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Some Unsolved Problems of
the Higher Criticism.

AN ADDRESS

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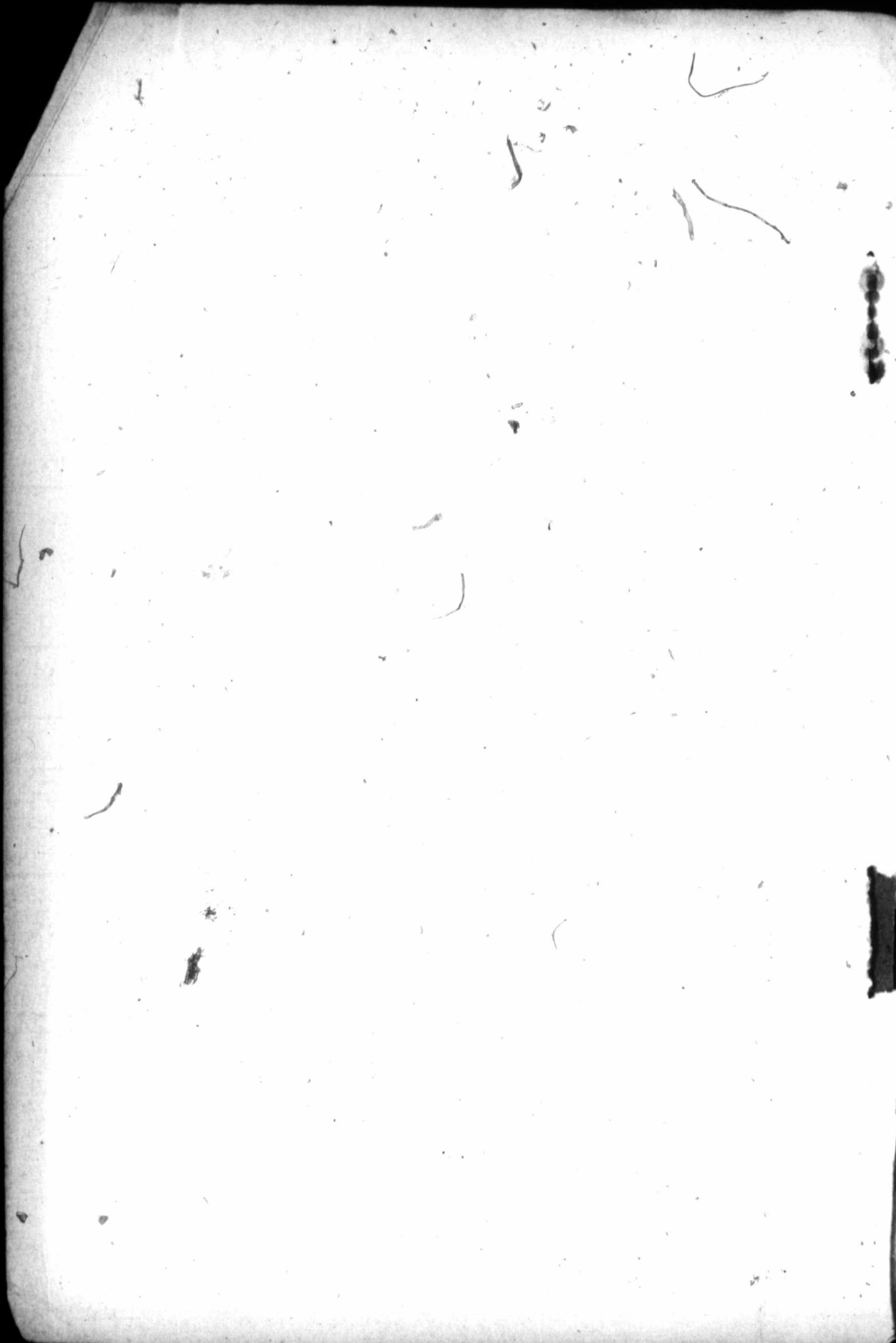
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October 12th, 1894.*

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SOME UNSOLVED PROBLEMS OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE is not to be deprecated, any more than the criticism of any other book. Textual criticism, which is called the lower in distinction from the historical and literary which is styled the higher, has been of exceeding value. There is no good reason why the latter should not be of great service as well as the former. A millionaire might not care much for the class of ship in which he was sending a few dollars' worth of freight; but were he about to embark with his family and all his fortune, he would wish to know that every timber was sound. Just because we are asked to entrust the infinite interests of our souls to the Bible and its teachings, is it but reasonable that the Bible should be submitted to the severest testing. Neither are those who would shield the Bible from the most searching examination its truest friends. Any indisposition to have it submitted to criticism both implies and suggests a doubt whether it is able to bear it, which is most damaging to its claims. Those who have thorough confidence in the Bible as God's Word, are ever most ready to have its claims tested; for they believe that examination will but make their truth more apparent. In any case, we want to know the truth. This can never harm us, but must be of

the highest service in the end. God himself must wish us to know the truth, or He would not be true.

Let it not be supposed, therefore, in anything I shall say this evening, that I object to the criticism of the Bible or depreciate its value. Fair criticism is always legitimate. It is a condition of all progress in knowledge, as well as of assurance of results. But criticism itself may run mad. It may be imposed upon by its own ingenuity. It may degenerate into the shaping of facts to theories rather than a shaping of theories by facts. It may be ruled by preconceptions while avowedly applying the inductive method. It may make the whole arena of its labors much like a gymnasium given up to new and curious feats. It is to a criticism which is subjective, fantastic, and ruled by false principles that I object, not to a criticism which is objective, sober and reverent.

At the outset, the propriety, if not the right of anyone but an expert to deal with the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament has been challenged. Did I think this challenge well founded I should not have ventured to comply with the request of the Chancellor and Faculty to discuss some phase of this live and serious subject this evening. It is true, I have been following the course of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament for quite a number of years with deep interest. For some time I have read as widely as I could in its literature. At the same time I make no claim to be a specialist in this line of study. I do not believe, however, that I am, therefore, compelled to receive with silent submission and dumb assent all that the higher critics *par excellence* may give, or rather, leave us. A Ruskin, and many who are not Ruskins, can judge of

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works of art they cannot paint. We can tell bread from beef, although we may be unable to resolve either into its original elements. All of us can judge of many subjects we have not fully mastered. In like manner, the general features and the conclusions of the Higher Criticism are not beyond the competency of earnest Bible students who have not mastered all its subtle processes and its microscopic details. Indeed, if this complete mastery were indispensable to an intelligent judgment, the whole Christian world would be at the mercy of a very few; for the masters in this study—if there be any masters—can be numbered upon the fingers, perhaps of one hand. Besides, the higher critics are themselves appealing to the general public for its judgment. It is surely not presumptuous for those who have given very special attention to the subject to deal with some of its problems. I concur in the statement of Professor Robertson, of Glasgow, "These writers are specialists, it is true, but specialists dealing with matters in which common sense may follow them—observe their processes and pronounce upon their validity."*

We shall be even less inclined to comply with the demand to put ourselves out of court and surrender unconditionally to the higher critics, if we recall a few facts. This same historical and literary criticism has been applied to the New Testament by Baur and Strauss. They brought to their task a learning which was encyclopedic. They subjected the Gospels and the New Testament generally to as searching a scrutiny, using every available side-light of the apostolic and post-apostolic age, as they ever received, and

* "Early Religion of Israel," p. 7.

yet their hypotheses have long been laid on the shelf as interesting relics of misapplied scholarship. The utmost efforts of their followers have been unable to secure them more than a small *coterie* of adherents. The attempt of Pfeiderer and Harnack to-day to rehabilitate them in the interest of an anti-supernaturalism has been unavailing to do more than put scholars who believe in the supernatural on their guard. The principles of this criticism were applied to the "Iliad," and this immortal work was reduced to a collection of heroic poems gathered together under Homer's name. The result of the controversy has been represented with some wit and no little truth as an acknowledgment by the supporters of this view, that while the "Iliad" was not written by Homer, it was written by a person who lived in the same age and bore the same name. The canons of this criticism relegated the Kingdom of Agamemnon and the story of the Trojan war to mythland; but the excavations of Dr. Schiemann have established the right of both to be considered historical, notwithstanding their legendary and poetical setting. Even in profane history, where this criticism has been so valuable, it has been far from infallible.

As we turn to the course of Old Testament criticism, we shall be struck with its kaleidoscopic character. It has been ever changing, as new theories have been advanced to explain alleged facts, or as the facts have been reshaped to suit new theories. All who take a common-sense view of the course of the higher critical study of the Old Testament, will not feel inclined to challenge the following from Prof. Robertson, of Glasgow University: "Specialists are very prone to become theorists, and a specialist with a theory is

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a very unsafe guide when questions of evidence have to be settled. The Hebrew scholar or trained critic may, by the very possession of his qualifications, see possible combinations, and suggest possible constructions and emendations of a passage that the ordinary reader would never dream of, and he may combine and eliminate, and transpose and amend, and by a triumph of ingenuity bring out a most unexpected result, while all the time, perhaps, a simple and plain meaning of a phrase or passage stares him in the face, from which, however, he gets away to one quite recondite or fanciful. . . . There is an acrobatic criticism which is more sensational than sensible. The qualifications of the specialist render him peculiarly prone to push a theory at all hazards, when to common sense it appears overweighted.* Prof. Sayce, of Oxford, speaks still more strongly. "Baseless assumptions," he says, "have been placed on a level with ascertained facts; hasty conclusions have been put forward as principles of science, and we have been called upon to accept the prepossessions and fancies of the individual critic as the revelation of a new Gospel." ("The Higher Critics and the Monuments," page 5.)

Let us not, therefore, be too much moved, if the higher critics read us out from the ranks of scholars because we are not prepared to accept the latest variation of their view, or even results upon which they have been longest agreed. We need not tremble if they even hurl at us the epithets, traditionalists and anti-critics. The traditional is the view of the Old Testament as we have it. Even

* "Early Religion of Israel," page 7.

Kuenen admits that the critic "dares to form a conception of Israel's development totally different from that which, as anyone may see, is set forth in the Old Testament." Is it to the discredit of the view which the higher critics oppose, that it has had the support of reverent students from time immemorial, and that it is still held by scholars who have no superiors?

In order that you may follow me intelligently, as well as to justify what I have said, I must now give you all too brief a

SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS OF HIGHER CRITICISM.

The Higher Criticism of the Old Testament in its present form began with Astruc, a French physician of some scholarship but of profligate life. In a work published in 1753, he threw out the conjecture whether Genesis was not framed by piecing together sections of pre-existing documents, the two chief of which were distinguished by the use respectively of Elohim and Jehovah for God. Eichorn, the distinguished but unbelieving professor at Gottingen, declared it an "impossibility to form a rational theory of separable documents on the use of the divine names as they now appear in Genesis." He, therefore, subjected Genesis and the first chapters of Exodus to a searching examination of diction, style and contents, in his "Introduction to the Old Testament," which appeared in 1780, in order that the partition into documents might rest upon more numerous if not more reliable data. The theory thus elaborated was called the Earlier Documentary or Compilation Hypothesis. It did not challenge the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch: it but affirmed that Moses,

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But it was soon seen that the criteria which Eichorn had drawn from diction, style and contents, might as readily be used to resolve the whole Pentateuch into a congeries of fragments, as to resolve Genesis and the first of Exodus into two chief documents. As Dr. Green, of Princeton, than whom there are few more accomplished Old Testament scholars, than whom there is no more masterful critic of the Higher Criticism, trenchantly puts it: "Admit the legitimacy of this disintegrating process, and there is no limit to which it may not be carried at the pleasure of the operator; and it might be added, there is no work to which it might not be applied. Any book in the Bible or out of the Bible could be sliced and splintered in the same way and by the same method of argument. Let a similarly minute and searching examination be instituted into the contents of any modern book; let any one page be compared with any other, and every word and form of expression and grammatical construction and rhetorical figure in one that does not occur in the other be noted as difference of diction and style; let every thought in one that has its counterpart in the other be paraded as parallel sections, evidencing diversity of origin and authorship, and every thought which has not its counterpart in the other as establishing a diversity in the ideas of the authors of the two pages respectively; let every conclusion arrived at on one page that does not appear on the other argue different tendencies in the two writers, different aims with which and different influences under which they severally write, and nothing could be

easier, if this method of proof be allowed, than to demonstrate that each successive verse came from a different pen."*

Accordingly, in the hands of Geddes, in England, and Vater, in Germany, in the early part of this century, the Earlier Documentary became a Fragmentary Hypothesis. Its advocates denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch generally. Its compiler had before him a great mass of independent scraps, stories, genealogies and narratives of various lengths, of which only the fragments in the Pentateuch have been preserved. Every section of the Pentateuch is a scrap from these old documents, and without any connection with each other. Of course this theory assumed an incredible number of writings referring to Mosaic and Ante-Mosaic times. It also failed utterly to account for the unity of the Pentateuch, and the numerous allusions of some parts to other parts. It was attacked by Dr. Wette, Bleek and others, in the interest of the Supplementary Hypothesis, and went down before it in the first half of this century.

This hypothesis sought to escape the objections against both the previous theories. The great gaps in the narratives of the Pentateuch as partitioned by Eichorn were hard to reconcile with his idea that both were complete, as were the references in parts assigned to one to parts assigned to the other, with his assumption of their independence. The advocates of this new hypothesis, therefore, held that the Elohist was the earliest as well as the chief historical narrative, and formed the groundwork of the Pentateuch.

* "Anti-Higher Criticism," page 38.

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The Jehovist was a later writer, who prepared an enlarged edition of his work. He preserved his style, for the most part; but incorporated in it sections of his own, supplied omissions, enlarged and took great liberties generally.

It is easy to see how this theory did much to meet the objections to the Documentary Hypothesis, I have just mentioned, and also to account for the unity of the Pentateuch. It did nothing, however, to explain how the portions attributed to the earlier Elohist document refer to or pre-suppose portions referred to the later Jehovist. Neither was it consistent with a chief criterion by which the partition had been made—the existence of alleged duplicate but variant narratives of the same event; for why should a writer, merely supplementing the omissions of another, introduce conflicting accounts of his own? In order to square with other assumptions of their theory, it was also necessary to hold that the Jehovist conformed some portions of his supplementary matter to the Elohist's style, while again he transformed some portions of the original document to his own style. In this way the critics cut the ground from under their criterion from style altogether, and knocked away one of the chief props of their partition theory, by making the Jehovist play fast and loose with both his own style and that of the Elohist.

This hypothesis had its day, and also went down under adverse criticism led by Hupfeld in 1853. His theory was that the Elohist groundwork of the preceding hypothesis was itself a compilation of two Elohist narratives. The major portion remained as the work of the first Elohist, as this writer was now called, while the portion which was thought to partake of the style of the Jehovist, while still

using Elohim for the name of God, was no longer explained as due to the Jehovist supplementer conforming portions of the ground writing to his own style, but was attributed to a separate writer who preferred Elohim to Jehovah for God, and who was termed the Second Elohist. These three narratives, now regarded as independent, and not as supplementary to each other, were thought to have been pieced together by a redactor, who allowed himself all the liberties the Jehovist was said to have taken, of inserting, enlarging, retrenching, transposing, modifying and combining at his pleasure. The objection to the assumed completeness as well as independence of these narratives which the great unfilled gaps afforded, Hupfeld sought to meet by piecing them out with sentences torn away from their connection in what had hitherto been assigned to one document, and crediting them to another. The references from one document to another, which would be a fatal objection to their independence, as well as everything else which did not square with the theory, was conveniently attributed to the redactor. Thus was constructed the More Elaborate Documentary Hypothesis, accepted in its main features by Schrader, Noldecke and Dillmann. This is the view, if we correctly interpret his words in a recent *Biblical World*, adopted by Dr. Harper.

This theory held chief sway among the higher critics from 1853 till 1861. Then there was a slight reaction led by Knobel and Colenso back toward the Supplementary Hypothesis. But the time was ripe for a change which was completely revolutionary in some of its features. Hitherto there had been the most perfect agreement among the critics on several important points. On what had been

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regarded as sufficient evidence, the Elohist narrative or narratives had been considered the most ancient and the most reliable. The Jehovist narrative was the least trustworthy. Deuteronomy was the latest portion of the Pentateuch, dating from Josiah's time 621 B.C. The great leader in the movement which revolutionized all these conclusions was Graf, although Popper had already published similar views, and Reuss had long taught them. In a work published in 1866, he took the ground that all the legal portions of the narrative ascribed to the First Elohist were not the earliest part of the Hexateuch but the latest, dating from after the Babylonish captivity. It was shown, however, that these legal portions of the narrative were so embedded in the historical part, that they must be both from one hand. With that happy facility of shaping facts to theories, of which the Higher Criticism affords so many examples, Graf said: "I accept your position that the legislation, and the historical narrative ascribed to the First Elohist cannot be separated. Then both the history and the legislation are post-exilic." In this way this portion of the Hexateuch is put forward at least four hundred years, and becomes most recent and least trustworthy instead of most ancient and most reliable. Deuteronomy is dislodged from its place as the crowning work and completion of the Pentateuch. The legislation of Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus, as well as of Deuteronomy, is wrenched away from its historical setting, and the whole of Old Testament history must be recarved and shaped to this new hypothesis. The great central assumption is that the religious history of Israel was a natural evolution purely. It denies direct revelation from

God, miracles, prediction of the future and the supernatural generally. By assigning the portions of the histories which conflict with this idea to the bias of late writers or to late redactors, they are licked into shape. The legislation is then arranged in the order and given the dates which the assumption demands. Prophecies of events too much beyond the time of the prophet in whose writings they now appear, to be explained as wise forecasts from a study of the signs of the times, are assigned to unknown writers of a later date. In the hands of some recent writers, Isaiah and Jeremiah are but congeries of prophecies of various times and from different writers of which these prophets wrote but a part.

This is the theory which its advocates claim has gradually dominated higher critical thought since Wellhausen and Kuenen gave it their powerful advocacy from 1878 on. While there are many who accept the general critical partition of the Old Testament made by these leaders who do not follow them in their denial of the supernatural, the tendency in that direction is very strong. Cheyne has yielded to it. Driver admits the supernatural in a qualified way in his Introduction; but Cheyne intimates that this work does not represent the full extent of his accord with more advanced critics. Dr. Briggs declares that "a minute fulfilment of predictive prophecy is impossible," and a comparison of his position as stated in the *Presbyterian Review* of 1883, with that of his Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch in 1893, and much more that of his address before the Parliament of Religions, shows how he has been swept further and further from the old moorings.

There are two tendencies observable at present. One

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represented by Strack and Koenig, in Germany, is a reaction toward more conservative ground. The other represented by Eichthal, Havet and Vernes, in France, would resolve Deuteronomy also into a complex of documents, and would make the whole Pentateuch, and even all the prophets, post-exilic. It is noticeable that this latter view claims for all the alleged narratives of which the Pentateuch is said to be composed an almost contemporaneous composition, and thus is in the most violent contradiction with the salient features of the Development Hypothesis. Is it too much to hope that the day may come when the critics may not only accept the contemporaneousness of all the alleged documents composing the Pentateuch, but may refer them all back to the Mosaic age, thus having beaten all around the circle?

Having thus given an outline of the progress of the Higher Criticism, which, though brief, I trust may have been clear enough to follow, let us proceed to consider

SOME OF ITS UNSOLVED PROBLEMS.

The treatment of them must be very brief in the time at our disposal.

I. It is claimed by the critics that the two oldest documents which they aver helped to form the Hexateuch—those of the Elohist and the Jehovist—were not composed until about six hundred years after Moses and the chief part of the events they record. Deuteronomy was not written until eight hundred years after the death of Israel's great lawgiver. The Priests' Code—the legislation of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, excepting Exodus xx.—xxxiii. and xxxiv., and a portion of the history including the first

chapter of Genesis—was not written until one thousand years after Moses, to whom it is all assigned. The writers of these four chief portions of the Hexateuch were dependent for their material upon tradition which had been transmitted orally from generation to generation for from six hundred to one thousand years. To explain why all the early history and much of the sacred legislation of Israel should have been left so long at the mercy of tradition before it was written, it was assumed that writing on stone was the only kind known in these early times, and that writing for literary purposes was not introduced until the age of the Elohist and Jehovist.

Recent archæological discoveries, however, have made it perfectly clear that, as Prof. Sayce, of Oxford, strongly puts it, "the populations of Western Asia in the age of Moses were as highly cultured and literary as the population of Western Europe in the age of the Renaissance."* Referring to the evidence from the Tel al Amarna tablets, he adds: "It proves that, in the century before the Exodus, the Babylonian language was the common medium of literary intercourse from the banks of the Nile to those of the Tigris and Euphrates, and that the complicated syllabery of Babylonia was taught and learned along with the Babylonian language throughout the whole of Western Asia. The letters were written by persons of the most diversified race and nationality, many of them officers of the Egyptian court, and they are sometimes about the most trivial matters. They testify to an active and extensive correspondence carried on, not by a select caste of scribes, but

* "The Higher Critics and the Monuments," page 47.

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by everyone who pretended to the rank and education of a gentleman."* This correspondence and literary activity was most active over the land soon to be conquered by the Israelites and the adjacent countries. Those who do not shut their eyes to the light must believe that Moses and many others of the Israelites made a common practice of writing. Neither could the Israelites in the after centuries, touched as they were by the most cultured peoples on each side, have gone back into literary savagery. But admit that writing was in common use from the time of Moses on, and, at the first blush, it seems strange how a theory which assumed its practical non-existence, can stand on all fours, when one of its leading assumptions is knocked away. The problem becomes all the more perplexing when we examine the theory more minutely, in face of the fact that writing was in common use.

The higher critics generally affirm that if Moses left anything in writing, it was only the basis of the Decalogue. But if this was all the legislation he gave to Israel, the fact that he was the author of this mere fragment cannot explain how he came to have such a place as the great lawgiver of Israel, that all subsequent legislators were solicitous to shelter their productions under his name, as the critics allege, neither can it account for the fact that all which was thought to be from him was esteemed sacred and authoritative. If, however, we take the view of other critics, and believe that Moses gave to Israel a sufficient body of laws to account for his reputation as a lawgiver, the difficulties become greater, for how did it happen

* "The Higher Critics and the Monuments," page 49.

that Moses put only the basis of the Decalogue into written and permanent form? How came it that all the rest of his teaching, precious and sacred though it must have been, was left for centuries to the risk of oral transmission, and was not made secure by being put into written and fixed form? Why, above all, with writing in common use, was only the Decalogue put in full written form until about six hundred years after Moses, and the great mass of Mosaic tradition left two hundred years longer before the Deuteronomist gathered up a part of them? And why, even after eight hundred years had elapsed since Moses, was still the largest part of the legislation attributed to him left two hundred years longer before it was put into changeless written form? This seems to some of us inexplicable—a problem which is not only unsolved but insoluble.

It is no wonder that the leaders of the Development Hypothesis generally take the ground that Deuteronomy and the Priests' Code are not Mosaic, but were attributed to Moses to give them currency. But this assumption is little better than the others. If what Moses taught was written down and known, as we must believe it was, in view of the proof that writing was then in common use, how could the people be induced to accept these codes as his when they were not? The authors of them knew better, and must have been guilty of conscious forgery. The priests, also, must have had definite knowledge of what was recorded as from Moses. Did they all join in a conspiracy to delude the people? Well may Dr. Green say: "The idea that such a fraud could be perpetrated is preposterous. It is utterly out of the question that a body of laws never before heard

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of could be imposed upon the people as though they had been given by Moses centuries before, and that they could have been accepted and obeyed by them, notwithstanding they imposed new and serious burdens, set aside established usages to which the people were devotedly attached, and conflicted with the interests of numerous and powerful classes of the people." It might also be added that it involves the difficulty of explaining how three codes said to be variant and even conflicting, and each intended to supersede its predecessor, should ever have been all attributed to Moses, or should ever have come to be considered parts of one self-consistent body of laws.

There is, therefore, no theory of the critics as to the composition of the Pentateuch which does not appear to be exposed to insuperable objections, when once we admit that writing was commonly practised in the time of Moses.

II. A second problem of as serious a character as this first is pressing the higher critics for solution through the discoveries of archæologists.

Whatever were the events of the Mosaic period, the higher critics hold that no record of any of them was attempted until about six hundred years after Moses, and that the most of them were not written down until they had passed from mouth to mouth for eight hundred and one thousand years. Take a parallel case. Imagine no attempt to have been made to record the history of our Anglo-Saxon period until two hundred years ago. Suppose that one or two men then gathered up a small portion of the current stories of that period long past, but it was not till the present time that a larger part of these traditions were put down in writing, while the largest part of

the history should not be recorded until two hundred years hence. Make all the allowance you may for the different conditions of life in the East during these ages, and in our country since the Norman conquest, and still what a margin for error, what small chances for historic truth! Indeed, the narratives into which the Pentateuch is cut up by the critics, are, as they aver, full of contradictions. These prove that the traditions upon which they are thought to be based, were untrue to fact in numerous particulars, and cast doubt upon the trustworthiness of them all.

But this is not all. The authors of the later narratives are said to have shaped their material to suit their peculiar priestly or prophetic views. The Deuteronomist attributed laws to Moses which first saw the light eight hundred years after him, and gave them an historical framework to match. The authors of the Priests' Code, although their work was put forth one thousand years after Moses, attributed their legislation to him and gave a still more elaborate historical framework in order to make the whole appear ancient and give it authority with the people. As Kuenen says, covering by his remark the two sources of historical and other error which I have mentioned: "The historical reminiscences, orally preserved during a longer or shorter period, are constantly taking alien and not always identical matter into their texture. When they come to be written down, the legends are worked up in one way by one writer and in another by another, according to the point of view and purpose of each respectively, so as often to be notably modified or even completely transformed. That the narratives of the Hexateuch have

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But even this is not all. The original narratives, severally as well as after union with one another, are said to have been "worked over" frequently by redactors, of whom Kuenen mentions sixteen, and Wellhausen nineteen. Dr. Osgoode describes their work as represented by the higher critics, as "editing, re-editing, subtracting, adding, misplacing, using sagas, legends, myths, traditions and accommodating them to the ideas of their periods far apart."† It is not strange that Duhm thought the establishment of this Development Hypothesis would, "with one blow, put the Mosaic period out of the world." It is strange that the higher critics, having destroyed the unity of the Hexateuch by rending it into discordant fragments and explaining its composition as they do, can believe it possible for human ingenuity to extract from it anything reliable.

Now, it is admitted that no task is more delicate and difficult than for a historian of events of a former age to give to them their exact local coloring, and their setting in the manners and customs, and the related history of the time, even when he has official documents and works of reference on all these matters. Yet here we have the Pentateuch, which the critics allege is a mosaic of fragments from many different hands, and each and all dependent almost exclusively upon floating oral traditions from six to ten centuries old. And instead of these various authors avoiding allusions of these kinds, or making them of the most general and colorless character, each fragment, almost, has

* "Hexateuch," page 38.

† Bib. Sac., July, 1893.

its local coloring ; allusions are numerous, circumstantial, minute, and all appear in a complete setting of references to manners and customs, and in full historical perspective, as though recorded by one upon the ground. But admitting that the critics' idea of the composition of the Hexateuch is correct, and that men, in giving traditions which had floated down the long centuries with all the consequent changes and perversions, were unwary enough to attempt to supply all these minute details ; admit that not only one of the many men who had a hand in its composition, but all or nearly all sought to give these details in connection with the parts they severally supplied to the composite work ; admit, too, as the critics also must, that these various writers were as dependent upon long-drawn and perverted tradition for many of these details and the related history as for the events which these details were to embellish and for which they were to supply setting and perspective, and what then ? These minute allusions to place, manners, customs, religious beliefs and ceremonies of the long past and of other peoples, as well as the history of nations with which Israel had to do in that remote period, would be most unreliable of all.

But what are the facts ? This Hexateuch which the critics allege has been subjected to so many influences to pervert its truth and render it utterly untrustworthy, by a testing such as has been given to no other book, has been proved, beyond all contradiction, to be wonderfully true and minutely accurate, in all the forms of allusion, on which even historians of contemporaneous events are most liable to stumble. The allusions to the topography of Egypt, the Desert of the Exodus and of Palestine have

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been examined on the ground with the most searching scrutiny. Every side-light possible has been cast on every reference in these records to the earliest times, and even skeptics have been compelled to admit their wonderful accuracy. Time was when the Pentateuch was charged with errors in its references to Egypt and the Egyptians. Von Bohlen, for instance, pointed out a number of them. But as the monuments have brought to light the Egypt of the Exodus, it has been found that it was the critic who was in error. Egyptologists like Ebers, Brugsch, Meyer and Sayce now testify to the minute accuracy of all these references, incidental and circumstantial though they be. So undeniably accurate are all these delicate allusions to conditions in the remote past that Vernes has attempted to explain it in harmony with the views of the critics. He thinks that the post-exilic company of theologians to whom he credits the Hexateuch in its final form, after conference, assigned to each one the portion of the work to which he would be best fitted to give the appropriate setting and coloring. This is a fine testimony to the accuracy of the Hexateuch, even though it may seem to most people that Verne's critical acumen is more remarkable than his common sense.

So also of the historical allusions. Time was when many of these were declared false. But the world of the Exodus and prior to the Exodus, has been laid bare by the spade of the archaeologist and the skill of the antiquarian. From clay tablet and stone monument the history of this far-off time has been largely recovered. Neither can the critics say that these records have been tampered with and made untrustworthy by redactors as

many, and by biases as various, as the demands of a theory require. In them the names of cities and places and tribes which are mentioned in the Pentateuch, stare us in the face. They are full of the color of the times. They give not only minute details, but from them also can be learned the great general features of the history of Ante-Mosaic ages, the relation of the great monarchies to each other and to the lesser peoples. They afford the historical perspective of which the Pentateuch affords the foreground. Here is a test which can be applied, which is better than any preconception of either higher critic or traditionalist. And what is the result? The silence which falls upon the higher critics when these recent archæological discoveries are referred to, is suggestive. The truth is that in this sphere there is remarkable confirmation of the truth of the Pentateuch. The account of the invasion of Chedorlaomer and his confederates, which had been thrust out of the region of the credible, has been verified as true. The account of the priest King Melchizedek of Salem, which has been regarded as rather mythical, has been shown to rest on a solid foundation of fact. Allusions to the Hittites, which have been thought mysterious and untrustworthy, have been cleared up, as they appear a powerful people who overran lesser tribes, and finally tried conclusions with Egypt in a contest which was for a long time a drawn one. The Edomites, the Amorites, and other tribes mentioned in the Hexateuch appear in the setting given them there. The time when the Israelites are represented as conquering Palestine, was just at the period when neither Egypt nor Babylon had possession of the land—the only time when it was possible to conquer it and grow to power, and

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not have to reckon with these great peoples. Prof. Sayce, of Oxford, is one of the most accomplished archæologists of the day. He may be charged with sometimes drawing conclusions from insufficient data, but he is no apologist, as can be seen by the fact that he thinks the biblical narrative contradicted by the monuments, in two or three cases, so far as research has gone. He shall bear witness, and his words are of exceeding weight on this head. "In place of the skepticism," he says, "it (the Higher Criticism) engendered, there is now a danger lest the oriental archæologist should adopt too excessive a credulity. The revelations of the past which have been made to him of late years have inclined him to believe that there is nothing impossible in history any more than there is in science, and that he is called upon to believe rather than to doubt."* Canon Girdlestone, of Oxford, also declares: "The evidence brought to light in the last half century has all gone one way, Palestine exploration, the disinterring of Egyptian remains, and the opening out of the ruinous heaps of Assyria. Babylonia and Persia have spoken with consentient voice. They utter their joint testimony to the historical character of the Hebrew writings."†

Now, it is inconceivable that the Hexateuch should be more accurate in these incidental allusions where less care would naturally be taken and more care required, than in the more important work of recording the events of the narratives where more care would naturally be taken and less care suffice. How then can this minute accuracy in

* "The Higher Critics and the Monuments," p. 23.

† "The Foundations of the Bible," p. 101.

what was most difficult, as demonstrated by the uncovering of the records of the remote past, be reconciled with the theory which involves the utter untrustworthiness of the history which was less difficult to record truthfully, and which the writers would have been more solicitous to make reliable? Must we not rather conclude that the hypothesis of the critics is erroneous? Dr. Osgoode's words are none too strong, when he says: "If we suppose, with some critics—twenty and more writers and editors—none of whom ever made an error in the customs and geography of an age seven hundred and nine hundred years before their time, we suppose, against the canons of historical criticism, a more astounding miracle than any in the Bible."* The problem is too difficult for Dr. Driver to solve by his *ipse dixit* in the rather ambiguous sentence: "The Biblical record possesses exactly that degree of historical and topographical accuracy which would be expected from the circumstances under which all reasonable critics hold that they were composed."† Rather shall we endorse the words of Professor Robertson, of Glasgow University: "The ordinary reader will find it hard to believe that in 'the manifold variants and repetitions of the same stories,' this feature of minutely accurate local picturing could have been preserved. And, when we take into account that not only in the stories of the patriarchs, but everywhere in the historical books, this accuracy is maintained, and bear in mind the liability to error which is inherent in oral transmission, we have a problem to solve which cannot be brushed aside by the *obiter dicta* of Well-

* "Moses and his Recent Critics," p. 407.

† Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. Preface xiv.

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III. Unsolved problems also confront us when we examine the latest theory of the higher critics along the line of its cardinal assumption, that the religion of Israel was a natural development.

I can describe this feature of the theory only in the briefest possible way. The Israelites consisted of a confederacy of desert tribes. Like their neighbors, they began their religious evolution in fetichism. When they conquered Canaan, they had their tribal god Jehovah, or Jahveh, just as Moab had Chemosh, and the Phœnicians, Baal; but they believed also that there were other gods of other tribes and nations. They observed Monolatry, but were not Monotheists. At this time their religious ideas and observances differed but little from the peoples with whom they dwelt. Kuenen declares that, during the eighth century before Christ—three centuries after David and Solomon: "The great majority of the people still acknowledged the existence of many gods, and, what is more, they worshipped them, and we can add," he continues, "that during the seventh century, and down to the Babylonish exile (586 B.C.) this state of things remained unaltered. The Polytheism of the mass of the people cannot be regarded as an innovation; everything is in favor of its originality."† The prophets, beginning with Elijah, according to Wellhausen, were the innovators, as they attempted to stem this tide which had set in this same direction during all the past of Israel's history. It

* The Early Religion of Israel, p. 101.

† "Religion of Israel," Vol. I. p. 223.

was not until after the exile that Monotheism prevailed, and high moral qualities were generally attributed to God.

The three codes of laws in Exodus xx.—xxiii. and xxxiv., Deuteronomy, and the rest of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers respectively, represent three stages of religious growth, and take their places along the line of this development. To give time for growth from stage to stage of evolution represented by these codes, long periods are placed between the promulgation of the first and second, and the second and third. The first was in its germ Mosaic, though not given forth in its expanded form until long after. Indeed, some critics suppose the Ten Commandments give too high ideas of God for the early stage of Israel's history to which they have been assigned, and either deny their early character altogether, or bring forth from their boundless reserve a redactor to help them out of the difficulty. The Deuteronomic code was introduced about the time of Josiah in 621, while the Levitical was post-exilic.

Now, it is not pretended that all this agrees with the Old Testament, as we have it. It is confessed that this development hypothesis contradicts point-blank the account the Pentateuch gives of itself. The history, some of the prophets, and the Psalms must first be shaped before they can be made to agree with the theory. There was no tabernacle in the wilderness as described in Exodus xxiv.—xxxii., for this is inseparable from the legislation of the Priests' Code which is post-exilic. It is only an ideal copy of Solomon's temple on a small scale, such as people one thousand years after Moses imagined he used in the desert wanderings.

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Deuteronomic and the Priests' codes are assigned to the author of the latter code and made post-exilic, or are referred to a writer after Josiah, when Deuteronomy was said to have been promulgated. Chronicles, which makes continuous reference to the legislation of the post-exilian Priests' Code as in force in all the past, was the work of a man who worked over the history of Israel in the interest of this code, in order that it might be thought to have been ever in force and so be received as authoritative. Even passages in Samuel and Kings, which declare ideas of God to have been held in an age before the critics think the religion of Israel had grown up to this stage, are also assigned to later redactors or to the late authors coloring the past with the tinge of an after age. Joel, until recently held to be among the earliest of the prophets, because his prophecy is saturated with the spirit of the Priests' Code, is moved down and ranked among the latest. Even passages in Hosea and Amos are attributed to a later hand, when they cannot be reconciled with the hypothesis. The Psalms which are everywhere redolent of lofty conceptions of God, and are fragrant with the incense of exalted praise and devotion, belong to the highest stage of the development, and are all made poet-exilic, and these poems and hymns to God, many of which are assigned to David in the Hebrew text, as we have it, were none of them written less than six hundred years after his time. So we see that the codes are first adapted to the hypothesis, and then the history is shaped to the codes thus adapted, and the critic cries triumphantly, See how they all agree! Must not all this be true? Does Dr. Bissell speak too strongly when he asks, in view of these critical gymnastics, "Is this criti-

cism, or is it caricature?"* And we can sympathize with the impatience of Prof. Robertson, and endorse his words, when he says: "The only fixed thing perceivable is the theory itself; the only standard is strike out or I consider. For the rest, what may be called by admirers a delicate process of criticism may appear to others uncommonly like a piece of literary thimble-rigging. You come upon the critic suddenly when he professes to be engaged in one of these delicate processes of criticism, and you find him slipping his subjective rule up his sleeve. The passages which disturb a pet theory are declared to disturb the connection. We have, in fact, *no* contemporary reliable documents till the critic has adjusted them, and the theory ultimately is appealed to in confirmation of itself."†

I know there are those who accept the conclusions of the critics who make the denial of the supernatural the cardinal assumption by which they have been reached, and yet who believe that the Old Testament has in it a supernatural element. It is significant, however, as already remarked, that the acknowledged apostles of the Higher Criticism are avowed anti-supernaturalists, as are their followers, generally in Germany, France and Holland. Some also, who formerly held to the Old Testament as a supernatural revelation of religious truth have been carried farther and farther away, as the drift of this criticism has swept them on. I confess I am unable to understand how conclusions can be accepted when the cardinal assumption which has had chief place in shaping and reaching them, is denied. Kuenen seems to think this impossible, for he says: "So long as we

* "The Pentateuch—its Origin and Structure," page 16.

† "Early Religion of Israel," page 150.

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derive a separate part of Israel's religious life directly from God, and allow the supernatural to intervene, or supernatural revelation to intervene in a single point, so long will our view of the whole continue to be incorrect. . . .

. It is the supposition of a natural development alone which accounts for all the phenomena." *

Let us then take this cardinal assumption of a natural development of the religion of Israel, and see if it also does not involve its unsolved problems. ~~Reading out the super-~~ *Lead* natural, the conditions for this evolution in Israel were not different from those which had place in Phœnicia, Moab, Ammon and other neighboring tribes and nations. The higher critics allege that at the time of the conquest of Canaan they were about neck and neck in this progress. The problem is, how all these other nations sank lower and lower in the polluted slough of degraded Polytheism, while Israel evolved ethic Monotheism of a more and more exalted kind, until Christianity comes with its new and supreme light. Were they better conditioned, in any way, to reach this high result without help from God? Nay, we wish we had time to show more fully that the reverse of this was true, and that they were about the last people we should have expected to have outstripped all mankind on purely natural grounds. Tribal deities were thought to have power in proportion to the conquering might of the peoples who were supposed to have success through their favor. But Israel was a small nation cooped up in the mountains of Palestine in almost perpetual fear of the great monarchies on either side, and for the most of the time weakened by war and defeat. What was there in all this that would suggest the idea that their god who had been unable to

* "Prophets," etc., 586.

lead them on to dominion, but had suffered them to be beaten by those who were under the care of other gods, was the one supreme being? Worst of all, at the very time when the critics say Israel conceived this high idea, what little power they had was waning, or had been altogether swept away. If this high idea of God is to be explained on natural grounds, we might expect it to have arisen in Babylonia or Assyria, where a well-nigh world-wide sway might suggest the supremacy of their god to whom they ascribed their success; but in little Israel, writhing under the heel of these powers, never.

Neither were the Israelites the people from whom we might expect this idea of the one Holy God to arise through abstract thought. With the exception of the reign of Solomon and the latter part of that of David, there was none of that peaceful repose which is favorable to this kind of study. The land was perpetually in the throes of intestine strife and foreign war. According to the higher critics, Israel lagged behind other neighboring peoples in culture and remained in rude semi-savagery. She never had any philosophers. Her prophets are the farthest removed from this class. They were intensely interested in the politics of their people and in the movements of neighboring nations, as they might affect Israel's interests, rather than in evolving new ideas of God by mental process. Elijah, whom Wellhausen credits with first proclaiming ethic Monotheism, was a rough lonely man, who does not reason with the people as one who had gained a new conception by patient and subtle thought, but he declares and commands. None of the prophets argue their view of God, or use abstract thought. They speak

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with absolute confidence, they proclaim with authority as no philosopher had ever done. They argue from the idea of the one holy God, not to it. On natural principles we should have expected this new light for the world and for the ages, to have streamed forth from the mind of a Pláto, or from the studious sages of quiet and settled times, not through Jewish prophets with hearts throbbing with patriotic fire and with souls absorbed in the burning questions of the nation's life. The whole style and content of prophetic teaching are heavens wide from that of discoverers of higher ideas by laborious thought.

As little, also, would we expect the highest moral ideas of God to have originated in Israel, on purely natural grounds. Their whole history, with slight exception, was discordant with conflict and dripping in blood. It was fitted to foster cruelty and to develop what was base and bad. From the Old Testament history—and we would not expect Israelitish writers to paint the national life over-dark—they were a licentious, immoral people. Out of this seething hot-bed of strife and passion we should not expect to spring the supreme bloom of moral idea, neither would we expect that such a people would be the only one to accept these highest ideas and show in their lives a sympathetic response.

How, then, can we account on natural grounds, we ask again, for the fact that the Israelites—the very people who seemed among the worst conditioned for religious development—originated these grand conceptions of God by natural evolution, while all others, many of them so much better conditioned, slipped down deeper and deeper into the sink of Polytheism, or, if they rejected Polytheism, fell into licentious and polluted unbelief?

Is not any critic overdaring, who, as Kuenen says he and his fellows do, "dares to from a conception of Israel's development totally different from that which, as anyone may see, is set forth in the Old Testament, and to sketch the primitive Christianity in lines which even the acutest reader cannot recognize in the New"?

But when we come to the details of the Development Hypothesis, as explained by its great apostles, the problem becomes still more difficult. Wellhausen declares that Elijah was the first to perceive "that we have not, in the various departments of nature, a variety of forces worthy of our worship; but that there exists over all but one Mighty One who reveals himself, not in nature, but in law and righteousness in the world of man." Now, it has been shown that Hosea and Amos, whom the critics declare to be the earliest writing prophets, and who are among the pioneers of this alleged new teaching, assume this to have been the teaching of the past from which the people had fallen. They assume to deal with a declension by pressing home the old doctrines, not to overthrow hereditary beliefs by new teachings. The history as it stands is acknowledged to support this view. It is only as the history is reshaped to suit the theory, and as the declarations of these prophets that these teachings were hereditary in Israel are attributed to the retouching of a later hand, that the critics can conform the facts to their hypotheses. But we do not admit the right of any to adapt facts to a theory, and then allege that the theory is established by the facts.

But allow that the idea of the one God and of His moral perfection came to the prophets like a burst of mid-day

*"Modern Rev.," July, 1880.

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glory out of midnight gloom, with no intervening dawn and twilight, and it cannot be explained as a naturalistic evolution, which is accomplished slowly, step by step. Besides, these prophets repudiated the idea that they taught what they did by natural wisdom. They avowedly give messages from God." The evolutionist critic, therefore, must not only show how the prophets of Israel overleaped at a bound all the natural evolution of religious thought in all the ages; they must not only take the liberty to strike out from the earliest prophecies passages at their pleasure; they must also be allowed to know the source of the prophets' teachings better than the prophets themselves.

Is all this more reasonable than the Biblical explanation that Israel attained to higher knowledge, because to Israel were committed oracles of God? The Israelites outstripped all others, because they alone had supernatural light. The Old Testament Scriptures exerted a marvellous uplifting power, while all other so-called sacred writings were unable to help men upward if they did not help them downward, because the former were the medium of divine power, while the latter were the exponents of human weakness and moral impotence.

IV. We come now to another problem of the most serious character. It is this: How can any who accept the results of the Higher Criticism as embodied in the Development Hypothesis still regard the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God, or its religious teaching as ever having possessed divine authority for the Jews?

Of course this is no problem for the anti-supernaturalist leaders who have elaborated this theory. These have no difficulty. There is nothing of the supernatural in the

narratives of the Old Testament which are really historical. Their alleged miracles are myths. Avowed predictions of future events are explained either as wise forecasts through a study of the times, or descriptions of events already past by a later writer and attributed to the earlier prophet. There is no such thing as inspiration, or direct divine illumination. None of the religious teaching possesses divine authority. It has only the authority of the human teachers who uttered it, or to whom it was attributed, and that which its adaptation to human nature and the conditions of the times gave it. But are the conclusions of the Higher Criticism, as accepted by the more conservative critics of this continent, consistent with any real and peculiar inspiration of the Old Testament, or with the divine authority of its religious teachings?

Let us take Dr. Briggs as a fair representative of this more conservative wing. He believes that only forty-nine verses of the thirty-third chapter of Numbers, and a single sentence in Exodus xvii. 14 of the whole Pentateuch are as Moses gave them, and, therefore, genuinely Mosaic. He indeed concedes that the brief words of command in the Decalogue—just seventy-five words—are Mosaic; but all the rest of it is by later hands. Exodus xxi.-xxiii. and xxxiv., called the Book of the Covenant, and declared in Exodus xxiv. 4, xxxiv. 27, to have been written down by Moses and read to the people, have been subjected to "omissions, insertions, transpositions, and revisions." Deuteronomy generally is not what Moses wrote, but, mark the words, the "recodification of the old Covenant Code of Moses, in the Judaic recension." The Priests' Code is a codification, a thousand years after Moses, "of

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the priestly ritual and customs coming down by tradition from Moses and Aaron in the priestly circles at Jerusalem." What a shadow of a shadow of a shade is this of that whole legislation of the Pentateuch which is all ascribed to Moses.

I know that both Dr. Briggs and Dr. Driver makē vague statements, or rather conjectures, about a germ or essence of Mosaic teaching in the Deuteronomic and Priests' codes which they supposed published eight hundred and one thousand years after Moses. In this way they appear to suggest an explanation why their authors attributed them to Moses. Both these writers also attempt to answer the enigmatical question why, if this were the case, this germ or essence of Mosaic legislation was not given in its original form, or, at least, developed earlier. Dr. Driver thinks there are signs of the knowledge of this essence in the course of the history prior to the publication of each code. But the chief arguments for the non-existence of these codes until eight hundred or one thousand years after Moses are the alleged silence of history about the legislation contained in them, and the unconscious and uncondemned violations of their respective conditions, until the dates assigned to their publication. But how could there be this silence and this uncondemned violation of the chief provisions of these codes, if the "ultimate traditional basis" and essence were known all the time, and even evidenced itself in the very history which is silent about the institutions of which it is the basis? This seems a flat contradiction, and has the look of an attempt to evade a difficulty by hiding it in a fog of vague words.

Besides, were not these teachings which are assumed to be the "traditional bases" of the codes, as clear and definite

as any coming from Israel's great lawgiver? Why, then, were they left for centuries until they must have become dim and vague traditions before they were practically enjoined upon the people? Why, at least, did not the Deuteronomist gather up all the traditions of Mosaic teaching eight hundred years after Moses, and not leave even more than he codified for others two hundred years later to put into form and enjoin? The assumption of a definite basis of Mosaic teachings conjoined with the recognition of him as the great authoritative lawgiver of Israel, is utterly inconsistent with centuries of careless delay in publishing and enforcing them. The codes are also said to disagree in numerous particulars, and their discrepancies are urged as an argument for different and widely separated dates of publication. If they all came from an original basis of Mosaic teaching, then must we not assume that there was discrepancy in this original basis, or that tradition as shaped by the authors of the codes did not correctly represent these original teachings? In either case, the inspiration of the codes as we have them is overthrown. No, if these codes did not see the light until eight hundred and one thousand years after Moses, there is no rational way to suppose them Mosaic in essence. Neither can we assume as does Dr. Briggs, that their prophetic and priestly authors and the redactors who have all had such a hand in putting them into final form, were all inspired. Men who feel themselves divinely enlightened do not seek to put their inspired messages into other men's lips in order to give them authority. Thus did no prophet of whom we have any record. Thus did no apostle: The fact that the alleged authors and redactors are so solicitous, as the

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critics admit, to attribute all their work to Moses, is proof positive that they could not have thought themselves authorized by God to deliver the messages they gave. It seems impossible, therefore, on any ground, if we accept the dates assigned by the critics for the composition of these codes, to escape the conclusion that they had no inspired authority.

When we examine the Pentateuch more carefully, this conclusion is more than confirmed. The most advanced critics declare that the Tabernacle never had any existence, but that the description of it, of its furnishing and of its building and after use, was but an idealization on a reduced scale of Solomon's Temple, and thrown back into the Mosaic age to give the Temple observances a basis in the legislation of Israel's great lawgiver. More conservative critics, like Dr. Briggs, hold that the real tent of meeting was not the elaborate tabernacle described in Exodus. This means that twelve chapters of Exodus which are given to the preparation for the building, the description of what the Tabernacle and its furnishings were to be, and the account of its actual construction and use, are inventions of the tenth century after Moses. And yet as Dr. Green specifies: "The materials contributed by the people for the construction of this building and its furniture are recited in detail. The leading architects are mentioned by name and their pedigree given. It is stated upon what day the work was completed and the building completed in all its parts. The effulgence of the divine glory is said to have filled it at the time of its dedication. Various services are described, which were actually held in this tabernacle. Two of Aaron's sons perished there for offering

strange fire before the Lord. The arrangements of the camp were made with reference to it. . . . The number of wag-gons and oxen provided for its transportation, the persons charged with taking it down and setting it up when Israel journeyed from place to place, the method to be observed in wrapping up and guarding the sacred vessels, and the position they were to take in the line of march, are all minutely specified." How, we might ask, could all this have been reproduced from unwritten tradition which had been at the mercy of thirty generations of oral transmission, even though the critics should admit the Tabernacle had a real existence in the wilderness? If the Priests' Code, of which these chapters form a part, was post-exilic, the critics can do no better than make the descriptions of the Tabernacle the invention of its author. Neither is this the most serious part of the problem. The sacrifices instituted in the first seven chapters of Leviticus are all to be offered at the door of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons are to be the officiating priests, while parts of the sin-offerings of chapters 4-7 are to be burned without the camp. Chapters 8 and 9 give a minute account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, and 10 records the sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu, and some consequent legislation. Chapter 11 is given to Aaron as well as Moses, and the offerings of 12 are to be at the tent of meeting. In chapters 13 and 14, which have to do with the cleansing of the leper, the diseased party is to be brought to Aaron and his sons, and is to remain without the camp until cleansed. The laws on the great day of atonement of chapter 16, grew out of the sin of Aaron's sons. The offerings of 17 were to be made at the tent of

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meeting. Provisions of 18, 19 and 20 were in view of their life in Canaan which was not yet begun. Chapters 21 and 22 were given through Moses to Aaron and his sons for guidance. The laws of 23 and 25 were to come into operation when they entered Canaan, while 24 refers to the tent of meeting, Aaron and his sons, and gives an incident in the camp and what grew out of it. The covenant of chapters 26 and 27, if not the whole legislation of the book, is said in these chapters to have been given at Mount Sinai.

It is the same with Deuteronomy. It is avowedly an address and legislation given by Moses in the land of Moab. The location is minutely described. The exact time to a day in the year, as well as the day of Moses' life when these were delivered, are mentioned. It is all keyed to this time and place. It is declared to be in view of Israel's speedy entrance into Canaan. The sets of laws of Deuteronomy xii.-xxvi. are almost, if not all, individually as well as the whole code generally, introduced by words like these: "Thus shalt thou do," "in the land which the Lord the God of thy fathers hath given thee to possess it," "when ye pass over Jordan." Their offerings were to be made at a place where God would choose to put His name. There are laws for the extermination of the Canaanites and Amorites, and the destruction of all their idols. There are laws to govern their action at some future time when the people should desire a king.

Now, if it is possible to believe that anything of Mosaic teaching could have remained for six, eight and ten centuries at the mercy of oral transmission and not have been altogether perverted; if we can believe that writing was in common use from the days of Moses, that his teaching

was ever thought most precious and sacred, and yet that no attempt to gather it for preservation in written form was made for six hundred years; if we can believe that the writers who gathered up the traditions of his teaching six hundred years after his death, left unrecorded what served for the basis of a larger legislative code put forth eight hundred years after his death, and that there was still left unwritten of his priceless teachings what served as the basis of still more elaborate legislation one thousand years after his day; if we can accept all these assumptions of the more conservative of the higher critics, can we, nevertheless, on the general hypothesis of the critics, hold the authors of Deuteronomy and the Priests' Code of Exodus-Numbers guiltless of something more than a pious fraud? They must have known that their legislation at best was Mosaic only in the most vague and far-away sense. They knew that the great bulk of it was their own work. And yet, if anything is made plain by the facts above given in reference to the legislation of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, it is that its authors sought to do more than give the general impression that it was in some vague and indefinite sense fundamentally Mosaic. They took the utmost pains to make the people believe it to be altogether Mosaic. Imagine men eight hundred and one thousand years after Moses, with only some vague traditions exposed to all the mischances of these long stretches of years—traditions, also, which previous writers had passed by, for reasons which are inscrutable, giving the exact spot where great codes of laws were spoken by Moses, giving the exact date to a day, the exact year of his life. Imagine them taking the most scrupulous care to key every law they gave

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for the first time, to this time ages on ages past and these ancient circumstances, and representing them as for a life in Canaan which had not yet begun. Imagine them giving laws for times after the exile, and representing them as for Aaron and his sons at the first. Imagine them giving laws for the extermination of the Canaanites and the destruction of the images of their false gods and their high places, hundreds of years after the conquest of the land, but which would be well fitted to keep up this illusion. Most of all, imagine them giving what amounts to twelve chapters to a most minute description of a tabernacle, which is made to play a chief part in all their life in the desert, even mentioning the names and genealogies of its chief architects, and yet of a tabernacle which had no existence except in their imaginations—imagine all this, and then believe, if you can, that the authors of such alleged documents did not intend to delude the people into the idea that these were all the veritable teachings of Moses and not their own formularizations if not inventions. The higher critics themselves do not deny that the people really thought all these codes really and altogether Mosaic, and, therefore, authoritative and binding. They did, therefore, according to the critics, really deceive the people; they did secure allegiance to these laws which they knew were only in a most shadowy way, if at all, Mosaic, by representing them and making the people believe them to be altogether Mosaic. Were these men true enough to be the medium of divine communication? Can we believe teachings put forth under such false pretences, as the leading critics assert, and as their theory must compel them all to admit, to possess divine

authority? Dare we think that God himself would thus countenance methods like these?

No: from the premises of the higher critics we cannot but accept the latest revised conclusion of Dr. Briggs, in his address before the Parliament of Religions: "The Higher Criticism shows the process by which the sacred books were produced, that the most of them were composed by unknown authors, that they have passed through the hands of a considerable number of unknown editors who have brought together the older materials without removing discrepancies, inconsistencies and errors. In this process of editing, arranging, addition, subtraction, reconstruction and consolidation, extending through many centuries, what evidence have we that these unknown editors were kept free from error in their work?"

Can we do else than answer, none whatever, on the divisive theory of the critics? The inspiration and divine authority of the Pentateuch go down before this hypothesis, and there is no escape. From this quotation, however, we can see clearly what Dr. Briggs means by inspiration in his Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch, when he says that the "narratives of the Pentateuch have been compacted by a series of inspired redactors."

I need not say that this makes the whole question very serious. This will appear more clearly as we proceed to discuss the crowning problem for which all that has been advanced has prepared the way. The problem is this: V. How to reconcile with the Development Hypothesis the references of the New Testament to the Old. I can but touch a few salient points of this phase of our subject, to which a volume might be given. It will be seen, also,

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that the question whether Moses wrote the whole or even a large part of the Pentateuch constitutes but a small part of this problem. It does not seem to me that Dr. Briggs and some other higher critics are altogether ingenuous in writing as though this was the whole of it.

The allusions of the writers of the New Testament to the Old are utterly irreconcilable with the assumption of the naturalistic leaders of the Higher Criticism, that the religion of Israel was a natural development, and that there is no supernatural revelation or display of supernatural knowledge or power in the Old Testament. As surely as our Lord claimed to be a supernatural being—as surely as He and the writers of the epistles claimed to be supernatural teachers—so surely do they acknowledge the claim of the Old Testament to contain a supernatural revelation of religious truth. They also believed without a waver of distrust that its prophets wrought miracles and foresaw the future by the help of God. There was no careless conformity to the prevalent ideas of the time here. They themselves believed with all pious Jews that the religion of Israel was a supernatural revelation, and not a natural evolution. This is so plain that denial is impossible. The supernatural in the New Testament avowedly roots itself in the supernatural of the Old. The life and teaching of our Lord were not the first light from above—a burst of supreme brightness from a rayless sky—but the heavens had been aglow for centuries over Israel with the growing light of the dawn which was to usher in this crowning glory of supernatural revelation.

Now, what if our Lord and New Testament writers were mistaken in all this? What if the religious teaching of

the Old Testament was not from God, but of men—its events to which they referred as miraculous, but myths—its ceremonial observances which they thought typical and prophetic of New Testament realities, but their own ingenious after thoughts—its alleged prophecies which they thought fulfilled in after events, but happy forecasts or ambiguous allusions which they had misinterpreted—what if all this be true, as these naturalistic critics allege? Then our Lord and the New Testament teachers generally were altogether deluded as to the character of the Old Testament. If they were deceived in this, they were deceived in what tested their pretensions to be authoritative religious teachers; for if they were so terribly deluded as to the character of teachings not their own—if they were unable to distinguish the God given from the merely human in teachings already given—what assurance have we that they may not have claimed for their own teachings a divine authority they did not possess? If the supernatural in the Old Testament is to go down before the Higher Criticism, there appears to be no way to preserve that of the New from the same fate. We seem compelled to believe that even our Lord, whose life has been regarded as highest and His teaching as truest by the* best and truest men in all ages, may have been deluded as to the source of His own wonderful words. This means that the race has been left to grope its way in the shadowy gloom of natural religion, with nothing to point out the way amid the solemn mysteries of life but what may prove only the phantasm of a human brain, and with no assurance of anything in the great unseen.

This is a chill and fearful conclusion, but Kuenen did

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not fear to face it. His biographer declares that he made it the aim of his life to strip Christianity of every shred of supernaturalism. He saw clearly that the supernatural in Christianity must be stripped away, if the supernatural in the Old Testament was to be eliminated. He himself declares, "We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly bought scientific method, or must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament in the domain of the exegesis of the Old." Without hesitation he adds, "we choose the latter alternative."* He places the conclusions of the critics, reached so largely by occult processes and the forcing of arbitrary assumptions through the Old Testament with the consequent rending of history and law, as more authoritative than the word of our Lord himself.

But take the view of the more moderate higher critics, and must it not be shattered against the solid front of New Testament teaching, or, if there is more confidence in criticism than in Christ, must not the basis of Christianity be shattered, by denying that it had its source in the life and teachings of an omniscient Son of God.

Our Lord and New Testament writers refer to the events recorded in the Hexateuch as real and historical. Both our Lord and Paul mention the creation of our first parents and trace back to it the institution of marriage. (Matt. xix. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.) This they could not have done did they believe the story of creation other than a narrative of fact. But if the story of the creation of man was regarded as true to fact, we cannot but believe that the whole account of the creation of all things of which this forms a part was equally thought to be real and truthful. So far

* "The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel," page 487.

as we can judge, the view of Dr. Harper, who refers to the narrative of creation as creation stories, "grand and uplifting indeed, but not historical," differs very widely from that of our Lord, and we have to choose between them. Our Lord also refers to the account of Noah and the flood, Matthew xxiv. 37-39; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Luke xvii. 28; the calling of Moses at the burning bush, Mark xii. 26; the manna, John vi. 32, etc. The evangelist John refers to the brazen serpent, John iii. 14. Paul refers to the account of the fall in the most circumstantial way, Romans v. 12; 1 Timothy, ii. 13, 14. Neither does he leave it in doubt, as does Dr. Harper, whether he regards the story as "true and substantial, or false and fanciful," and used only to point a general moral lesson. Paul thought the story true and substantial, or he never would have explained the general sinfulness of the race as due to Adam's sin, or have argued the true relationship between man and woman on the ground of their relationship to the first temptation. John (1 John iii. 12) and the author of Hebrews (Hebrews xi. 4) refer to the account of Cain and Abel as true, and not the purified form of a story which had been floating for ages in the borderland of myth, as Dr. Harper seems to regard it. Paul also alludes to Abraham, his faith and the covenants made with him (Romans iv. 1-11), to Sarah, to Hagar, to the birth of Isaac, to Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, etc. (Romans ix. 7-13; Galatians iv. 22-31); to the account of the exodus, the passage through the Red Sea, to the miraculous provision for their sustenance, and to other events in their wilderness journey. Stephen and the author of Hebrews allude to the tabernacle as a real structure (Acts

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vii. 44; Hebrews ix. 1 *et seq.*), and not an ideal representation of a post-exilic writer, as higher critics, great and small, allege. The author of Hebrews also alludes to the forty years in the wilderness, the story of Melchizedek, the sale of Esau's birthright, and, in chapter eleven, calls attention to almost every event in the Hexateuch.

Now, if Our Lord and New Testament writers did not believe the narratives of the Hexateuch to be historical and true, we can be assured of nothing by their words; for their references are as clear and explicit as they could well be made. That some of them were thought true is proved, as we have seen, by great doctrines and institutions being derived from them, while there is not the remotest hint that these special narratives are exceptionally true, but every indication that all were regarded as equally true. They evidently knew nothing of the contradictions in these records which the theory of the critics involves, and which casts doubt upon the trustworthiness of them all. They did not consider them "idealized history." They did not suppose the whole Hexateuch to be but the reflection of the ideas which prevailed from six hundred to one thousand years after the latest events it avowedly records, and contains only the truth which remained after the distortion, elimination and additions of this long period of oral transmission and prophetic or priestly bias. They evidently believe the narratives as they stand, and not that they contained merely a kernel of truth which can be sifted out only by processes so delicate and refined that none but men of the acutest critical acumen can find it. It is also noticeable that our Lord and the writers of the New Testament refer to the very miraculous events as real

which the critics most confidently relegate to the region of the mythical, or at least, the unhistorical. Neither is there any evidence that they were accommodating their teaching to the ideas of the time. Paul could not have based his doctrine of original sin and the parallelism between our Lord and Adam as heads of the race, upon anything but what he believed to be real events and facts. There seems to be no escape; we must believe the critics to be poorer authorities than our Lord and Paul, and reject their view of the historical portions of the Pentateuch, or we must believe with those who declare that Wellhausen is a more trustworthy critic than our Lord, and accept the views of the critics. The most of us, I am sure, will disagree with Kuenen and prefer to agree with Paul and our Lord.

But when we come to the religious teachings of the Pentateuch and of the Old Testament generally, the views of the critics and of the New Testament writers are more widely at variance. Our Lord and these refer to ~~New~~ ^{Old} Testament teachings as from God and authoritative. Our Lord declares that He did not "come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil," and that "till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle should in no wise pass from the law till all should be fulfilled." "It is written," was for Him and for them the end of all controversy in arguments with Jews, and in wrestling with Satan. They quote indiscriminately from the law and the prophets which included the Pentateuch and the prophetic writings, and it is ever as from teachings which had divine authority. In their estimation they were all equally authoritative. Not one jot or tittle is beyond the protecting aegis of our Lord. We have already seen what the higher critical theory of

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the authorship of the Pentateuch involves. We have remarked that even Dr. Briggs denies that we have any proof of its inspiration. The codes it contains are said to be conflicting in many of their provisions. Their alleged authors were swayed by opposite biases, and conformed their legislation to their own views and preferences. They put forth what was chiefly their own productions or the accumulated priestly usages of the sanctuary, under the name of Moses, to induce the people to submit to them, thus tacitly acknowledging that they had no authority from God to give forth legislation which would be binding upon men, and showing that they could descend to a form of deception which it is hard to reconcile with the possession of piety. Can we believe that, had our Lord held this view of the origination of the Pentateuch, He would have put its religious teaching on an equality with His own? Would this conception of its production, which so many good but imperfect men regard as utterly inconsistent with its being a revelation from God, not have offended His holy soul? Of course, no theory of accommodation to the views of the people can explain our Lord's emphatic and repeated references to the law and the prophets as authoritative religious teachings, if He knew they were not from God but of men. It is only less difficult to believe that the doctrine of the Kenosis can reconcile our Lord's estimate of the law with the theory of the higher critics. If our Lord was ignorant of anything, it surely was not of that which was necessary to Him as an authoritative teacher. This would unfit Him for His mission. And could He be a reliable teacher while He sought to uphold as divine and binding what was human, fallible, and with-

out authority from above? It is inconceivable that He could voluntarily have divested himself of knowledge which was so essential to His great work as this. In pressing a theory which is inconsistent with that divine authority which our Lord attributes to the teachings of the Pentateuch, the critics are doing more than hewing off some excrescences from the Scriptures. They are striking at the heart of both the Old and the New Testament. If the law is what the theory of the critics makes it, our Lord is forever discredited as an infallible teacher. The issue seems to me to be direct. Accept the view of the critics and discredit Christ and His teachings and those of His followers, or exalt Christ and His teachings and discredit the theory of the critics, so far as it is inconsistent with the divine origin and authority of the law and the prophets.

There is still another very serious feature in the problem of the reconciliation of New Testament references to Old Testament writings with the views of the higher critics, apart from the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch altogether. It is the testimony of the New Testament that the law, whether written down by Moses or not, was given through him.

Our Lord declares that "Moses gave the law" (John vii. 19), the law meaning here as everywhere in the New Testament the legislation of the whole of the Pentateuch, as no one can successfully deny. John says (John i. 17) that the law was given by or through Moses. In harmony with these statements, our Lord refers to various laws of the Pentateuch as commanded by Moses: the law of the leper, Matt. viii. 4; of divorce, Matt. xix. 7, 8, where the reference is of the most specific kind; circumcision, John

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vii. 22, 23; treatment of parents, Matt. xix. 8. The author of Hebrews represents Moses as giving the law of the priesthood, Heb. vii. 14, and as having instituted the passover. There cannot be any doubt, therefore, of the meaning of our Lord and of New Testament writers when they speak of "the law of Moses," "the book of Moses," and use kindred expressions. We must here, as elsewhere, observe the self-evident principle that the indefinite must be explained by the definite, the obscure by the plain. While it is possible to believe that the law and book of Moses may mean no more than the law which was attributed to Moses, and the book in which he is the chief actor, these expressions may also mean the law which Moses actually gave. Now, when we have the express statements of our Lord and John that Moses gave the law, and that the law was given by him—when our Lord and New Testament writers ascribe various laws expressly to Moses, evidently not because they are peculiar in this respect, but merely because they form a part of the body of laws which is recognized as from him, we cannot doubt but that "law of Moses" meant to our Lord and the authors of the New Testament, the law given by Moses and not the law attributed to Moses, of which he gave only the germ of a very small part. To say that because "law of Moses" may mean law attributed to Moses, or law of which a shadowy germ only was Mosaic, therefore the express statement that Moses gave the law is to be set aside, would be to outrage common sense and cast all right reason to the winds. Our Lord and New Testament writers evidently held the general opinion of the time that Moses really gave the law as the Pentateuch says he did, and also gave it as they had it.

Neither can we believe in this case any more than in those that precede, that our Lord would have used these expressions had He believed with the higher critics that the law was the product of later ages, working on a small and distorted remnant of Mosaic teaching, which had run the ages' long gauntlet of perverting and obscuring influences of oral transmission and theological prejudice. Nor can we suppose Him ignorant in a matter of this kind which involves so much as to the real character of the law, and not trench greatly upon His claim to divinity and infallibility. Ignorance here, also, could scarcely be accounted for on the ground of our Lord's voluntary humiliation, for it has to do with what was necessary to the exercise of His function as a reliable teacher.

The theory of the higher critics and what is involved in it, therefore, require us to believe that our Lord and the New Testament writers had a false conception of the history of the Hexateuch, of the character of its religious teaching, and of its authorship. They believed the narratives of events true when they were most unreliable. They believed the religious teaching given altogether by revelation from God and authoritative, while it was really produced by men and put forth under false pretences to serve a priestly or prophetic purpose. They believed it all to have been given by Moses as they had it, while only the merest fragment of it was given by him, and all the rest was given forth from six to ten centuries after his day.

If we can accept all this, the question is, what confidence can we have in the New Testament writers, what in our Lord himself, as teachers of religious truth? What is left for us but to refine our ideas of the inspiration

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of the New Testament away until too little remains to permit us to rest upon the teachings even of our Lord himself, the unspeakable interests of our immortal souls with the supreme confidence which will give us peace which neither life nor death can disturb. The fact that the apostles of the Higher Criticism reject all of the supernatural in the New Testament as the outcome of their views of the Old, and that one after another of their followers are led on to take the plunge into pure naturalism, has an ugly look.

Thus we have seen how the Higher Criticism has advanced from stage to stage in its divisive and destructive course. Beginning with the partition of Genesis into separate documents, it has advanced until not only is the Hexateuch divided into discordant and conflicting fragments, but much of the after history and many of the prophetic writings are referred to many different hands. Beginning with the harmless assumption that Moses, in composing the Pentateuch, used pre-existing documents, it has advanced until it denies that he is either the author or source of any more than the merest fragment of it. Admitting at the beginning that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, it has advanced the date of its composition until it asserts that the most of it was not written until one thousand years after his death, and some of its advocates allege that none of the Old Testament was written until after the captivity. Conceding at the first the general historical credibility of the Hexateuch, it has ended, in the hands of its most trusted apostles, in relegating it generally to myth and legend. Beginning with a recognition of the inspiration of the Old Testament, it ends

with conclusions that are utterly irreconcilable with its divine authority. But this is not all. There is no barrier between the Old Testament and the New to prevent its sweeping with destructive flood over the latter, if we allow it to overwhelm all that is trustworthy and divine in the former. It would, to-day, sweep away the claim of the New Testament, and of our Lord himself, to be trustworthy, because they assume and assert the trustworthiness and authority of the Old Testament which the Higher Criticism denies.

If the Higher Criticism merely claimed that Moses used pre-existing documents in the composition of the Pentateuch; if it only claimed that it was compiled by various men under the superintendence of Moses, I should not so much care, for this would not be in conflict with its claim to be trustworthy and of divine authority. But when we are asked to believe that the religious and moral legislation of the Pentateuch was put forth by priest and prophet hundreds of years after Moses, and attributed to him to induce the people to accept it through a deception which would to-day be regarded as little short of literary forgery; when we are asked to believe that a history was fitted around this teaching put forth with this intention to deceive, in order to support the fiction of its Mosaic authorship by a narrative well-nigh as fictitious; when I am also asked to believe that it was such lawgiving that our Lord declared would stand though the heavens should fall, and such history that He accepted as trustworthy, then the issue becomes too grave and far-reaching to be decided by a process of criticism which is subjective, microscopic, and governed largely by preconceptions. The question is,

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whether there is greater evidence for the reliability and infallibility of Christ, or of the critics, for I can see no ground for our Lord's ignorance of the real character of the Old Testament, save that He was fallible. When I am required to choose between confidence in Christ and in the critics, it is not I believe, a begging of the question, even out of regard for all that is of worth for my soul and all souls, for me to maintain my confidence in Him. For are there not proofs as supreme as the teachings which He gave, and as strong as the tides of moral and uplifting power which have flowed forth through His words, that He was the Divine and Omniscient Teacher—that He was the Truth, and knew the truth, and spoke the truth; while the conclusions of the Higher Criticism have been supported by methods as arbitrary as many of its assumptions have been proved irreconcilable with facts. While there may be some modification of the traditional view of the Old Testament, we may be sure that it will be a modification which will be consistent with its credibility and authority as recognized by our Lord. When the battle has been fought out over the Old Testament, as it has been over the New, we may be sure that the foundations of our faith in the Old will be confirmed and established, as has been our serene confidence in the New.