

This theory was not always in vogue among Higher Critics. Its adoption marks a remarkable turning point in the history of Old Testament criticism. Before this, the criticism had proceeded mainly on literary grounds. Diction, style, ideas, the connection of paragraphs and sentences, supplied the staple arguments and furnished the criteria from which all conclusions were drawn. And the data being so vague, no sure footing could be found for a common standing ground, and so, speaking generally, every imaginable difference prevailed among the critics. But in 1866 Prof. Karl H. Graf, of Gottingen, published his essay on "The Historical Books of the Old Testament," in which he proposed the complete reversal of the main results of the older criticism, by placing the Law later than the Prophets, by a big leap over the yawning gulf of five centuries. It certainly does not help to inspire confidence in the newer critical methods to know that this leap was actually made, and for no other reason than because the development theory rendered such an alteration necessary.

The Grafian hypothesis, as it was called, after the name of its author, did not at once commend itself to the German mind, and Graf himself was mainly to blame for its temporary disfavor, by separating the legal portion of the Elohist or Priestly document (containing Leviticus and related portions of Exodus and Numbers) from its historical setting and transferring that portion alone to its new post-exilian position, while he left the history where it was, as the oldest constituent of the Pentateuch. Such a separation, however, was impossible. The history and the laws were stamped with the same characteristics and could not be torn apart. While the controversy was raging, Dr. Ab. Kuenen, professor in Leyden, came upon the scene. He boldly grasped the situation. He thought that Graf's