to upset, at almost every point, the Bible’s witness to itself. How, a reasonable mind will inevitably ask, can anyone regard as the Word of God a book which confessedly is largely composed of fictions and incredibilities; which degrades and dishonours God by its representations; which is full of contradictions; in which its most solemn “Thus saith the Lords” are denied; which does not scruple, on occasion, to employ the methods of fraud? Criticism of this kind

## DOES EMPHATICALLY MATTER.

It is the armoury in which popular infidelity finds to-day its most effective weapons against the Bible.

This is not a matter which appeals only to academic interests. The argument from consequences needs, indeed, to be handled with caution. But in no sphere of life does any sane man close his eyes to the nature of the consequences of the theory he is opposing or defending. Is it a Fiscal Controversy? The stake is held to be the prosperity or ruin of the Empire. Is it a question of personal conduct? The beneficial or harmful consequences of a particular line of action are never forgotten to be urged. Grave or hurtful consequences are at least always regarded as a reason for the narrowest scrutiny of the principles or theo-

ries that lead up to them. They are often more. “By their fruits ye shall know them” is given as a test bearing directly upon truth.<sup>2</sup>

It is carefully to be observed, in entering on the inquiry about criticism, that

### THE BOOK PROPOSED TO BE SUBJECTED

to this ordeal does not come to the trial without having something to say for itself on the points directly at issue.

The investigation does not take place *in vacuo*. The slate is not clean at the commencement of the critics’ proceedings. The Bible has a character, an identity, a witness of its own, which must be taken account of in any examination of its claims. It comes into court with very distinct claims. It professes to be a history of revelation. It gives itself out as a record of God’s dealings with man in revelation from the beginning. It unfolds the course of that revelation through its successive dispensations. It has its own account to give of the origin of its laws and institutions. Its narrative is connected with great historic personages—Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, the prophets, culminating in Jesus Christ, the goal of the whole. The history, accordingly has

### AN ORGANIC, PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER,

is charged with deep ideas, moves forward under the impulse of an indwelling divine purpose, which cannot be eliminated from its parts without destroying the significance of the whole.

More even must be said of it than this. The Old Testament abounds in claims to be, or convey, the Word of God to its own time and people. Jesus accepted it as such (*e.g.*, Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; v. 17, 18; xv. 3, 6; Luke xxiv. 26, 27; John v. 39, 45-47). He appeals to its narratives, even the earliest, in proof of the great principles of His religion (Matt. xix. 4-6; xxii. 31, 32). The New Testament declares this to be its character, and, in the essentials of its message, affirms it to be the Word of God to Christians still (*e.g.*, Rom. i. 1, 2; iii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17). The Old Testament gives, besides, good reasons for these claims in the spiritual powers with which its revelation is shown to be charged. The onus lies on the critic, if he will, of disproving this character of the Bible (many, of course, do not desire to disprove it). It cannot be simply ignored, or treated as if the claim was not there. The critic cannot be allowed, in oblivion of all this, to start

### THEORY-BUILDING

on the origin and course of Israel’s history and religion, as if nothing already was given. Yet, as we are soon to see, this is precisely what the modern criticism, in its most eminent representatives, does.

It will, in truth, become apparent, as we proceed, that nearly everything in this critical study of the Old Testament depends on the principles by which we are guided, and the spirit in which the study is conducted. Criticism is like the fiery-cloudy pillar which led the Israelites through the Red Sea: it has a double aspect—light to the hosts in front; darkness to their pursuers. To one man, imbued with the Psalmist’s love of God’s law (Ps. cxix. i8), criticism discloses endless harmonies and agreements. To another it discovers nothing but diffi-

culties, incredibilities, contradictions, moral monstrosities. It follows that we cannot be too careful about our starting points and methods.

## II.

This brings me to a closer scrutiny of the methods of

### THE NEWER CRITICISM

of whose procedure I complain. Criticism, I know, is for the present so settled on its lees in its confidence in its immovable results that little that anyone can say will make any impression on it. It points, in the familiar phrase, to its “assured results,” and there is held to be an end of it. There are, however, several questions which press for answer here. A first is, Are the results settled? Next, if they are, How are they settled? And yet another is, *Should* they be settled? And the middle question of these three—the question of the How—is as important as either of the others. It is the one I propose to look at to begin with.

The story of how criticism has come to reach

### ITS PRESENT ADVANCED POSITION

is too long to be here even entered on. Two periods, in general, may be distinguished:

First, there was the period of the “literary” criticism, with its “results” in the analysis of the documents of the Pentateuch now commonly accepted (J, E, D, P, with their developments), the assigning of Deuteronomy to the age of Josiah, the attributing of the second part to Isaiah to the exile, of Daniel to the age of the Maccabees, &c.

Next came the period of the so-called “historical-religious” criticism, inaugurated (with some precursors) by Graf in 1866, and carried forward by Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others, till it has become the reigning school. In its hands history, laws, religion, all go into the melting-pot, with consequences that will afterwards become apparent. Its distinctive and most plausible feature is the theory of

### THE THREE CODES

—viz., the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic, and the Priestly Codes—assumed to correspond with successive periods of the history. The Levitical Code, assigned by the Bible to Moses, is post-exilian. The order of “Levites” takes its origin from the “degraded priests” of Ezek. xliv.

If now the question is asked, By what *method* are these “results” obtained? the answer will confidently be given—by careful literary and historical investigation. And I have no disposition to deny that honest and careful investigation *has* played a large part in the history of criticism. Critical theories are often hypotheses to explain real phenomena, and it is only fair to give careful attention to any facts they bring to light and seek to account for. But is this all? If it were, it is safe to say we should not have the results now shown. But it is not. There is

## A DEEPER FORCE AT WORK

whose action has profoundly controlled and directed the operations of Old Testament criticism from the first. The force I speak of is the rationalistic conviction that a supernatural explanation of facts cannot be admitted. From the beginning Old Testament criticism has been committed to this idea, and it is under its influence, very largely, that the modern theory we are now discussing has been built up. This preconception, connected with what is called "the modern view of the world," enters deeply into both Old Testament and New Testament criticism at the present hour.

I take here a striking illustration from the New Testament, which applies with equal force to the Old. Germany and other countries have been flooded of late with books, some of a popular order, setting forth the lineaments of a non-supernatural Jesus, and of a Christianity divorced from "Pauline" ideas. Against this so-called "religious-historical" view of Jesus and Christianity, as represented by two writers, Bousset and Wrede, the Ritschlian Professor, Julius Kaftan, of Berlin, utters himself in a trenchant pamphlet, *Jesus and Paulus*, which, in its own way, is a sign of the times. His words are weighty. This new theorising, he declares emphatically, "has its roots in quite other soil than that of method." "It is," he says, "put briefly, the so-called 'modern view of the world' (moderne *Weltanschauung*) which stands behind it" (p. 4). He shows how this leads to a quite unhistorical representation of both Jesus and Paul, and concludes a searching investigation with the judgment: "I conclude, therefore, that this 'Jesus-religion' is an affair without roots. As it has points of support neither in the Gospel of Jesus nor in primitive Christianity, so it will never approve itself, not to-day, and not in the future, as a possible form of Christianity" (p. 77).<sup>3</sup>

Exactly the same thing is true of the modern theorising on the Old Testament. It has its roots not in method, but in

### AN ANTI- SUPERNATURALISTIC PRESUPPOSITION.

De Wette, in his *Introduction*, laid it down that the miraculous narratives of the Old Testament "have their foundation partly in the deficiency and narrowness of human knowledge at that time . . . and partly in the distance of time between the event itself and the written account of it," and held that they were to be treated as "historical myths" (II. p. 25). The criticism of Kuenen and Wellhausen is ruled by this idea. Prof. G. B. Foster, of Chicago University, declares, with the endorsement of that body, in his recent book on *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, that "to the scientific understanding of the world, and to the intellectual aptitude superinduced by science, a miracle cannot be admitted" (p. 130), and devotes a large section of his work to the proof of this thesis.

I know, of course, very well that many who have adopted and work with these theories retain their faith in the supernatural. Their reason for doing so is the very just one that they perceive quite clearly that, with any amount of critical violence, you cannot get the supernatural out of the Bible. It is there, and will reassert itself. Their problem, accordingly, is to work these two things together, and the result is a compromise which will not stand, since the things attempted to be combined are opposite in principle. Fruit grown upon a tree of

such pronouncedly rationalistic root does not become good simply by being served up in a Christian basket.<sup>4</sup>

### III.

The truth of what is now said becomes more evident, when, from its underlying principle, we look to

#### THE WORKING OUT

of this modern critical theory. The Bible is a book full of the supernatural from beginning to end. It is the history of the development of a supernatural purpose, issuing in the Incarnation, and in a supernatural economy of redemption. It is a story, from the Call of Abraham downwards, of the entrance of God into history in supernatural word and deed. It is clear that the critical view, having as its postulate the denial of all this, has no alternative but to begin by sweeping the whole of it away. This, accordingly, is what it actually does. The process has two stages, in each of which the characteristic vice of the method is laid bare. The method, first, compels rejection, almost *in toto*, of the history we have; next, it invokes imagination to fill up the blank by devising a *new* history, fashioned on its own principle of

#### RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION.

As to the completeness of the sweep made of the existing history, there can be no question. Mr. Addis has just published a volume on *Hebrew Religion*,<sup>5</sup> in which the patriarchal age is not so much as mentioned. To use a phrase of Duhm's, applied to the Mosaic period it is simply "wiped out."<sup>6</sup> The same is true of the age of Moses, even where the lawgiver's personality and religious leadership of Israel are admitted. The history as we have it disappears. But some go further. In an important work lately published by Prof. Ed. Meyer, of Berlin, on *Israel and its Neighbours*,<sup>7</sup> the thesis is laid down and defended that Moses is no historical personality (p. 569). This will comfort Dr. Cheyne, who cannot believe that Moses was even, like Sargon, "a historical personage with mythic accretions." The book of Joshua is a "romance." I gave in my volume on the Old Testament a typical example of this "historical" method from Budde, which I may here reproduce. He is explaining how the Kenite god of Moses became transformed into the Yahweh of a later period by the absorption of "other gods" into Himself. "Yahweh had not expelled or annihilated them [the Canaanitish Gods], but had made them subject: He had divested them of their personality by absorbing them into His own person. *To be sure, neither the law, nor the historical narratives, nor the prophets say a word of all this, yet it can be proved,*" &c.<sup>8</sup>

Another branch of the same procedure is the removal by critical expurgation of any passages or references in the history or prophets which do not suit the critical scheme. The high priest, for instance, Wellhausen tells us, is a creation of the exile. He is "unknown even to Ezekiel."<sup>9</sup> Yet the high priest is mentioned at least four times in the preceding history (2 Kings xii. 10; xxii. 4-8; xxiii., q.), and the texts are sustained by the parallel passages in Chronicles

and by the Septuagint. What is to be done with them? They are simply *struck* out as interpolations.

The passage above quoted from Budde serves equally as an illustration of the counter process of

#### FILLING UP FROM IMAGINATION

the blanks created by this annihilation of the existing history. Examples would be endless. The whole critical theory of the evolution of Israel's religion from a primitive animism to the creation of the Priestly Code in the exile is, in my judgment, a case of it, and it was seen in a previous paper that Hugo Winckler, the Orientalist, is of the same opinion. Only an instance or two need be given.

It was mentioned before that the "Levites" in the Priestly Code are supposed to have taken their origin in the "degradation" of the unfaithful priests of Ezek. xliv. There is no evidence that such a degradation was ever carried out, much less that the "Levites," already found at the return from exile (Ezra ii. 40; iii. 8, &c.), were the creation of any such ban; yet we are treated with imaginary pictures of the "vehement struggles" (adumbrated in the story of Korah) of these degraded priests in the exile to regain their lost privileges!<sup>10</sup> Nothing could be more baseless.

Again, the Decalogue is denied to Moses, but the fiction of a "second decalogue," which is supposed to be more primitive, is extracted from Exodus xxxiv. 14-26. Yet Mr. Addis, who serves up this "earliest decalogue" without demur in his *Hebrew Religion* (pp. 117-19), had himself told us in his larger work on the Hexateuch (I. p. 157), in this agreeing with very many critics, that the disentangling of the alleged "ten words" is "mere guesswork!" In the same writer a proof that "the doorposts [in Israel] were under the protection of penates, or spirits of the household," is found in the fact that the master took his bondsmen "to the door-post, and pierced his ear with an awl, by that act bringing him to Elohim" (p. 37; Cf. Exodus xxi. 6). What can be clearer than that "Elohim" here means simply "judges" (E.V. "shall bring him unto the judges"), as unquestionably it does in 1 Sam. ii. 25? More examples will be found when we come to deal with worship.

#### IV.

To prove the Wellhausen theory, however, to be arbitrary and fallacious would avail little, if it were not possible to put some

#### POSITIVE CONSTRUCTION

in its place, and to show that the Biblical representation, to which the Wellhausen conception is opposed, is capable of vindication on its own account. It has been pointed out that the most fundamental and plausible part of this hypothesis—that which has gained for it, undoubtedly, most acceptance—is its skilful theory of the "three Codes." It may serve a useful purpose at this stage, therefore, briefly to bring the Biblical and the critical views on these Codes into contrast, and to test their respective merits.

The comparison is crucial in other ways. It is sometimes said that there is no claim in the Pentateuch itself to

## MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP.

But is this the case? Does not the Decalogue claim to be Mosaic? Does not every Code of Law in the Old Testament claim to be from Moses? Moses is said to have written down the laws in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xxiv. 3-7). He is expressly said to have written the law in Deuteronomy (Deut. xxxi. g). He gave the Levitical Laws. The arguments against the Mosaic authorship formerly drawn from the absence of the art of writing and the state of culture of the time are vanishing with better knowledge, and objection now chiefly turns on the supposed incompatibility of the Codes with each other, and with the history.

## CRITICAL THEORY OF THE CODES.

Criticism undertakes to show that the three Codes in question—the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Levitical Code—are non-Mosaic, partly on the ground of their internal incompatibility, but chiefly because they can be proved to belong to successive periods of history by their correspondence with the conditions of these periods. As Prof. Peake, in a lecture before quoted,<sup>11</sup> succinctly puts the matter: “By proving that these Codes arose in different ages, and were elicited by different social and religious conditions, it [criticism] has removed the great stumbling-block presented by the spectacle of radically inconsistent Codes given by the same legislator with an interval of a few months at most between them” (the interval between Deuteronomy and the other Codes, it may be remarked, was nearly forty years). The law in Exodus xx.-xxiii., it is held, with its provision for a multiplicity of altars (Ch. xx. 24), ruled till the age of Josiah; then came the movement for the centralisation of worship inaugurated by Deuteronomy, taken to be “a prophetic programme”; the Levitical Code is post-exilian, as is thought to be proved by the absence of all reference to its characteristic institutions earlier. So it used to be shown that the Fourth Gospel could not be earlier than the middle of the second century, because it reflected the conditions of the conflict with Gnosticism!

Historical and legal details will be considered in another connection. I wish now to try to show that, from the Bible’s own point of view, the whole theory rests on

## A FUNDAMENTAL OVERSIGHT.

A constant assumption of the school I am criticising is that the Levitical Code is put forth as a fixed, immutable system of laws, given once for all in the wilderness, and intended to regulate the life and practice of the Israelites, without change or modification, in all future time. The late Prof. W. R. Smith makes this, which he calls “The Traditional Theory of the Old Testament History,” the basis of his whole exposition of the theory of the Codes. “As soon,” he says, “as we lay down the position that the system of the ceremonial law, embracing as it does the whole life of every Jew, was completed and prescribed as an authoritative code for Israel before the conquest of Canaan, we have an



absolute rule for measuring the whole future history of the nation, and the whole significance of subsequent revelation under the whole Testament.<sup>12</sup>

Now look at the facts.

Two things are clear as day in the history of the Mosaic times: the people looked forward to Canaan, *yet* the ceremonial legislation, in its immediate form, was all but wholly adapted to the conditions of the wilderness.

Let anyone read carefully the laws and narratives attributed to the Priestly Code in Exod. xxv. ff., Leviticus, and Numbers, and he will see that, throughout, the arrangements described are

#### ADAPTED TO THE WILDERNESS,

and that many of them have no meaning except there. The arrangements, *e.g.*, for the consecration of Aaron and his sons; the census-lists of the tribes; the arrangements for the disposition of the tribes in their several camps around the tabernacle; the elaborate instructions for the march of the host; the choice of the Levites and details of their duties in the charge and conveyance of the tabernacle in its journeyings; the directions for the making of the tabernacle itself—for the tabernacle in its nature was a structure which was bound in time to wear out and need replacement. Even the laws and ritual of the sacrifices and feasts, where there is obviously more that is intended to be permanent, are, in the first instance, cast into the wilderness forms. We have, *e.g.*, the direction for the carrying forth of the bullock of the sin-offering, “without the camp, unto a clean place,” and burning of it there (Lev. iv. 12), which so stumbled Bishop Colenso. Evidently the whole cast of such legislation would become unsuitable on entering the land. Only the principles, in many cases, would remain. An observance in the letter would be a manifest impossibility.

A vast mass of the Levitical legislation, therefore, is, on the face of it, of a *temporary* character. It corresponds with the description of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews as an economy that “decayeth” and “is ready to vanish away” (Heb. viii. 13). This is a fact of weighty importance in its bearing on the difficulties which the critics raise about the Codes. Two things, apart from the very direct presumption it affords of an authorship in the Mosaic age,<sup>13</sup> follow from it:—

1. It explains why the traces of this Levitical Code are

#### RELATIVELY SCANT

in the periods that succeeded Moses. They are not nearly so scant, it will be discovered, by any means, as the critics try to make out. Great allowance must also, in fairness, be made, in Hebrew as in Christian history, for times of religious disorganisation (*e.g.*, the judges), corruption, and declension. But it is not always sufficiently considered how large a part of the Levitical legislation was *necessarily* left behind in the simple transition from life in the wilderness to settled life in Canaan. Priests and Levites, *e.g.*, are no longer found grouped in their tents around the tabernacle; but a quite different provision is made for them in the institution of the Levitical cities (Num. xxxv.; Josh. xxi.).<sup>14</sup> The ritual law was carried forward as far as practicable, yet under new forms and conditions, which made reference to the laws in their wilderness forms unlikely.<sup>15</sup> When the temporary part of the legislation is stripped off, the laws

that remain are of a kind which it would be very difficult to prove were not always of validity in Israel.

Besides this, it seems to me quite a mistake to suppose that the godly in Israel ever were, or were intended to be, of the law to the extent that many suppose (1 Sam. xv. 21).<sup>16</sup> The moral law was ever above the ritual (Cf. Matt. xii. 3-7). As necessity arose, laws were freely altered or modified, of course under proper authority. David, on the testimony of the "Levitical" Chronicler, reorganised the whole worship of the tabernacle (1 Chron. xxiii. ff.). The tax imposed by Nehemiah was the *third* of a shekel, instead of the *half* shekel of the law (Neh. x. 32). When all the circumstances are considered, we may begin to feel with Dillmann that the allusions, even to ritual, in the history are as numerous as we had any right to expect.

2. It leads us to anticipate that, later, new laws

### MODIFYING THE OLD

would be given in prospect of entering the land. If the Levitical law, as just said, at once looked forward to entering Canaan (*e.g.*, Lev. xxv. 2), yet, in its immediate shape, was wholly adapted to conditions in the wilderness, it is only what we might expect that, as the time for the change approached, new or supplementary ordinances would be given (*e.g.*, the directions for the Levitical cities, Num. xxxv.; laws of inheritance, Num. xxxvi.), and that in any rehearsal or re-promulgation certain changes, readaptations, and modifications of laws would be made. This last is precisely what we find in the Book of Deuteronomy, which looks forward not only to life in Canaan, but to a future settled place for God's house, in room of the shifting tabernacle, and to a stricter centralisation of worship than was then possible (Ch. xii.) It will be seen afterwards that there is in this no "radical inconsistency" with the older legislation, which also has the unity of God's worship as its ideal. So far from Deuteronomy "contradicting" the law about the altar of earth or stone in Ex. xx-24-25, it directly falls back on that law in ordaining an altar to be set up on Mount Ebal (Deut. xxvii. 4-7).

### V.

Here, then, it seems to me, we have, in great part,

### THE REAL SECRET

of the peculiarities of the three Codes, on an illusory interpretation of which the new theory of Israel's law and religion is made to hinge. When the right perspective is attained, the "radical inconsistencies" of the critic's imaginings largely fall away of their own accord. The oldest Code in Ex. xx-xxiii. cannot stand in essential disagreement with the Levitical ritual law, for, except in the law of the altar (Ex. xx. 24-26), which is quite general, and probably embodies old usage, and one or two other points (the feasts, Ex. xxiii. 14-19), it deals, as civil law,<sup>17</sup> with a different class of subjects altogether. As little can "radical" inconsistency be alleged between this Code and Deuteronomy, seeing that, apart again from the altar law, the Deuteronomic Code is, by all but universal

admission, based on this older legislation. The supposed discrepancy on the central sanctuary will be discussed after.

The only crucial question, then, is as to

#### THE RELATION OF THE LEVITICAL LAW TO DEUTERONOMY,

and on this point the Bible and the Wellhausen criticism do stand “radically” opposed. The Bible makes the Levitical law the earlier, representing it as the product of the wilderness, with which its form agrees. Criticism, on the other hand, as we have seen, tears it away from its Mosaic basis, and carries it down to post-exilic times; puts it after the prophets. Instead of the order “law and prophets,” we have now the order “prophets and law.”<sup>18</sup>

But, apart from other objections, is this likely? It is the favourite theory at present, but is it natural or reasonable? As we formerly saw, Hugo Winckler, who knows as much about Oriental codes as most, decidedly rejects it on historical grounds. Law and prophets, he tells, are present from the beginning (op. cit., p. 47). But is it reasonable in itself?

#### IS PROGRESS BACKWARD?

Which is the more natural order, from outward to inward, or from inward to outward? From rudiments to more spiritual teaching? Or from spiritual teaching back to “beggarly elements?” The law has a suitability and value in its own place as a stepping-stone to something higher; a prefiguration of more spiritual blessings to come. But how shall we regard it as any part of “the Word of God,” if it represents an unspiritual lapse from prophetic teaching to an infinitely lower level? is, in truth, a concoction of exilic priests, who know no better way of commending their fictions than by passing them off in the name of Moses! Having begun in the Spirit, was it God’s will that His chosen people should be made perfect in the flesh? Later Judaism, no doubt, represents a descent into an exaggerated legalism; but was this the proper order or outcome of God’s dispensations?

How, finally, does it stand with the Codes themselves in the

#### RELATION OF DEPENDENCE?

It is not difficult to show that, in manifold ways, as scholars of the highest standing maintain, the Levitical law, or portions of it, are implied in Deuteronomy. On the other hand, the peculiarities of Deuteronomy are not reflected in the Levitical law. There is allusion to the Priestly law in Deuteronomy (Cf. Deut. xiv. 4-20, which Dr. Driver admits is “in great measure verbally identical” with Lev. xi, 2-23). But the Priestly law shows no acquaintance with Deuteronomy. What conclusion is reasonable, but that the Priestly law is the earlier of the two?

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> It is, at the same time, only superficially plausible to say that, in almost any department, criticism “does not matter.” It is the case, e.g., that the more nearly we come to contemporary sources in history, the better is our foundation. Who will deny that this fact lends importance

to such questions as to whether Moses was concerned in the composition of the Pentateuch, or whether Luke wrote the third Gospel and the Acts, or whether Paul was the author of the Epistles that bear his name?

2 Hence the ineptness of such criticism on this point as the following:—"The real question is: Are the generally accepted results of Biblical criticism substantially correct? If they are, we must accept them, no matter what consequences they involve. 'Let's have the light even if we perish in it.'" Is it probable that the true light will issue in destruction?

3 I have been criticised for saying, in my book on Gods Image in Man, that the Christian view of the world is not the "modern" view, and that we ought to have the courage to declare this. Kaftan utters himself in much stronger language than I have cared to use. "I am no lover," he says, "of the modern view of the world; rather, I find it astonishing that so many thinking men should be led astray by this bugbear" (p. 72). See page 151.

4 The reply sometimes made to an argument of this kind, viz., that the believer also has his "presuppositions," is, in this connection, without force. The difference is, that the believer's presuppositions are those which the Bible itself yields; the critics are not, but the negation of the Bible's postulates. The believer, accordingly, interprets the Bible along the Bible's own lines; the opposite view can only be maintained by continual drafts on the historic imagination and by bold and arbitrary treatment of the text and history.

5 [The criticisms on Mr. Addis here and in later papers are allowed to remain; but I desire now to say that I have no doubt of this writer's full acceptance of the great doctrines of our common Christian faith. I cannot change my view on the consistency.]

6 Duhm boasts in his work on the Prophets (p. 19) that by the transference of *a single source* (the Priestly Law) into the post-exilic time, "at one stroke the 'Mosaic' period is wiped out."

7 *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme.*

8 *Religion of Israel*, p. 41. Italics are mine. The above is a suggestive commentary on such panegyrics on the newer criticism as those in Prof. Kent's *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, "Not a grain of truth which the Bible contains has been destroyed or permanently obscured. Instead, the debris of time honoured traditions and dogmas have been cleared away, and the true Scriptures at last stand forth again in their pristine splendour:" &c. ! (p. 16).

9 *Hist. of Israel*, pp. 142-3.

10 E.g., Kautzsch, in his *Lit. of O. T.*, p. 117.

11 *Manchester Inaugural Lectures*, p. 32.

12 *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 298, ff: (1st Edition). Even on this showing, does the conclusion follow? How would it fare with the New Testament Church if tested by the "absolute rule" of Christ's teaching. How many epochs and passages in its history would have to be ruled out as "unhistorical?"

13 Bleek, one of the older critical writers, made good use of this in his *Introduction*, as proving "that an important part of the laws and ordinances of the Pentateuch is of such a nature that, judging from their purport and form, it is impossible that they could belong to any other age than the Mosaic; also that the historical part of the Pentateuch is generally confirmed by them, since they relate so clearly to the circumstances contained in the history." (*Introd. I. p. 225*, E, T.). He says that when we meet with laws, as those mentioned above, "which refer in their whole tenor to a state of things utterly unknown in the period subsequent to Moses, and to circumstances existing in the Mosaic age, and to that only, it is in the highest degree likely that these laws, not only in their essential purport proceeded from Moses, but also that they were written down by Moses, or at least in the Mosaic age" (p. 212).

14 It is possible that, like many other laws, this law of the Levitical cities was never very strictly carried out, though there are instances implying its existence. (Cf. 1 Sam. vi. 15; 1 Kings ii. 26; Jer. i. 1). But is it credible that Ezra should have given to the people for the first time a law declaring that forty-eight cities had been set apart from time immemorial for this purpose when everybody present must have known that no such cities ever existed? Yet such is the critical theory.

15 Cf. my *Problem of the O. T.*, pp. 300, 325.

16 *Ibid*, pp. 19, 504

17 In form and character, as shown by the recently discovered code of Hammurabi (the Amraphel of Gen. xiv.), this Code has on it the impress of great antiquity.

18 The opposition of "priestly" and "prophetic" tendencies may easily be exaggerated. Isaiah received his call in vision in the temple; Jeremiah was of priestly descent; priests and prophets acted together at the finding of the law in Josiah's reign; Deuteronomy is marked by both tendencies; Ezekiel was a priest; Joel, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi do honour to the law, &c.