

nings of spiritual life ; yet nobody can trace those beginnings in the twenty-ninth and the following Psalms, or in certain passages of the Prophets, without a feeling widely different from contempt. If the Old Testament were a mass of absurdities and immoralities, could it by any force of mere tradition have kept its hold on the reverence and affection of multitudes in the most highly civilized nations ? Would the sacred books of any other primitive nation have done the same ? If the Mosaic code and polity were on a level with those of other barbarous tribes, would men in the age and with the culture of the Puritans have imagined, however erroneously, that they were a divine ideal of government and law ? Newton rested satisfied with the cosmogony of Genesis, which came into no decisive collision with his science : would he have rested satisfied with any other cosmogony that could be named ? Say that a great deal of the Old Testament, especially the history of the tribal wars, belongs to the past, to the ages before humanity ; say that those portions of it ought no more to be read in churches ; and we shall heartily agree with you. But let us be true critics and do justice to the past.

Even as to those tribal wars and the exterminating precepts connected with them (which it is a comfort to think were probably speculative, having been penned when the wars were really over), they differ from their counterparts in the history of other tribes, not by special ferocity, but in having, not merely a territorial or predatory, but a moral object. The lawgiver wanted to save his people from contamination by the presence of an impure religion and a depraved morality ; the Dorian invaders of Peloponnese, the Huns, the Danes, the Iroquois, had no such aim. Mosaism is the very reverse of favourable to militarism or to conquest. It is a remarkable attempt to give peaceful industry, embodied in a community of agricultural freeholders, a complete ascendancy over war. It bids the people, of course, fight bravely in defence of their land, and enjoins the priests to encourage them in doing so, as in a world of rapine necessity required. But it does not exalt military