

Pentateuch, but that able critic did not deny that it had on the whole a Mosaic origin. Spinoza, and after him, Astruc, contended that it was a compilation; other critics, among whom the well-known De Wette may be numbered, followed in their train, until at last the theory of disintegration took definite shape and form in the conclusions of Ewald, which were confidently accepted some thirty years ago by "liberal" theologians and critics as the "conclusions of modern critical science." His theory is elaborate indeed. He postulates (1) a few fragments of works contemporary with Moses, embedded in a mass of later matter. These consist of (a) the Book of the Wars of Jahveh, quoted in Num. xxi. 14, (b) the Biography of Moses, (c) the Book of Covenants. Then (2) follows the Book of Origins, written about the time of David. Then (3) the narratives written by the prophets, attributed to three different authors; and, lastly, the Deuteronomist, who reduced these various materials into shape, with the addition of supplementary matter of his own, suited to the purpose he had in hand; that purpose being to induce people to accept his view of Jewish institutions as the voice of Moses himself. No other word but "dishonest" can fitly describe an attempt on the part of the sacerdotal class, how excellent soever may have been its intentions, to secure attention to the religious system it desired to establish, by representing it as the work of Moses. These conclusions are put forward by Ewald, as by all other Old Testament critics it has been my fortune to meet, with a lofty infallibility which disdains argument. Questions of style are settled by an *ipse dixit*, and matters of history are dealt with as suits the critic's taste. Other writers of the same school, as might be expected, differ from Ewald in his conclusions. Each thinks for himself, and each is equally infallible. Knobel reduces the number of writers on the ground that Ewald's system is "so complicated and obscure a fabric"¹ that it will not bear investigation. Hupfeld proposes a different arrangement, which is further simplified by Nöldeke, who is still too elaborate for Bleek. Ewald, in turn,

¹ Ein so verwickeltes und unklares Gewebe. *Kritik des Pentateuch und Josua*, p. 496.