

unwritten law, to their final form subsequent to the exile.¹ Perhaps, under certain influences now prevalent at Oxford, some parishes may suddenly find themselves inundated with a torrent of doctrine of both these descriptions at once. It will depend entirely on circumstances whether our unfortunate congregations are to be nourished on the milk of Oxford and Cambridge Professors, or the strong meat of Wellhausen and Kuenen, and other similar writers, now widely read in England; whether they are to be taught to regard the Old Testament as a compilation of uncertain date, and more or less doubtful authority, or whether they are to look upon it as an audacious forgery in the interests of a class, absurd in its statements, loose in its moral principles, utterly ludicrous in its literary form.² The question, therefore, is already before the Christian world in a practical shape. Every teacher of religion must be prepared to state his opinion upon it. We must know where the new criticism is to stop, and why. We must know definitely on what grounds it is recommended to us, and what is the value of the consent which is urged upon us as a reason for accepting it. We must decide for ourselves whether the narrative which comes before us as the history of the people of Israel be "idealized" or not. Nor will it do to explain this phrase as meaning no more than the honest delivery of traditions handed down from an earlier age. To "idealize," consciously or "unconsciously," is to create; to record tradition is to relate. We must understand precisely which of the two theories, the German or the English, we mean to adopt, for our treatment of the Scriptures will depend entirely on our decision. Nor can it be contended that these questions should be settled by experts alone.³ They must be decided by arguments which are calculated to satisfy the reason of every intelligent man. Every honest attempt to understand the principles on which our acceptance of these new views of the Old Testament is asked is a con-

¹ See Kuenen, cited in last paper, p. 369, note.

² See passages from Wellhausen cited in the former paper, p. 369, note.

³ As we have seen, the results of Hebrew criticism are of a most contradictory character. See former paper, pp. 364, 365.