

given by the Lausiac History of Palladius, the best authority for the history of Egyptian Monasticism : in the middle ages, this work, in its current shape, was accepted as historic : in recent times its confusions and mistakes were exposed and it was held to be largely a romance : quite lately Dom Butler, a learned English Benedictine, has applied to the work the joint methods of the Lower and Higher Criticism, establishing the results (a) that in the earlier work a shorter text can be discriminated, (b) that the text so gained is of great historic value. Thus a firm footing has been gained in a field of work where without the continued application of criticism we should have been left either in error or without accurate knowledge. The verdict of Dom Butler (as embodied in his contributions to Cambridge Texts and Studies) is probably final for the work in question, but from time to time the verdict has been in suspense although the method has been the same throughout.

When applied to the Old Testament Historical Criticism distinguishes four groups or layers, which can be discerned to a large extent even in the English version, in the Hexateuch, or the Pentateuch with Joshua : there is (a) a part, denoted by J, in which the name Jehovah is used : (b) a part denoted by E in which the name Elohim is used : (c) a distinct and coherent part, the framework of the narrative priestly in tone and sympathies, denoted by P : (d) another distinct part which from its prevalence in Deuteronomy is denoted by D. While P and D are easily distinguished from each other and from J and E, J and E are not so easily separated from each other : their narratives overlap and are so blended that critics while agreeing as to their existence generally differ about details : hence their combination JE is often treated as a whole. These divisions which cover not only the Hexateuch but the text of the historical books as well are generally admitted by the vast majority of scholars : they are due to no new theories, and the belief in their existence is due to the use in Old Testament study of the methods