

existence when he wrote, he was himself the author of it. If a 'Book of the Wars of Jahveh' is quoted, as in Num. xxi. 14, 15, it is an older document. If a 'Book of the Law of Jahveh,' he wrote it himself. 'This is not to inquire, it is to make inquiry impossible.' But it is an extremely convenient process for its authors. No answer to it is possible. Every testimony to the antiquity of a book is declared to have been inserted into the older narrative at the time the book was written. This is not proved; it is simply asserted. The only possible answer is a counter-assertion. Assertions, however, in favour of the traditional belief unfortunately are worth nothing. It is only when they are alleged against it that they are supposed to be entitled to any weight. What is the value of a general consent of writers who call this process criticism, and its results scientific?

Again, the notion of ancient documents transferred bodily to the redactor's pages suggests some object and purpose in thus transferring them. But what was the use of putting a simple allegory like that of the Fall, so obviously the product of a very early stage in the national development, into a book intended to influence a people who had reached a high degree of civilization, and had declined from it—the very period of national life least accessible to the beauty of simplicity and childlike credulity?¹ Why is the tribe of Judah, the pivot on which all the later history revolves, omitted altogether from the narrative of the early struggles of the race, if, as we are continually told is the case, Judges was revised throughout in the interest of the Jewish priesthood? Why do we find the apostate tribe of Ephraim exalted above that of faithful Judah in the blessings of Jacob and Moses, as recorded in a book written partly for the express purpose of supporting the policy of Josiah, and partly after the captivity and the utter disappearance of the tribe of Joseph from the earth? Documents of northern Israel are,

¹ Observe how fully Ezra recognizes the fact that the age of miracles was over in his day (Ezra viii. 22). This single verse is sufficient to prove the antiquity of the miraculous portions of the Old Testament.