

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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## I. THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF WRITTEN REVELATION.

WE use the term Revelation, in its wider signification, as the name of the Sacred Scriptures, and as implying divine authority for the whole, just as we call the whole the Word of God. Both of these names imply the orthodox view of inspiration. We shall assume that the book is as distinctly divine as if it all were actually revealed, while it is as distinctly human as if it all were of human origin. It is the analogue of the Incarnate Word, in whom perfect divinity and inerrant humanity meet in one person—the God-man. While it is not the purpose at this time to discuss this view, it will, no doubt, appear incidentally that no other working hypothesis is so satisfactory as this, no matter what inductions we seek to make from the Scriptures.

Writing looks to permanent preservation in unvarying form, and carries authority when duly authenticated. The “Ten Words” were written on tables of stone by the finger of God, and kept in the ark of the testimony under the most awful sanctions. Moses wrote his law in a book, and put it either in or beside the ark for a witness. Samuel wrote the “manner of the kingdom” in a book. Christ said to Satan, “It is written.”

There is no difference of opinion here. Nor is it important to settle whether there were previous writings from which much of the earlier books of revelation was taken, nor how far such writings may have been inspired.

It is now popular to say that the Scriptures are a growth, a de-

## II. THE ANTI-BIBLICAL HIGHER CRITICISM.<sup>1</sup>

No graver crisis has ever confronted the evangelical churches of Christendom, than that which they are called to face at present; none which affects matters so fundamental, or the issues of which are so serious and so far-reaching. Heretofore, the contests within the church have concerned questions of doctrine or of policy, more or less momentous; but all parties recognized one supreme authority. The Word of God was the admitted standard by which all controversies were to be ultimately decided. But now the Word of God is itself brought into question, and the issue which is forced upon us is, Is the Bible what the church has always believed it to be, and what we have always been taught to regard it? Or must the old view of the Bible be given up, and a new view be substituted for it, by which its authority and trustworthiness will be seriously impaired?

Attacks upon the genuineness and the truth of the books of the Bible, made by the enemies of the Bible, are no new thing. Nor is there anything novel in such attacks made in the name of Biblical Criticism by scholars, who have no faith in the supernatural. They cannot consistently do otherwise than discredit the books of Moses with the marvellous miracles which they record, and the accurately fulfilled prophecies which they contain. The only thing that is novel in the present situation is the acceptance of these critical conclusions by Christian scholars, who claim to be evangelical in their creed, and to be reverent students of the word of God. They admit the allegation that it has been demonstrated that several of the books of the Bible were not written by the persons to whom they have heretofore been attributed. But this, they affirm, need occasion no concern. It is really no damage to the Christian faith. Human authorship matters little in the books of Scripture. The only thing of consequence is divine authorship. Let the critics establish what they may, the heart of the matter is

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beyond their reach. The divine origin and authority of Scripture are not dependent upon their human authors, but upon God, whose word it is.

It should be said here that we have no disposition to depreciate Biblical Criticism, when reverently and fairly conducted, nor to underestimate its value as a branch of theological science. We wish it distinctly understood at the outset that we do not object to the application of the most searching tests to the books of Scripture, and the most thorough scrutiny as to their real origin. Turn on the light from every possible quarter and ascertain the exact truth. If all antiquity has been in error and the Jewish people and the Christian church through all the ages have been in error in believing that the Pentateuch was the production of Moses, let the truth be told though the heavens fall.

We think it capable of demonstration that Moses did write the Pentateuch, and that the objections by which the attempt has been made to set aside the faith of all past ages and to contravene the explicit testimony of our Lord in this matter can be shown to be invalid. This, however, is not the point to which we ask attention at this time. Our object at present is to set forth the gravity of the question at issue. It is not so indifferent a matter as it has been represented to be, whether or no Moses wrote the Pentateuch. It is said that the contents of the first five books of the Bible remain the same, whoever wrote them and whenever they were written. It may still be the Word of God and equally command our faith, whether it was all written in the Mosaic age and by Moses himself, or was written by other inspired men in later ages.

But this reasoning leaves out of view the intimate connection between the genuineness of a production and its truth and authority. It is not accounted a matter of indifference in the affairs of ordinary life, whether a legal instrument, claiming to be authoritative, or commercial paper, purporting to represent a given value, has proceeded from the proper authority, and whether the signature that it bears is genuine. If it is not from the source that it claims to be, and the signature attached to it is false, it is not worth the paper that it is written on.

Moses was a commissioned messenger of the Most High. His inspiration is attested by indubitable proofs. Our Lord and the inspired writers of the New Testament abundantly confirm the claim of the Pentateuch to be regarded as the Word of God, but in so doing, they uniformly attach to it the name of Moses; Moses says, Moses wrote, Moses taught, the law of Moses, etc., etc. It is as God's word through Moses, that they commend it to our faith. If these books be detached from Moses as their author, they are thereby detached likewise from the indorsement of our Lord and his apostles. They bid us accept what Moses taught and what Moses commanded. If these are not the teachings of Moses, and these commands are not his, their sanction is withdrawn.

Much has been said of late about the absolute inerrancy of the original autographs of Scripture, as though the question at issue at present was one of minute accuracy in trivial and unessential matters, and this related only to hypothetical originals no longer in existence, and was a mere inference from a particular theory of the mode of inspiration. This is an utter misunderstanding of the real gravity of the case. The actual issue which is now before the evangelical churches of Christendom is far more serious and far-reaching than this. It is vital and fundamental. It is a question of the historical truth and the divine authority of the Old Testament from beginning to end. Are its statements trustworthy? Can they be depended upon, not in minor and unessential matters, but in the great body of its contents? and has it any just claim to be regarded as really the Word of God? Its historical truth and its divine authority are closely linked, and must stand or fall together, not only because that which is untrue is thereby evidenced not to be from God, but because the Old Testament is professedly a record of God's revelation to his chosen people through a long series of ages. If the facts as therein set forth are true and real, it is beyond question an immediate divine revelation. If the alleged facts are fictitious the revelation itself is unreal.

The particular point to which we wish to direct attention is the bearing of the critical hypotheses respecting the Pentateuch upon its historical truth, and consequently upon its divine origin and authority.

If, according to the common and well-attested belief upon this subject, Moses is the author of these books which bear his name, their historic truth is placed beyond controversy. If Moses is the author of the narrative of those fearful plagues which broke the obstinacy of Pharaoh, and of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, and of the majestic scenes attending the delivery of the Law at Sinai, and of the journeyings of Israel through the wilderness attended by so many manifestations of divine grace and power; and if he placed on record the legislation attributed to him and which he is said to have received directly from God himself, then we have in this fact the highest possible voucher of the truth and certainty of the whole. It is the testimony of an eye-witness and a principal actor in the scenes recorded, of unimpeachable veracity; his record was made at a time when the events were fresh in the minds of the whole people; and his word is moreover confirmed by the mighty signs and wonders wrought by him, which are God's own attestation to its truth.

But we are told that we lose nothing by accepting the critical hypothesis, which denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and affirms it to be of composite origin; that this hypothesis is not discredited because unbelieving critics, such as Kuenen and Wellhausen, have used it to destroy the authority of the Pentateuch. In the hands of evangelical critics it is harmless. What evil can result from admitting that the Pentateuch is a compilation from four different inspired documents? Then instead of only one witness we have four separate witnesses to the history of the Mosaic period. These have been compared to the four Gospels, which supplement and corroborate each other and give a more complete and better attested life of Christ than could have been afforded by one alone. And it has even been alleged that we have in the Pentateuch a singular advantage beyond that which we possess in the Gospels. Uninspired men have undertaken to harmonize the Gospels, and to combine them into one continuous narrative. But there is much in even the best of these efforts which is open to question. Of different possible arrangements of the materials we cannot be certain in every case that the right one has been reached; whereas the Pentateuchal history is already

compacted for us into one continuous narrative by one inspired redactor.

Such is the representation that has been made. Now let us look at the actual operation of this critical hypothesis, and that not in the hands of Kuenen and Wellhausen, but of those who call themselves evangelical critics. We shall leave out of view the more destructive speculations and inferences of the former, and confine ourselves to those consequences which are inseparable from the hypothesis, however inclined its advocates may be to present it in the most favorable aspect possible.

The authors of the four Pentateuchal documents, which the critics profess to have discovered, are altogether unknown. The age in which they lived is uncertain and can only be approximately ascertained. For convenience in referring to them they are commonly designated by the letters of the alphabet, J, E, D, and P. J, the Jehovist, speaks of God uniformly as Jehovah, E prefers instead to call him Elohim, the Hebrew for God. D is the writer of Deuteronomy. P is the priestly writer to whom we owe the great body of the ceremonial law, as well as certain portions of the Pentateuchal history which are supposed to be linked with it. J and E are conceived to have been the oldest of these documents. The Rev. Dr. Driver, of Oxford, England, whose *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* has recently been published under the editorial supervision of Dr. Briggs, of New York City, and Dr. Salmond of Aberdeen, Scotland, tells us that J and E were not later than 750 B. C., and they may belong to the early centuries of the Monarchy. If we understand him to mean by this vague expression the earliest date to which it can possibly apply, they may perhaps be coeval with the age of David and Solomon. At the very least, therefore, they are at a remove of 400 years from the Exodus, a distance of time equal to that which separates us from the discovery of this continent by Columbus, or from the birth of Martin Luther. Or if the larger limit be allowed, they may be more than 300 years later still. Dr. Driver assigns D to the reign of the ungodly king Manasseh, eight centuries after the Exodus, and P after the Babylonish Exile, nearly or quite ten centuries from the Exodus. For our knowledge, conse-

quently, of the whole Mosaic period we are dependent upon records which are from four hundred to one thousand years subsequent to the events which they relate, and which are based upon the popular traditions of the time when they were prepared. And let it be remembered that the age of Moses was the foundation period of the Old Testament religion when its institutions were ordained by God himself amid signal attestations of the divinity of their origin; a period, therefore, respecting which it is of the utmost consequence that we should possess positive certainty of the truth and reality of the events recorded.

What credit would be attached to the Gospels if, instead of being written by contemporaries and eye-witnesses, or based upon the testimony of those who were, they were composed four centuries, eight centuries and ten centuries after the time of Christ, and reported simply the stories that were circulating respecting him at these several dates? And, further, if instead of being written by well-known apostles and evangelists, their authors were entirely unknown and their origin purely conjectural? What foundation would we have for our belief in anything that is related of Jesus Christ or in the truth and reality of his miracles and his death for our redemption, if all rested upon such a basis as this?

But it is said that other histories of the Old Testament are compilations and are anonymous, and were written long after the events which they record. Thus the Books of Kings contain the history of four hundred and fifty years from Solomon to the Exile, and could not, of course, have been written until after the latest event which they record. But it is to be observed that the contents of these books are throughout drawn from public and contemporary records, to which appeal is made at the close of every reign; and thus an adequate guarantee is given of the accuracy of the history. It is also the case that Moses records the lives of the patriarchs, though he was born five hundred and sixty years after the call of Abraham. But here again it is to be observed that the inspiration of Moses, of which we have the most abundant proofs in the notable miracles wrought through his instrumentality, is God's own attestation of the truth of all that he has delivered to

us in the Book of Genesis, not only respecting Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but of the earliest ages extending back to the creation of the world.

Here, however, we are met by the question, If the inspiration of Moses accredits the narratives of Genesis respecting events long prior to his time and even the primeval ages, why may not the inspiration of J, E, D and P, in like manner, accredit the contents of the Pentateuch?

The reason is obvious: In the first place, we have abundant and decisive evidence of the inspiration of Moses; of J, E, D and P we know nothing whatever, and of their inspiration we have no proof. In the second place, the hypothesis of the critics in relation to these assumed documents is absolutely inconsistent with the idea of their inspiration in any such sense as affords any guarantee whatever of their historical truth.

That this is so will appear from a statement of the grounds upon which the critics base their hypothesis for the partition of the Pentateuch. There are two principal criteria by which they undertake to distinguish the several documents, and which they regard as affording the clearest evidence of their existence. We must devote a few moments to the examination of these criteria, and shall then indicate the bearing which they have upon the historical truth of these documents and upon their inspiration in any proper sense of that term.

The first of these criteria is an alleged diversity of style and diction. Certain words and forms of speech are, it is said, peculiar to P in distinction from J and E, and wherever these characteristic expressions occur, this is an indication that the paragraph, sentence or clause, in which they are found, has been extracted from the document P. It is apparent how easy it is to make a division on this basis which is altogether factitious. The critic assumes that certain words and phrases are characteristic of one document, and certain other words and phrases are characteristic of another document. He accordingly goes through the Pentateuch with this criterion in view. Every paragraph, sentence and clause, in which any of the one class of expressions chance to be found, is regularly assigned to the one document; and with

like regularity every paragraph, sentence and clause, in which any of the other class of expressions appear, is assigned to the other document. And when the partition is completed it is found that all of the one set of expressions is in one document and all of the other set in the other document. But the reason of this is, because the critic has put them there. The partition corresponds with the hypothesis, for the simple reason that it was made by the hypothesis.

There is another significant fact connected with this matter. The critics tell us that while P is readily distinguishable in style and diction from J and E, it is not possible to establish any clear distinction of this sort between J and E themselves. And the reason of this is obvious to one who examines the subject with any care. To P are assigned the ceremonial law, genealogies, statistics and such grand, world-wide events as the creation and the main portion of the flood, but almost nothing that pertains to the ordinary current of events and the experience of individual lives. What can properly be called the narrative portion of the Pentateuch is almost entirely divided between J and E. The natural and necessary consequence of this partition is that each document has those words and phrases which are appropriate to the subject matter assigned to it. P has not the words of ordinary narrative for the simple reason that such narrative is regularly given not to P, but to J and E. And for the same reason P has not the style which belongs to narrative. It is said that there is a marked difference between these documents in point of style; that the style of P is rigid, formal, stereotyped and repetitious, and that of J and E is easy, flowing and picturesque. The difference is just that between genealogies, statistics and ritual legislation on the one hand, and historical narrative on the other. The differences of style are obvious enough; but they indicate not a diversity of writers, but diversity of theme. And unless it be maintained that one and the same writer must always limit himself to the same class of subjects, with what propriety can it be insisted upon that he must invariably adhere to one uniform style? Why may not a historian, while he deals principally in narrative, insert likewise genealogies and ritual laws in their proper place? And if the

genealogy has not the easy, flowing style of the narrative, is that any proof that it is from a different hand?

The impossibility acknowledged by the critics themselves of discriminating between the diction and style of J and E arises from the fact that the narrative parts of the Pentateuch are partitioned between them. Where there is diversity of matter, there is diversity of style. Where the matter is of the same description so is the style. There is nothing surely in all this to indicate that the Pentateuch is a composite production, made up by the blending of different documents. And thus we dispose of the first criterion proposed by the critics, on the basis of which they undertake to parcel the Pentateuch among the documents which they imagine that they have discovered. We are obliged, of course, to deal with this matter here only in the most general fashion. It is impossible now to go into details.

The second criterion upon which the critics base their partition of the Pentateuch is the one with which we are most particularly concerned at present, since it rests upon the assumption of the untrustworthiness of these alleged documents, and is fundamentally inconsistent with their inspiration, provided the term "inspiration" be used in its proper and universally accepted sense, as such a divine control over the writers of Scripture as secured their infallibility and guarded them from error. Here is where the allegation has its root, that Biblical Criticism requires a modification of the common doctrine of inspiration, as this is claimed by the sacred penmen, and has been the uniform belief of the Christian church. This doctrine is opposed to one of the primary assumptions of that school of criticism which rends the Pentateuch into tatters. We say "assumptions" advisedly. It is not a conclusion established by this divisive criticism, but is assumed as the basis on which the divisive criticism is itself built. We refer to their assumption of the existence of duplicate and discrepant statements as a pervading feature of the Pentateuch narratives. This is, in fact, the main reliance of the critics. They affect to find duplicate and discrepant statements everywhere, and they point to them as clearly evidencing duplicate authorship.

The way in which these are made out, is simple enough. Two

distinct events have certain features in common. These are compared, and are held to prove that these events are not two but in reality are one and the same, and this in defiance of the explicit statements of the record. The critic unhesitatingly sets the direct and unequivocal testimony of the sacred historian aside, and assumes on the ground of a superficial resemblance in a few particulars, that what is represented to be two separate occurrences is in fact but a single transaction. This assertion is made by the critic from no independent testimony tending to identify the two events or to show that the historian was in error. It is his own arbitrary judgment that the historian is not to be credited. Having thus converted the two events into one on the ground of a certain measure of correspondence, as the history never repeated itself the critic next displays their points of difference, not to show what they really do evidence, that the events are in fact distinct as they appear on the face of the record. but that these are two variant accounts of the same thing. And as the same writer could not have given such diverse representations of the matter, it is argued that they must be attributed to distinct writers.

Thus for example Abraham, on two separate occasions, through fear for his own safety, prevaricated respecting Sarah, saying that she is not his wife but his sister. She is brought into peril in consequence, but is providentially released. The critics tell us that these must be regarded as variant accounts of the same transaction, which according to J occurred in Egypt at the court of Pharaoh, but according to E took place in Gerar at the palace of Abimelech.

Again Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech in relation to wells of water, which were an occasion of strife between their respective servants, and he called the name of the well where their bargain was made Beersheba, the well of the oath. At a later time Isaac was in the same region and had a like difficulty about wells. The name of the Philistine king was again Abimelech, which was the permanent appellation of the monarch, like Pharaoh in Egypt, or Cæsar at Rome. Isaac had to dig over again the wells of his father which the Philistines had meanwhile stopped. So it came to pass that he too made a covenant with

Abimelech respecting wells at Beersheba, thus furnishing a fresh reason for the name which it bore ever afterward. Here again the critics can see nothing but variant accounts of the same transaction, which one document connected with Abraham and another with Isaac.

The critics still further multiply what they consider variant traditions of the same occurrence by setting one part of a transaction over against the other part of it, as though they were conflicting statements. Thus two reasons are given in the sacred record why Jacob left his father's house to go to Padan-Aram. One was to escape the fury of Esau, whom he had overreached by fraudulently obtaining his father's blessing; the other that his father charged him to go and obtain a wife from among his kindred. The two are entirely consistent; but the critics create a discrepancy by saying that J and E give a reason of which P knows nothing but assigns as the reason something altogether different.

Again, they tell us that J and E have quite different versions of what happened to Jacob at Bethel. According to E, he had a dream, in which he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, but heard no voice and received no verbal promise. J, on the other hand, knows nothing of any dream or ladder or angels, but says that Jehovah there appeared to Jacob while he slept and made certain promises to him.

Thus by identifying distinct transactions or distinct parts of the same transaction, they find material for what they consider separate documents, each of which tells a story diverse from the others and at variance with them. The necessary effect of such treatment is, of course, to produce the appearance of discrepancies and divergencies everywhere. And the entire history from first to last is converted from a consistent, continuous and reliable record into a medley of contradictory and jarring stories, such as were floating about at the time when these several documents were written. It is obvious what becomes of the historical character of a record so dealt with. And need it create surprise that critics who have formed this conception of the Pentateuch clamor for a modification of the common doctrine of inspiration?

And it is not merely the patriarchal history, which is thus resolved into a mass of discordant materials. The Mosaic period fares in the same way. The same methods are applied to it and with a like result; and this not in its subordinate details but in matters of the greatest consequence. God reveals himself to Moses in Exodus, chapter iii., and again in chapter vi. Both times he announces his purpose to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and bring them to Canaan by the instrumentality of Moses. Stress is laid upon his name Jehovah as pledging this result, and upon Moses shrinking from the task, his brother Aaron is associated with him as a spokesman, and the miraculous sign is given of the rod changed into a serpent.

Here, again, the critics tell us, these are but different narratives of the same thing, and there are numerous contradictions between them. The locality is different and the whole situation is different. E locates it in the wilderness of Horeb, while Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law in Midian: the Lord there appeared to him in the flame of fire in the bush. P knows nothing of Moses ever having been in Midian, or having seen the marvellous spectacle of a bush burning with fire yet unconsumed; he reports the revelation as having occurred in Egypt. According to E, the people believed Moses, when he brought them this message; but, according to P, they refused to hearken to him. In E, Aaron was to speak for Moses to the people; in P, he was appointed to speak for him to the king. In E, the signs were done before the people; in P, they were done before the king. In E, a rod possessing miraculous virtue was given to Moses as the instrument by which his wonders were to be wrought, in J, the rod was not the effective agent but the material of the miracle; it was itself converted into a serpent. Thus the different documents vary materially in their representation of the affair. And it is inferred that they must have followed diverse traditions of it. What the exact truth in the matter was, and how much of what is recorded really took place, and how much is to be placed to the account of legendary accretions, which had gathered in the lapse of from four to ten centuries intervening before the record was made, is left to be inferred.

In like manner, there are discrepancies between the different documents as to the plagues sent upon Egypt to compel Pharaoh to let Israel go. These concern the number of the plagues, what the plagues were, the design with which they were sent, and the manner in which they were wrought. According to P, the plagues were simply exhibitions of power, with which the magicians of Egypt vie with partial success at first, but are finally discomfited. J and E make no mention of any magicians. In P, Aaron with his rod works the miracles; in E, it is Moses with his rod; in J, no rod was used at all. There is only one plague that the three narrators, P, J, and E, have in common. From all this it has been inferred that the several traditions represented by these documents agreed that certain extraordinary events preceded and facilitated the Exodus, but there was no agreement as to what these events were.

The same sort of discrepancy is alleged of the passage of the Red Sea, the transactions at Sinai, and the wanderings in the wilderness.

According to the critical hypothesis, even in the most moderate hands, the situation, then, is this: The Pentateuch, instead of being one continuous and self-consistent history from the pen of Moses, is made up of four distinct documents which have been woven together, but which the critics claim that they are able to separate and restore, as far as the surviving remnants of each permit, to their original condition. These severally represent the traditions of the Mosaic age as they existed four, eight, and ten centuries after the Exodus. When these are compared, they are found to be in perpetual conflict. Events wear an entirely different complexion in one from that which they have in another; the characters of those who appear in them, the motives by which they are actuated, and the whole impression of the period in which they live is entirely different.

It is very evident from all this why the critics tell us that the doctrine of inspiration must be modified. If these Pentateuchal documents, as they describe them, were inspired, it must have been in a very peculiar sense. It is not a question of inerrancy, but of wholesale mutual contradiction which quite destroys their

credit as truthful histories. And these contradictions, be it observed, are not in the Pentateuch itself, but result from the mangling and the mal-interpretations to which it has been subjected by the critics.

On the critical hypothesis, the real facts of the history are not what they seem to be to the ordinary reader. They can only be elicited by an elaborate critical process. The several documents must first be disentangled and carefully compared; the points in which they agree and those in which they differ must be noted. And from this conflicting mass of testimony the critic must ascertain as best he may how much can be relied upon as true, how much has a certain measure of probability, and how much must be rejected altogether.

Another element of precariousness enters into the critical attempts to distinguish what is reliable from what is not in the Pentateuchal narratives. By the confession of the critics themselves, and by the necessity of their hypothesis, the documents which they fancy that they have discovered are by no means complete. By singling out the paragraphs and clauses which are regarded as belonging to each of the documents severally, and putting them together, they undertake the reconstruction of the original documents, which are supposed in the first instance to have circulated separately as distinct and independent publications, but to have been subsequently fused together into the Pentateuch as we now possess it, by a series of compilers, or, as they are technically called, redactors. First, the two oldest documents, J and E, were combined, and the combination was effected, it is supposed, by the following method: Sections or paragraphs, longer or shorter, were taken alternately from J and from E, and pieced together so as to form one continuous narrative. It was the purpose of the redactor to make the best use that he possibly could of these two sources at his command, in preparing a history of the period of which they treat. In some cases he made full extracts from both his sources of all that they contained, and preserved the language of each unaltered, making no additions or modifications of his own. Frequently, however, it was necessary to adjust what was thus taken from different works, in order to make it

read smoothly, or to render it harmonious. Hence, upon occasion he introduced explanatory remarks, or made such changes as seemed to be required in what he borrowed from J or from E. Sometimes his sources were so nearly parallel that it would lead to needless repetition to use them both. In such cases, accordingly, he confined himself to the account given in one of the documents, either omitting the corresponding statements of the other altogether, or weaving in a clause or a sentence here and there when it seemed to him distinctive and important. Again, cases occur in which the narratives of J and E were in real or apparent conflict. Here he does the best that he can. He either undertakes to harmonize their accounts, where this is possible, by inserting some statement which seems to reconcile them, by so changing the order of the narrative as to relieve the difficulty, or by converting inconsistent accounts of the same event into two different transactions. Where none of these methods is practicable, and reconciliation is out of the question, the redactor adheres to one of his sources, and disregards the other.

D, which was composed some centuries after this union of J E, existed for some time as an independent work, and was then combined with J E by a new redactor, who, besides attaching D to this previously existing work, retouched J E in several places, and introduced a number of passages from his own point of view, which was different from that of the older historians.

Finally the document P was prepared, at first as a separate publication, but at length it was interwoven by a third redactor with the preëxisting triplicate treatise D J E, the process being substantially the same as has already been described in the case of J E.

This is in general the method by which the critics suppose that the Pentateuch was gradually brought to its present form. It will be seen at a glance how the complexity of the critical problem is increased by the successive editorial labors which are supposed to have been brought into requisition in the course of the construction of the Pentateuch. The several documents must not only be distinguished from each other, but also from the various redactional additions and insertions which have at any time been made.

Let us assume that this delicate and difficult analysis has been effected with unflinching accuracy notwithstanding the liabilities to error vitiating the result, which increase at every step. But waiving this, what is the situation when the analysis has been accomplished? and what is its bearing upon the historical character of the Pentateuch?

The critics have undertaken to reproduce for us the documents J, E, D, and P, which are our primary sources for both the Mosaic and the patriarchal history, and which date respectively four, eight and ten centuries after the Exodus. These documents are not only at variance with each other in their statements respecting numerous particulars, thus invalidating each other's testimony and showing that the traditions which they have severally followed are mutually inconsistent; but they are besides very incomplete. Numerous gaps and omissions occur in each. Matter which they once contained, as is evident from allusions still found in them, is now missing; how much it is impossible to tell.

But what is more serious, the parts that yet remain have been manipulated by the various redactors. The order of events has been disturbed; events really distinct have been confused and mistaken for one and the same; and narratives of the same event have been mistaken for events altogether distinct; statements which are misleading have been inserted with the view of harmonizing what cannot in fact be reconciled; when traditions vary, instead of being recorded in their integrity to afford some opportunity of ascertaining the truth by comparison, they have either been mingled together; thus disturbing both, or one only has been preserved, thus leaving no check upon its inaccuracies. All this and more, the critics tell us, the several redactors have done with their materials. No charge is made of dishonest intentions. But surely it is most unfortunate for the historical value of their work. There is no way of ascertaining how far these materials have been warped from their proper original intent by the well-meant but mistaken efforts of the redactors to correct or to harmonize them. That their meaning has been seriously altered in repeated instances, which are pointed out by the critics, creates a very natural

presumption that like changes have been freely made elsewhere which can now no longer be detected.

It is difficult to understand in what sense the redactors, whose work has been described, can be said to have been inspired. They certainly had no inspiration which preserved them from error, or even from making the gravest historical mistakes. They had no such inspiration as gives any divine attestation to their work. The Pentateuchal history gathers no confirmation from having passed through their hands.

Upon the theory of the most conservative of the divisive critics, for it is this with which we have been dealing, what dependence can be placed upon the historical statements of the Pentateuch? These are, as they allege, inaccurate and inconsistent with themselves not in the patriarchal period merely, but throughout the lifetime of Moses, when the foundation was laid of the Old Testament religion and those signal miracles were wrought which gave it undeniable divine sanction. The real facts are not those which appear upon the surface. They can only be elicited by an elaborate critical process which shall detect and remove the mistaken additions and attempted emendations of each of the redactors, and shall then restore the four documents to their pristine condition, so far as what remains of each will allow. This will put the critic in possession of a mutilated record of four variant traditions of the Mosaic age, as these existed four, eight and ten centuries after that date. And now it is by the help of such materials in the way of comparison, correction and elimination that he must sift out and ascertain the real facts. Must we not say that the history of the Mosaic age, if this be the only way of arriving at it, rests upon a quicksand? and that nothing of any consequence can be certainly known regarding it?

We have been able in this discussion to look in a hurried way at but one feature of the disintegrating work which is done in the name of Biblical Criticism. We do not speak of the destructive inferences drawn by critics who are avowedly antagonistic to supernatural religion. We have confined ourselves to the conclusions accepted by that class of critics who claim to be evangelical, and who occupy positions of honor and influence in evangelical

churches, such as the British scholars and divines, Drs. Driver and Cheyne, and the American scholars who affiliate with them. We have looked at but one phase of their work, even as respects the Pentateuch. Had we been able to consider their treatment of the Mosaic laws, our conclusion would have been yet more abundantly confirmed. Here is no question merely of the strict inerrancy of Scripture, of absolute accuracy in unimportant minutæ, of precision in matters of science. This is not the issue raised by the theorizing of that class of biblical critics with which we contend. And it is no mere question of the mode of inspiration. But it is the question whether any dependence can be placed upon the historical truth of the Bible; whether our confidence in the facts recorded in the Pentateuch rests upon any really trustworthy basis; facts, be it observed, not of mere scientific or antiquarian interest, but which mark the course of God's revelations to the patriarchs and to Moses. It is the certainty of facts which are vital to the religion of the Old Testament, and the denial of whose truth weakens the foundations on which the New Testament itself is built. The critical theory which we have been examining, is destructive of all rational certainty of the reality of these truths; and thus tends to overturn the historical basis of the religion of the Bible. Our holy religion is a historical religion, based on a series of redemptive facts, in which God revealed himself to men and unfolded his will and gracious purposes. And to weaken the evidence of those facts, to cast doubt upon the reality of their historical occurrence, is to cast doubt upon the reality of that revelation which they embodied.

Those who hold these critical views which we have been considering may tell us that they believe in the truth of the Pentateuch, that they believe it to be inspired of God, that they believe it to be infallible in all matters of faith and duty. Of course, we do not question these declarations of their personal faith. But this does not make their critical theories harmless. It is well that men are sometimes inconsistent; that they who have adopted wrong principles or dangerous theories, do not always follow them to their legitimate conclusions. What we are concerned to know is not the personal faith of those who still cling to the creed in

which they have been brought up in spite of their acceptance of a critical hypothesis which is antagonistic to it. What we are concerned to know is the legitimate tendency of the critical hypothesis itself. However some of its adherents may retain their faith in the historical truth of the Pentateuch and its divine inspiration and authority, this hypothesis, as has been shown, undermines them all. Its acceptance by those not already well grounded in these doctrines must tend to unsettle their faith. Its general acceptance must lead ultimately to the denial of the inspiration of the Pentateuch even in that qualified sense in which these critics profess to accept it now, as well as to the denial of its historical truth, as surely as the tree will bear fruit after its own kind.

Now are we not right in saying that it is not Biblical Criticism in any proper sense which thus antagonizes the truth of the history recorded in the Bible and the inspiration of its books, but that it ought rather to be denominated, Anti-biblical Criticism, since even in the hands of those who wish to be regarded as evangelical, it unsettles the verity of the sacred oracles, and annuls their claim to be the very Word of God?

But a single word more. What must be the state of mind engendered toward the Scriptures by these critical speculations? Everything is unsettled. Doubt and uncertainty pervade the whole, unless we are content to take the *ipse dixit* of some particular critic. Where all rests upon uncertain conjecture, who can forbid fresh conjectures and additional speculations? In regard to every passage in the Pentateuch, the question must be raised, Is this by J or E or D or P, or is it an insertion by one or other of the redactors, or is it from some other source different from any of these? To which of the centuries from four to ten after Moses does it belong? Is its statement to be credited as a fact or to be set aside as a misconception? Will this encourage faith in Scripture and a reverent submission to its authority on the part of those who are taught to deal with it in this manner? Every one can answer this question for himself.

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