

WELLHAUSEN ON THE PENTATEUCH.

PART IV.

IN the last paper the new criticism was discussed from the point of view of Israelitish history. This time we will consider it in relation to the law. The limits to which these papers are confined will force us this time to confine ourselves to arguments endorsed by the English school of critics. In their case, we shall find dangerous admissions, but no direct irreverence to the Word of God. Professor Robertson Smith, in his *Answer* to the charges brought against him before the Presbytery of the Free Church at Aberdeen (p. 43), refers to the "holy boldness" with which Luther and Zwingle were wont to speak of Holy Scripture, and goes on to say that these very men "taught the Church to love and reverence the Bible as it never had been done before." It is quite true that we are bound to prefer the spirit to the letter; that the Revelation of God's Will has been progressive; that we owe it to the prophets of Israel as well as to Moses; that it has been the work of a developing Spirit resident in the Church, and gradually leading men to a higher knowledge of the truth. And it is only fair to Professor Robertson Smith to say that he distinctly dissociates himself from Kuenen in the most extreme of his statements. For instance, he altogether repudiates the notion that Deuteronomy was a forgery of the priestly party. It is not with any desire to deprecate fair criticism of this kind that these papers are written. If I have spoken of the moral or theological considerations involved,¹ it is in order to arouse the interest of the general public. I referred to those considerations, first, as reasons why we should weigh the question with special care, it being one on which it is eminently undesirable that our judgments should be formed off-hand; and next, because it is one on which each Christian man, and especially each Christian

¹ *Theological Monthly*, June, 1890, pp. 363, 367-69.