

Wellhausen tells us that every one disposed to recognize scientific methods must allow that it was composed at the time it was found.¹ The force of the objections to this theory, as well as that of the post-exilic origin of a large part of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, is admitted by their English followers. They will not face the vast improbability that important portions of the history of Israel and her institutions could have been invented at a far later date, and yet that Israel could be induced to believe them.² We are entitled to ask whether any other instance is to be found of a nation so credulous as to receive with eagerness a book as authentic containing an entirely fictitious account of its history and institutions, full of the most sweeping condemnations of their past behaviour and present condition, and making the strongest demands upon them for an entire change of conduct and religious conviction. We have read of religious reforms in other countries. The examples of Zoroaster, Manes, Mahomet, Wiclif, Martin Luther are before us. Did it occur to any of these remarkable men to attempt to palm off a forgery upon those whom they addressed, or does it seem probable that they would have succeeded better if they had done so? Mohammed wrote the Koran, it is true. But he did not pretend that it was a volume eight hundred years old. Wiclif and Luther pinned their faith to a book. But it was a book of demonstrated antiquity. We may be able to

¹ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. "In allen Kreisen wo überhaupt auf Anerkennung wissenschaftlicher Resultate wird anerkannt dass es in der Zeit verfasst ist, in der es entdeckt werde." p. 9.

² In order to support this theory, we are required to believe that the allusions to the "book of the law" in Joshua are the insertion of the Deuteronomist himself. It is difficult to believe that an authentic history of Joshua *ex hypothesi* in the hands of the men of that day could have been so falsified under the eyes of a determined and powerful opposition. Civilized society is much the same in all ages, and such attempts, if made, would be sure to recoil on their authors. Only in an age of ignorance, produced by the suppression of all free inquiry, would such a policy be likely to succeed. So obvious is this, that we may expect to find a school arise which will make the whole Hexateuch, in its present shape, post-exilic. But even then all the difficulties will not have vanished. The discrepancies between Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code would be on that hypothesis at least as inexplicable as they are upon the hypothesis of the Mosaic origin of the whole.