

miracle. It assumes the power and prerogative of deciding, on the basis of inward characteristics, upon the relative age of the documents of which the Old Testament is made up; of deciding, even to parts of verses and to single words, where such documents have been retouched, where matter has been put in and where it has been left out, emendations by a first hand, emendations by a second hand and a third hand. It assumes as an axiom and bases some of its weightiest deductions upon the demonstrably untenable principle that if a law, purporting to be Mosaic, is not found to be actually in operation in an age subsequent to Moses, it cannot have emanated from him. It assumes for Israel a development like that of any other people and undertakes to reconstruct the biblical history in harmony with that conception. It finds itself withal under the necessity of assuming an amount of fraud in the composition and present arrangement of the Old Testament books that is appalling to contemplate and totally at variance with the spirit and teachings of these books as well as with their past influence in the world.

If we are asked, accordingly, whether this system of criticism has "affected unfavorably any of the essential doctrines of Christianity," we are bound, in view of its present wide influence, to say that it has. But, on the other hand, in view of the obvious quality and leading characteristics of the criticism we are also bound to reply, and with much stronger emphasis that, assuredly, it has not. It has not and can never have any considerable effect on the doctrinal contents of the Bible. To do that it must itself be true, and it must show by reasoning that cannot justly be excepted to that the Bible is false. "We can do nothing," says the apostle, "against the truth, but for the truth." (2 Cor. xiii: 8.)

The work of such critics as Reuss, Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen is not, however, without its value. It has brought to light many new facts that were previously unknown. It has greatly stimulated Old Testament studies. The "more noble" have been stirred up to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. (Acts xvii: 11).

It is a law of physics that action and reaction are equal. But Colenso's attacks, years ago, on the authenticity and genuineness of the Pentateuch called forth an army of defenders; his few short-lived books evoked a whole library of learned treatises whose value is beyond estimate. The reaction from the more recent German criticism has also begun to set powerfully in. When it is complete it will be the answer of Providence to the inquiry why providence permits such assaults in the name of Christianity on the citadels of Christianity.

The conflict will undoubtedly go on. New points of attack will be discovered when the old have been made impregnable. It is best that it should go on. The higher results of it will only be attained when it is acknowledged that besides other kinds of truth there is such a