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I.

DR. BRIGGS' HIGHER CRITICISM OF THE HEXATEUCH EXAMINED.

IN the *Presbyterian Review* for January, 1883, Dr. Briggs published "A Critical Study of the History of the Higher Criticism with Special Reference to the Pentateuch." This is now reprinted in a volume, with a few additions and such verbal corrections as his subsequent change of attitude has rendered necessary, under the title of *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*.* In this amended form it may consequently be regarded as presenting the carefully considered views of the author corrected up to date.

There is an obvious distinction between the Higher Criticism *de jure* and the Higher Criticism *de facto*; and these may differ widely from each other. Critical investigations may be rightly conducted and lead to correct conclusions; or they may be based on wrong principles, follow wrong methods, and lead to false conclusions. Dr. Briggs tells us (*Presbyterian Review* for 1881, p. 578) that "Biblical criticism is represented by two antagonistic parties—evangelical critics and rationalistic critics." And he claims to have shown (*Presbyterian Review* for, 1883, p. 70) that "evangelical Biblical criticism was based on the formal principle of Protestantism, the divine authority of the Scriptures, over against ecclesiastical

* *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*. By Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D. 8vo, pp. 259. The Preface states that "ten years ago the author undertook to write a little book upon the Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch, and at that time he advanced some distance in its preparation. But on reflection he turned aside from it, with the opinion that the times were not yet ripe for it." Now "he presents to the public the result of his studies so far as they have gone."

tradition; that the voice of God Himself, speaking to His people through His Word, is the great evangelical critical test." He cannot then object to the application of this test of his own suggesting to the Higher Criticism as he expounds and defends it. Is it evangelical or rationalistic criticism? Is it Biblical or anti-Biblical? Are his critical conclusions in harmony or at variance with the statements of Scripture?

Dr. Briggs indeed says (p. 3): *

"The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch vindicates its credibility. It strengthens the historical credibility, (1) by showing that we have four parallel narratives instead of the single narrative of the traditional theory; and (2) by tracing these narratives to their sources in the more ancient documents buried in them."

It is difficult to imagine what meaning he can possibly attach to these words to justify him in making such a statement. It is obvious that taken in their ordinary and natural sense they do not express the truth. According to the Higher Criticism of Dr. Briggs, the Pentateuchal narrative is a compilation from four post-Mosaic documents, J, E, D and P, extracts from which have been woven together by a series of redactors. The oldest of these documents, J and E, are somewhat doubtfully assigned to a date from four to six centuries after the death of Moses (pp. 136, 156). D is said to belong eight centuries after the same event, and P ten centuries. What conceivable sense is there in saying that the historical credibility of the Pentateuch is strengthened by its being made up from four narratives dating respectively four, eight and ten centuries after the Mosaic age, instead of being a single narrative from the pen of Moses, a principal actor in all that is recorded from Exodus to Deuteronomy, who was consequently familiar with the facts, and his word a complete guarantee of the truthfulness and accuracy of his account? Would it strengthen the historical credibility of the Gospels if, instead of being written by well-known contemporaries and eye-witnesses, they proceeded from unknown authors belonging severally to the ages of Augustine, Charlemagne and Pope Gregory VII, and were made up from the stories in circulation at these respective periods? And the case is yet more seriously aggravated by the discrepancies and contradictions that are alleged between the Pentateuchal documents; discrepancies not found in the Mosaic narrative, but created by the critical processes which sunder it into fragments and set these over against one another, making the part equal to the whole, or identifying distinct transactions, thus arbitrarily producing discord, and making the several documents nullify each other's testimony instead of sup-

* This and similar references hereafter are to the volume named in the preceding note.

porting it. The universal affirmation of those that accept the partition hypothesis is that the history must be reconstructed; that the true course of events is not that which lies upon the face of the narrative, but it must be ascertained by eliminations and fresh combinations. And the only difference between the critics is in their varying estimates of the amount of truth which can be extracted from the mass of legendary accretions, later codifications and parenetic settings.

It is altogether misleading to say that the Higher Criticism, as handled by Dr. Briggs, only finds in the Pentateuch

“minor discrepancies and inaccuracies such as are familiar to students of the Gospels; but these increase the historical credibility of the writings, as they show that the writers and compilers were true to their sources of information even when they could not harmonize them in all respects.”

Apart from the gratuitous and unwarranted assumption that there are discrepancies and inaccuracies in the Gospels, this conceals the fact that the representations of the Pentateuch in regard to the work of Moses, the revelations made to him and the laws enacted by him, are in large part discredited. What avails it that “the writers and compilers were true to their sources of information,” if these sources, because of distance in time or for other reasons, are considered unreliable? It is true that inspiration is attributed both to the documents and the redactors (pp. 142, 160). But here again the use of terms out of their ordinary and accepted sense is calculated to mislead. For it must be borne in mind that inspiration in Dr. Briggs' view does not preserve its subjects from historical mistakes. Accordingly it leaves the historic credibility precisely where it would have been without it.

Dr. Briggs stigmatizes the view which he opposes as “the traditional theory.” It is no baseless ecclesiastical tradition, but it has formed a part of the faith of the Church from the beginning, because accredited by reliable history and by explicit statements of the Word of God.

The testimony of Holy Scripture regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch is first reviewed (pp. 6-30); and then the history of critical opinions adverse to the authorship of Moses (pp. 36-145). There is this remarkable difference between the two parts of the discussion. In the former there is a constant attempt to minimize or evade statements however positive and explicit. In the latter objections are exaggerated and their validity magisterially affirmed. Thus by depreciating all that favors, and enhancing and overrating all that can be made to seem to oppose, the authorship of Moses, the professor fancies that he makes out a case. Had he come to the Scriptures to learn what they really teach, and then tested objec-

tions fairly to see whether they were of sufficient force to set aside the teaching of Scripture, the result would have been different.

According to Ex. xxiv. 3, 4, 7, Moses wrote in the Book of the Covenant all the words of Jehovah, viz., those recorded in chap. xx, and the judgments, chaps. xxi-xxiii. This is commented upon as follows (p. 6):

“The editor of the Hexateuch designed to give the essential contents of the Book of the Covenant in that series of pentades and decalogues which seem to have been the original contents of this code of the Ephraimitic writer. A critical study of this code shows that there have been omissions, insertions, transpositions and revisions; but the substance of this original code of the twelve decalogues is there.”

This is altogether without warrant. The sacred writer here professes to lay before his readers a true copy of the Book of the Covenant, not merely its “essential contents” nor its “substance.” It is the code committed to writing by Moses, not a modification of it drawn up in a later age.* And the unique importance of this authoritative document, which lay at the basis of the covenant ratified at Sinai, is of itself a guarantee that it would be sacredly preserved in its primitive form unaltered. The proof offered (pp. 211-232) of alterations from the Mosaic original is drawn from the assumption that this was composed in decalogues and pentades, which, though still preserved in part, can no longer be traced throughout, and which, it is hence inferred, must have been obscured or effaced by omissions, insertions and transpositions. But this is pure conjecture. The only decalogue, which is expressly declared to be such, is the ten commandments, Deut. iv. 13, x. 4. It is quite likely that Ex. xxi. 2-11 may be regarded as a decalogue; and some other groups of ten or five are pointed out with more or less plausibility. In the majority of instances, however, the critics vary considerably in their enumeration. The presence of certain groups of five or ten in this ancient body of laws, however, does not prove that every subject of legislation here introduced was dealt with after one unvarying pattern, that each was unfolded in precisely the same number of statutes, none more and none less, and that no miscellaneous statutes were admitted without a similar grouping. And especially, when it is found that these groups of five or ten cannot be made to cover the Book of the

*The professor nowhere states definitely the date to which he would assign the Covenant code. He says (p. 125): “It is not surprising that the school of Reuss put the Covenant code in the reign of Jehoshaphat. It would be difficult to find it in all respects in the previous history, and there seems to have been a progress in the line of the Covenant code up to the reign of Jehoshaphat and beyond. . . . It seems most probable that the greater code of the Covenant represents the Mosaic code, as it had been codified in the northern kingdom of Israel.” And on p. 124: “A theocratic code suits best a prosperous kingdom and a period where elders and judges were in authority.”

Covenant as it now stands, it does not follow that the reason is to be sought in changes that it has undergone. The assumption that the verses which the professor finds himself unable to classify are fragments of former decalogues, and that the original number of decalogues was twelve to correspond with the twelve pillars erected by Moses, for which he can imagine no other use than that the decalogues may have been severally written upon them, is unverified and baseless speculation. And as this is the only semblance of proof presented to show that the Book of the Covenant has not been preserved in the form in which it was written by Moses, it cannot be considered very convincing.

In Ex. xxxiv. 27, Moses is directed to write the words contained in the preceding verses, which the professor calls the Little Book of the Covenant, in distinction from chaps. xx-xxiii, the Greater Book of the Covenant. He agrees with those critics who assign the latter to the document E, and the former to the document J. This gives occasion to the remark (p. 7):

“The question thus arises whether there were two law-codes [in two different books given within a few weeks of each other, or whether these are two different codifications of one and the same Book of the Covenant.”

There is no question at all about the matter to one who puts any faith in the history related in the Book of Exodus. There are here not two different codifications of one and the same Book of the Covenant, one produced in the northern kingdom of Israel and the other in Judah. The sacred narrative distinctly states when, where and by whom each was written. One was written by Moses on the occasion of the original ratification of the covenant at Sinai; the other on the renewal of that covenant after it had been broken by the sin of the golden calf.

In Deut. xxxi. 9, 24-26, Moses is said to have written all the words of “this law” in a book and delivered it to the custody of the priests. The professor tells us that “this law” must be limited to Deut. xii-xxvi, although in the usage of Deuteronomy this expression cannot be so restricted.* Deuteronomy recognizes a prior legislation of Moses binding upon Israel,† and the book of the law of Moses, by which Joshua was guided, must have been much more extensive.‡

* See Deut. i. 5, iv. 44, xxviii. 58, 61, xxix. 20, 27.

† See Deut. iv. 5, 14, xxix. 1, xvii. 11, xxiv. 8, xxvii. 26.

‡ Comp. Josh. i. 3-5*a* and Deut. xi. 24, 25; Josh. i. 5*b*, 6 and Deut. xxxi. 6, 7; Josh. i. 12-15 and Num. xxxii; Josh. v. 2-8 and Ex. xii. 48; Josh. v. 10, 11 and Lev. xxiii. 5, 7, 11, 14; Josh. viii. 30, 31 and Deut. xxvii; Josh. viii. 34 and Deut. xxviii; Josh. xiv. 1-3*a* and Num. xxxiv. 13-18; Josh. xiv. 6-14 and Num. xiv. 24; Josh. xvii. 3, 4 and Num. xxvii. 6, 7; Josh. xx. and Num. xxxv. 10 sq.; Josh. xxi. and Num. xxxv. 1-8; Josh. xxii. 1-4 and Num. xxxii; Josh. xxii. 5 and Deut. x. 12. 13.

He then goes on to say (p. 8):

"This code is in the rhetorical form and not in the form of decalogues and pentades, as are the Covenant codes. The question, then, arises whether this rhetorical form belongs to the original code, or whether the original code of this law book has not been put in this rhetorical form by the Deuteronomist."

The record is explicit that Moses wrote "the words of this law in a book until they were finished;" Dr. Briggs identifies "this law" with Deut. xii-xxvi. And then because this law has a form of its own, distinct from that of another code prepared on a different occasion and for a different purpose, he questions whether we really possess what Moses actually wrote. It is surprising that its rhetorical form should raise such a question in his mind. That is precisely the form which all the circumstances would lead us to expect. The great legislator, on the point of surrendering into the hands of another the leadership which he had held for forty years, is making his farewell address to the people, under the conviction that their destiny hinged upon the fidelity with which they clung to the Lord and obeyed His law. Its rhetorical form belongs to its fitness for the occasion on which it was delivered. This is one of the indications of the genuineness of the Book of Deuteronomy which it is impossible to set aside.

In Deut. xxxi. 22, Moses is said to have written a song, which is thus commented upon (p. 9):

"The song referred to is given in Deut. xxxii, and it is one of the finest pieces of poetry in the Old Testament. . . . Whether the song in its present form came from the pen of Moses is doubted by many evangelical scholars."

The professor does not say whether he thinks these doubts well founded. Their only basis is the circumstance that the song transports us in thought to the time when the apostasies and penalties had actually occurred, which are spoken of (xxxii. 16-21, 29) as certainly foreseen. If such foresight was possible, the poetic dress which is given to it is altogether natural, and surely gives no valid ground for disputing the historic truth of the statement respecting its authorship. The praise of the poetry will scarcely atone for the suggestion of groundless suspicions concerning its genuineness.

The itinerary in Num. xxxiii is ascribed to Moses; and it is noteworthy that it is so related to the antecedent narrative as to bind together portions sundered by the critics and seriously to embarrass the partition hypothesis.

It is not worth while to discuss the question what it is that Moses is directed to write in Ex. xvii. 14, whether, as Dr. Briggs contends; simply the words, "I will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven," or, as Dr. Dillmann and the best in-

terpreters maintain, an account of the preceding transaction, the affair with Amalek.

The consideration of these several passages is followed by the remark (p. 11):

“All that the Pentateuch says as to Mosaic authorship we may accept as valid and true; but we cannot be asked to accept such a comprehensive inference as that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch from the simple statements of the Pentateuch that he wrote out the few things distinctly specified.”

We have seen that the professor, so far from accepting all the statements of the Pentateuch in regard to Mosaic authorship, has in every instance sought to belittle them and pare them down, and suggest doubts as to their accuracy. It should also be observed that the statement that Moses wrote certain things need carry with it no implication that he wrote nothing beside; on the contrary, it may imply that he wrote much more. Isaiah is expressly said to have written two things, an inscription upon a roll (Isa. viii. 1) and a brief prophecy upon a tablet (xxx. 8). Are we to infer that this was all that he wrote? Jeremiah is said (Jer. xxxvi. 2) to have written his prophecies up to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Does that imply that he wrote none after that date? Moses had been trained in Egypt, where it was the custom to record the exploits of kings and all important events. When, now, we are told that he wrote something in relation to Amalek's attack upon Israel at Rephidim, can it be that this was singled out as alone worthy to be put on record? And how does the fact that he preserved a list of the stations occupied by Israel in their journey through the desert create any presumption against his having also recorded the events which made that journey particularly memorable? If he wrote some of his laws and adopted measures for their careful preservation, why should he be less concerned to have other laws given by him reduced to writing, which were even more sacred and equally imperative?

The attempt is made to evade the testimony of Hos. viii. 12 to the existence of an extensive written law by giving a hypothetical sense to the first clause. But the past tense of the verb in the second clause renders that impracticable. The ten thousand precepts of God's law have been counted a strange thing. The people could not be charged with disregarding a law which they did not actually possess.

In regard to the book of the law found in the temple in the reign of Josiah we are told (p. 16) that critical scholars are agreed that it was the Deuteronomic code. And several pages are quoted from Prof. Ryle in proof of this position. But while the arguments adduced go to show that Deuteronomy was contained in the book

there is no proof that the rest of the Pentateuch was not contained in it likewise. The statement that the author of the Books of Kings was not acquainted with any law but that in Deuteronomy cannot be substantiated.*

The professor has made a number of most unaccountable slips in the next paragraph (pp. 20, 21). He speaks of—

“The roll of the book concerning the king, Ps. xl. 8. This doubtless points to the law contained in Deut. xvii. 4 *sq.*, and gives evidence of a knowledge of the Deuteronomic code by the writer of this exilic psalm.”

If “in the roll of the book it is written of me” (Ps. xl. 8) points to what is written in Deut. xvii. 14 *sq.*, concerning the king, then the author of this psalm was a king, and, as the kingdom ceased with the exile, the psalm could not possibly be exilic. He says further :

“‘Law’ in the Psalter is for the most part used in psalms of a very late post-exilic date.”

Five of the nine psalms in which this term occurs were certainly pre-exilic, viz., Ps. i (alluded to by Jer. xvii. 7, 8), xix, xxxvii, xl, ascribed to David in their titles, which there is no good ground for disputing; lxxviii, composed, according to Dr. Briggs (p. 148), before J and E were compacted, which, according to all critical authorities, antedates Deuteronomy (p. 101 *sq.*).

The Lord’s injunction by Malachi, “Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel,” is said to refer to the Deuteronomic code, though this was not given at Horeb, but in the plains of Moab.

The plain references in Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles and the New Testament to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch are diligently explained away, so that one is left to wonder what form of speech

*The plan of Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs. vi) is identical with that of the Mosaic tabernacle (Ex. xxvi), the dimensions are precisely duplicated, the apartments are the same, the decorations largely the same, and the furniture of the same description, only multiplied and enlarged (1 Kgs. vii). There are also plain allusions to the Priest code in the mention of the altar of gold (vii. 48), and of brass (viii. 64), the horns of the altar (i. 50, ii. 28), the feast in the seventh month (viii. 2), and on the fifteenth day of the month (xii. 32), the evening meal-offering (xviii. 29), and the morning meal-offering (2 Kgs. iii. 20; Ex. xxix. 39-41), new moon and sabbath as times of holy convocation or special religious observance (2 Kgs. iv. 23), the blasphemer to be stoned (1 Kgs. xxi. 13; Lev. xxiv. 16), patrimony inalienable (1 Kgs. xxi. 3; Lev. xxv. 23), the laws concerning leprosy (2 Kgs. vii. 3, xv. 5; Lev. xiii. 46), the high priest (2 Kgs. xii. 10, xxii. 4, xxiii. 4), the trespass offering and sin-offering (2 Kgs. xii. 16), the money of him that passeth the census, and for the person according to the priest’s estimation (2 Kgs. xii. 4; Ex. xxx. 14; Lev. xxvii. 2-8), meal-offering, drink-offering, the brazen altar which was before Jehovah (2 Kgs. xvi. 13-15), unleavened bread the food of priests (2 Kgs. xxiii. 9; Lev. vi. 16-18).

the sacred writers could have employed to express this idea more distinctly. The admission is made, however, on p. 26 in reference to several declarations of our Lord and some other inspired statements:

“These passages all represent Moses to be the law-giver that he appears to be in the narratives of the Pentateuch.”

And now from these minimizing interpretations of Scripture, we proceed to the history of critical opinion in the remainder of the volume, wherein are set forth the method by which conclusions adverse to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch have been reached, and the grounds on which they are based. The superficial objections of Peyrerius and Spinoza, which antedated the hypothesis of its composite origin, are first stated (pp. 36 *sq.*), and a validity attributed to them which they can only possess to one who is convinced for other reasons that the Pentateuch is not the work of Moses.

The hypothesis of different documents in the Pentateuch is supported by arguments from language, style and parallel narratives. The proof from language consists of long lists of words drawn out in formidable array (pp. 70 *sq.*, 168 *sq.*), as severally characteristic of these documents, and affording indubitable evidence of diversity of writers. This seems plausible at first sight, and is calculated to make a strong impression on the uninitiated. But it is altogether delusive, and the apparent force of the argument melts away on a closer inspection. The difference of diction in different sections of the Pentateuch is largely to be accounted for by the diversity of theme or of the character of the composition. The critics claim that what they call the document P is clearly distinguishable from JE in respect of language. Now, to P they assign genealogies, dates, legal sections, and such grand, world-wide events as the creation and deluge; but, as a rule, all narratives in the sphere of individual life are given to JE, only mere snatches from them, such as a few disjointed sentences or summary paragraphs, being allowed to P. It is obvious that a division of this sort must necessarily result in a diversity of diction. Words are signs of thought, and where the lines of thought are distinct so must the diction be. Words and phrases in constant use in ordinary narrative have no place in genealogies and ritual laws, and *vice versa* the peculiar diction of the latter is not to be expected in the former.

J and E, between which the narratives are commonly divided, are confessedly indistinguishable in diction. The general character of the composition being the same, the diction is alike. The only discrimination attempted is here again by means of a diversity of subject, *e. g.*, dreams, Moses' rod, the pillar of cloud, are regularly

given to E; Jehovah appearing, or coming down from heaven, and prostrations are the property of J. It is also significant that whenever the critics find themselves obliged to share a narrative between P and JE, as in Gen. xxxiv, Ex. xvi, Num. xvi, they find it as difficult to distinguish P from J or E on the score of diction, as they do to distinguish J from E. In such cases they are obliged to make the division, if they effect it at all, by other tests than those of language; and their wide divergence from one another shows how precarious and arbitrary are their assumed criteria.

It is further to be observed that these documents have no separate existence; and there is not the slightest evidence apart from alleged critical criteria that they ever did exist as distinct productions. The criteria are first assumed. The lines of partition are drawn accordingly. And then the correspondence of the documents with the criteria by which they were shaped is made the proof of their reality, when they may be nothing more than the arbitrary creations of the critics themselves. It is reasoning in a circle to prove the documents by the criteria, and the criteria by the documents.

And in spite of all the pains taken to partition the documents in accordance with the criteria, this is found to be impracticable in numerous instances. Of these the critics seek to rid themselves by various suspicious expedients. Sentences and clauses are cut out of their connection and attached to some remote paragraph. Words or expressions occurring at variance with the hypothesis are alleged to have been taken from one document and inserted in the other. Mixed criteria are attributed to the manipulation of the redactor, who is ever held in readiness to account for phenomena incompatible with their primary assumptions. And the text is unhesitatingly corrected into agreement with their hypothesis, the latter being made the standard to which the former is obliged to conform.

It should be observed likewise that these lists contain much which is plainly devoid of any significance whatever. Many of the so-called characteristic words could not be so regarded, even if the document hypothesis were well founded. The number is largely swelled by enumerating words of rare occurrence, also words which though familiar are proper to a given subject and are of course limited to passages treating of that subject, and synonyms which though used discriminatingly are counted as the unmeaning differences of distinct writers.

If different pages of any book or different productions of the same writer be compared, long lists can be made out of words in one which do not chance to occur in the other. But it would be futile to argue from this a diversity of authorship.

The argument from style is largely subjective, and is a very precarious ground for assuming the existence of distinct documents in the absence of more tangible and trustworthy proofs.

Dr. Briggs correctly affirmed in 1883 (*Presbyterian Review*, p. 100):

“There is nothing in this variation of documents as such to require that they should be successive and separated by wide intervals, or that would prevent their being very nearly contemporaneous. There is nothing in this distinction of documents as such that forces us to abandon the Mosaic age as the time of their origin.”

Even if it could be shown on purely literary grounds that the Pentateuch is a composite production, and that the differences of diction and style are such as to indicate the participation of distinct writers in its preparation, this would not of itself militate against its being produced under the superintendence, by the direction, and with the authority of Moses. It need not be prejudicial to its contemporaneousness, its credibility, and its entire truthfulness. The documentary hypothesis as first proposed by Astruc and further developed by Eichhorn contemplated merely the Book of Genesis, and assumed that this was compiled by Moses. There was nothing in this adverse to its inspiration and divine authority in its fullest sense. There was even plausibility and force in the contention of these early advocates of the hypothesis, that it tended to confirm rather than to disturb the credibility of the sacred record, which was thus traced back to ante-Mosaic writings instead of drawing its materials from unwritten tradition.

Even the extension of this hypothesis to the entire Pentateuch need not in friendly and unprejudiced hands have conflicted with its Mosaic authorship. It is quite conceivable, for example, that Moses might have directed Joshua and Eleazar, or some other suitable persons, to prepare accounts of whatever was memorable in the journey through the desert, and have made these the basis of his own final work. A critical analysis of the Pentateuch on purely literary grounds, supposing these to be sufficient to justify it, might thus be in entire harmony with the statements of the Pentateuch itself and of the rest of Scripture.

It is only the unfriendly presuppositions, on which the current scheme of critical analysis is based, which bring it into irreconcilable conflict with the truth of the Pentateuch, and consequently with its being the work of Moses. This comes clearly out in the next argument of Dr. Briggs on its behalf, that of parallel narratives. It is claimed that in repeated instances variant accounts are given of the same transaction, which differ so seriously from each other, that they cannot have proceeded from the same writer. These are,

it is true, described in the sacred record as distinct events. But this is attributed to a mistake on the part of the redactor or compiler, who, not being able to reconcile the discrepancies in these narratives proceeding from different sources, imagined that they must have related to separate times, places and actors, and so represented them. This assumption, which underlies the current critical hypothesis, and has been largely influential in the partition of the text, arbitrarily presupposes the untrustworthiness of the inspired history, sets up unsupported conjectures in opposition to its explicit statements, infers in spite of positive declarations to the contrary an identity from certain superficial resemblances which are outweighed by accompanying diversities, and imputes to the redactor, who is the reputed author of the Pentateuch in its present form, blunders of a kind that must destroy all confidence in the accuracy and reliability of his work. Instead of a truthful and reliable history, we have a record of discordant traditions put together in a way to mislead by one who misunderstood and misinterpreted them.

There are, we are told (p. 75 *sq.*), two accounts of the creation, which conflict in some important particulars; two variant accounts of the deluge; two versions of the Ten Words, neither of which records them as they were actually spoken by God Himself and written on the tables of stone, but both contain additions from several sources of a much later date. There are three stories of the peril of the wives of the patriarchs, two referring to Abraham at different courts, and one to Isaac; but all may be variations of the same story. The blessings pronounced upon Abraham at different epochs of his life are simply different versions of the same divine act. E and J differ in their account of what Joshua did with the stones taken from the bed of the Jordan. The redactor has in Num. xvi combined two distinct rebellions in one account. There are two reports of the bringing of the water from the rock. The one is in the wilderness of Sin, early in the wanderings; the other is in the wilderness of Zin, forty years after. It is a question whether these are not variant accounts of the same miracle.

It is obvious from these examples, and "many other instances might be given," how unsettling these so-called parallel narratives are to the historical truth of the Pentateuch. A mode of dealing with its statements is here sanctioned which in the hands of other critics leads to the most appalling consequences. And it does not appear how their conclusions are to be resisted, when their premises are thus freely conceded. Nor does it appear how far Dr. Briggs may be prepared to follow them. And if his adherence to the faith in which he has been brought up holds him back from the logical consequences of his positions, what assurance is there that those who

accept them from him will not pursue them to their natural issue? It is this uncertainty, in which Dr. Briggs shrouds himself, which has so disturbed his friends and alarmed the Church. He boldly announces startling principles, destructive of what is most surely believed, and then expects by glittering generalities to restore the confidence which he has so rudely shaken.

The discrepancies, which result from these assumed parallels, do not merely affect matters of small consequence; though the constant recurrence even of minor discrepancies tends to weaken confidence and undermine credibility. So reverent and conscientious a scholar as Dr. Dillmann, the chief opponent of the Wellhausen school, is led by the discrepancies thus developed in the patriarchal history to discredit the real existence of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to find in the record of their lives only the experiences of wandering clans, from which the people of Israel subsequently grew. Matters of the gravest importance in the Mosaic period, and such as are fundamental to the religion of the Old Testament, are similarly involved.

Dr. Briggs finds ten commands in what he calls the Little Book of the Covenant (Ex. xxxiv. 14-26), of which he says (p. 189):

“There are some critics who hold that this decalogue was written upon the tables, Ex. xxxiv. 28. . . . If the section Ex. xxxiv. 11-28, stood by itself we could not escape this conclusion; but if we go back to Ex. xxxiv. 1, we find the promise that Yahweh will write upon these tables the same commands that were upon the former tables destroyed by Moses, and these were certainly the ten words of Ex. xx. 2-17. This certainly was the opinion of the redactor.”

The professor states the opinion of certain critics, and of the redactor, but he gives no intimation of his own. As he puts it, all depends upon the critical analysis. The redactor connects vs. 11-28 with the promise in ver. 1, which leads to one conclusion; some critics interpret these verses by themselves and apart from that promise, which compels a different conclusion. Which is right? And what does the difference amount to? These critics charge that the redactor has made the same mistake here as in the instances above cited; that according to Ex. xxxiv, the ten commands here given are the ones that were written on the two tables of stone, whereas Ex. xx gives an entirely different version of them. The redactor, unable to harmonize these discrepant accounts, converted them into distinct transactions, and assigned them to separate occasions.

Wellhausen goes further; and Dr. Briggs opens the way for him, not indeed by a positive declaration, but by a query. He raises the question (p. 7) whether the Little Book of the Covenant and the Greater Book of the Covenant, Ex. xxi-xxiii, are not “two differ-

ent codifications of one and the same Book of the Covenant." Wellhausen says that they are, and thus he finds three parallel narratives, three variant accounts, of what was transacted at Sinai. These all agree that God delivered a law to Moses on Sinai, but differ materially in regard to the contents of that law and the circumstances of its delivery. In Ex. xx God utters ten commandments as there cited, in the audience of the people, amid awful terrors, and subsequently (xxx. 16) gives them to Moses on two tables of stone written with his own finger. In Ex. xxxiv God gives ten commandments (here reported from a variant tradition) to Moses alone, which Moses then writes on two tables of stone. In Ex. xxi-xxiii no mention is made of tables of stone or of ten commandments, but God gives to Moses a series of laws, which he commits to writing and reads to the people (xxiv. 4, 7).

We cannot conceive that Dr. Briggs assents for a moment to this conclusion. But it illustrates the havoc which this figment of parallel narratives, to which he gives his adhesion, is capable of making in the most central and vital matters of divine revelation. If, as Dr. Briggs intimates, the Little Book of the Covenant may be only an altered version of the Greater Book of the Covenant, and the redactor has erred in assigning them to distinct occasions; and if, moreover, the opinion of the redactor, thus suggested to be at fault in one particular, alone hinders the assumption that the decalogue of ch. xxxiv, already carried back to the time of the original ratification of the covenant at Sinai, was the ten commandments then written on tables of stone, is not Wellhausen's monstrous hypothesis of three parallel narratives justified by the professor's inconsiderate admissions?

Dr. Briggs finds two parallel narratives "of the same revelation of the divine name Jahveh" (p. 165), that of E in Ex. iii and that of P in Ex. vi. This first disclosure of Himself by the Most High to Moses, coupled with the original call of Moses to the work of delivering Israel, took place, according to E, in the desert of Midian at the burning bush as Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law. P locates it in Egypt, and says nothing of any burning bush, or of Moses ever having been in Midian. The redactor has converted these variant accounts of the same event into two separate events by introducing P's narrative at a later time, as though it described a second revelation made after Moses found that his intervention on behalf of the people aggravated their burdens instead of relieving them.

Parallel narratives of the same plague are mistaken by the redactor for distinct plagues, and are so represented by him (p. 78). The different narratives also make different representations as to

the mode in which the plagues were wrought, and what the plagues were (pp. 147, 148).

There are "several representations of the theophany" (p. 236):

"In E Moses sees God's face and form habitually. In J he is not permitted to see God's face, but only His back parts, and that as the greatest privilege of his life. In D the prohibition of making images is based on the fact that the people had seen no form of God in the theophany, but only heard His voice; whereas in E, the elders see God standing on a platform, and eat and drink in His presence. In P the glory of the theophanies lights up the face of Moses every time he enters into the presence of the glory. Nothing of the kind appears in any of the other narratives. These representations are sufficiently difficult to harmonize in different documents of later writers depending on different sources of information. How could Moses give such various accounts of what he himself had seen and heard?" See also p. 146.

On the principle of parallel narratives these are divergent accounts of the same thing and traceable to "different documents of later writers" and their "different sources of information." But the redactor, in his simplicity, regarded and represented them as accurate descriptions of what took place on different occasions.

There are divergent representations of the sacred tabernacle in respect to its location, its elaborate structure and its uses (p. 103). These variant traditions concerning the same building, which are found in documents of different ages, are treated by the redactor as though they were correct accounts of what belonged to the times and the situations specified in the narrative.

The Biblical narrative and the critical conception of what were the real facts are thus in antagonism throughout. If the former is to be surrendered and the latter accepted, the truth can only be ascertained by a complete reconstruction of the history by critical methods. And the serious aspect of the case, then, is that the documents, which are the only available sources, are conflicting and overlaid by traditional accretions, and the well-meant, but mistaken, attempts of the redactor to unify and harmonize them prove very confusing, so that it is well-nigh impossible to attain to a well-grounded certainty in respect even to the most fundamental facts of the religion of the Old Testament. To show that this is not the exaggeration of an "anti-critic," but a sober view of the actual situation from a critical standpoint, I cite here the words of Kittel, whose authority on such a matter will not be questioned: *

"A profound and almost impenetrable obscurity rests upon the occurrences at

* *Geschichte der Hebräer*, Vol. i, p. 212. A competent scholar and an intimate friend of Dr. Briggs gives the following estimate of this work in the *Presbyterian Review* for 1889, p. 138: "The spirit of the book is rigidly scientific. It is in the interest of historical research that the author writes. But he writes as a profound believer in the supernatural. He treats the historical materials he uses with deep respect. He is a critic, but a reverent and constructive one. He is a representative of sober, thorough historical study, unwarped by prejudice, who cannot be made light of. He has done a great service in this volume."

Sinai, so far as regards their course in particular. There is scarcely any point of the entire Old Testament tradition concerning which the accounts are so involved and confused to such a degree as they have been here by the effort of the redactor to unify this most important piece of the national history. . . .

"But, tangled as the individual threads of the narrative may be at this point, one thing comes plainly out from all the accounts as the core of the whole. The centre of all the events which take place here is the revelation of Jahve at Sinai in a law regulating the life of the people. But in respect to its contents and compass the several narrators diverge with regard to this law still more seriously, I may almost say, than with reference to the external course of the giving of the law."

There is no obscurity whatever in the Biblical narrative respecting the events at Sinai or the laws given there; but critical reconstruction throws everything into a tangle. The record of the laws given at Sinai is parceled between the different narrators, J, E and P. Dr. Briggs tells us (p. 156) of J, "The only legislation it attributes to Moses is the moral law of the Ten Words, the decalogue of worship (the Little Book of the Covenant) and a special law of the Passover." Of E he says, "Its law code, the Greater Book of the Covenant, was the Mosaic law in its Ephraimitic codification." The Sinaitic legislation according to P was the ritual law from Ex. xxv to Num. x. In critical estimation these are divergent representations. No two of the authorities are agreed what laws were given at Sinai. And the redactor by "his effort to unify" and by reducing these variant statements to a continuous and consistent account, as we now find it in the Pentateuch, has simply confused the whole matter. The authorities are at variance, and it is impossible to ascertain what were the real facts. The only thing that is plain is that Jehovah did reveal a law at Sinai. But what that law was we have no means of knowing. What is to be thought of such a method of dealing with the inspired volume by professed believers in divine revelation?

The chapter on the date of Deuteronomy, with the exception of a couple of paragraphs from Dr. Driver, is repeated from the *Presbyterian Review* of 1883, with a few verbal changes and the insertion of a few clauses indicative of the change of sentiment which the professor has since undergone. It recites *verbatim* the identical arguments for the late date of Deuteronomy, which were then pronounced inconclusive, as well as what were then declared to be "insuperable obstacles to the composition of Deuteronomy in the age of Josiah." Only now a different conclusion is drawn from the very same premises. Of the explicit testimony of Deut. xxxi. 9-11, 24-26, the professor then said (*Presbyterian Review*, p. 105):

"This seems to imply clearly the Mosaic authorship and composition of the Deuteronomic code."

He now says (p. 89):

“This seems to imply the Mosaic authorship and composition of a code of law, but was that code the Deuteronomic code in its present form? . . . All that is said may be true if we suppose that an ancient Mosaic code was discovered in Josiah's time, and that this code was put in a popular rhetorical form as a people's law book for practical purposes with the authority of the king, prophet and priest.”

No amount of special pleading can obscure the fact that the only possible alternatives are that the Deuteronomic code is from Moses or it is a pious fraud. The previous toleration of high places has no force against the existence of the Deuteronomic code except on the assumption that it proves the non-existence of a law restricting sacrificial worship to a single altar. And yet this is acknowledged to be the law by which the reforms of Josiah were directed, reforms professedly based on the law book found in the temple. The insertion of this novel statute under the name of recodification, and enforcing it on the authority of Moses, who by hypothesis gave no such law, but one directly opposite, is as palpable a fraud and as impossible to carry into effect without detection as though the entire statute book was then manufactured and the attempt made to palm it on the people and the kings as the production of the great law-giver.

Having traced the literary analysis of the Pentateuch as successively proposed by the documentary and the supplementary hypotheses, and discussed the date of Deuteronomy, the professor proceeds to the consideration of the development hypothesis of Reuss as further championed and popularized by Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen and others. Of this he correctly remarks (p. 95):

“It is evident that the school of Reuss propose a *revolutionary* theory of the literature and religion of Israel.”

It revolutionized preëxisting critical opinion, reversing the order and the character of the so-called documents, making that last which had been held to be the first, and that least reliable which had been esteemed the most accurate and trustworthy, annihilating beyond recovery the supplementary hypothesis which was then in the ascendant, and saving the documentary hypothesis only by the expedient of rending the Elohist in two, with an interval of centuries between the sundered parts.

It was revolutionary in its relation to the Scripture record, whose explicit statements it directly antagonized. Dr. Briggs here interposes the caveat (p. 95):

“It is important to distinguish the essential features from the accidental The rationalism and unbelief that characterize Kuenen, Wellhausen and Reuss are not essential to the theory itself.”

But the adoption by believing scholars of a theory which is

inherently anti-Scriptural does not change its essential nature. The precious cargo of a vessel may be scattered on the waves by a ruthless band of savages exulting in the work of destruction; or it may be cast overboard with no hostile intent by a devoted crew persuaded that the vessel must be lightened that it may outride the storm. The motives and the aims of the actors are as different as day and night, but whether by friend or foe the cargo is sunk in the sea. The various attitudes of different critics towards supernatural and revealed religion does not alter the inherent quality of the theory which they adopt in common, however it may modify the tone and manner of their presentation of it, and the consequences which they deduce from it.

The hypothesis of Reuss is built upon two assumptions, which are in open and confessed antagonism to the declarations of Scripture:

1. That the Pentateuchal codes are not, as represented in the Pentateuch itself and elsewhere in Scripture, component and mutually related parts of one complete system of legislation, but they constitute so many distinct and successive systems of legislation, the next in order being in each case further developed than that which preceded it.

2. That the differences between these codes are such that they cannot all have belonged to any one period, least of all to the Mosaic, as represented in the Scripture account, but long periods of time must have elapsed to give occasion for their introduction.

Now the professor very properly asks (p. 95):

“How shall we meet it but on the same evangelical principles with which all other theories have been met, without fear and without prejudice, in the honest search for the real truth and facts of the case?”

Its antagonism to Scripture does not absolve us from a candid examination of its claims, and a fearless inquiry into the facts upon which it is professedly based. But we must not conceal from ourselves the gravity of the issue. If it is true, the entire record of the Bible on this subject is false. This is no reason for blinking the question, momentous as it is. Or rather, its tremendous importance imperatively demands that the investigation should be honest, impartial and thoroughgoing. Here, if anywhere, we want to know the exact truth. The Bible is not to be upheld by special pleading, by concealment or ignoring of facts, by sophistical reasoning, or by any species of dishonest arts. Let no servant of the God of truth presume to undertake the defense of His righteous cause by disingenuous advocacy. The challenge of Job xiii. 7-11 is unanswerable: “Will ye speak unrighteously for God, and talk deceitfully for him? . . . Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?”

The issue is direct: the Bible account of the Pentateuchal legislation *versus* the theory of Reuss. Which is true? If honesty forbids covering up or evading any of the facts by which that theory is supported, it equally forbids any sophistical attempt to hide or explain away the absolute incompatibility between that theory, and not merely particular averments of Scripture, but the historical truth of the entire Hexateuch. He who has confidence in the Bible need not fear the result of the contest.

The development hypothesis is engrafted upon the documentary hypothesis by assigning the Covenant code to E from four to six centuries after the death of Moses, the Deuteronomic code to D eight centuries, and the Priest code or ritual law to P ten centuries after the same event. The documentary hypothesis accepting these dates completely undermines the credibility of the narratives of the Hexateuch, by attributing them to documents belonging six, eight and ten centuries after the events recorded, and based upon variant traditions circulating at those several dates. But the development hypothesis goes further and charges the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua with absolute falsity.

Moses is expressly declared (Ex. xxiv) to have written the Covenant code, and read it in the audience of the people, whereupon they promised obedience, and the covenant between Jehovah and Israel was ratified on this basis with appropriate rites. The critical allegation on the contrary is that the Covenant code, as recorded, Ex. xxi-xxiii, was not and could not have been written by Moses, but was drawn up in its present form in North Israel some time after the settlement in Canaan; Reuss says in the reign of Jehoshaphat.

Moses is said (Deut. xxxi) to have written the book of the law, and delivered it into the custody of the priests. This cannot mean less than the Deuteronomic code; it may include much more. But the critical contention is that this code made its first appearance in the reign of Josiah.

It is insisted that the Priest code as recorded in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers dates from the time of Ezra, whereas it is in the sacred record directly attributed to Moses as a whole and in every part of it. Its various enactments are interwoven with the events of the Mosaic history; the occasion and circumstances under which they were delivered, together with the judgments inflicted for their violation, are minutely specified. And the language of the laws ties them to the period of wandering in the wilderness by the mention of tents and camps and shittim-wood, and oxen and carts for the transportation of the movable sanctuary, and Aaron and Eleazar as the celebrants of the rites enjoined; by allusions to Egypt as the land

from which they had recently come, and to Canaan as the land to which they were going; and by injunctions which could only be imposed or obeyed when Israel was encamped together in a body, *e. g.*, Lev. xvii. 1-9.

Of the two assumptions, on which the development hypothesis rests, Dr. Briggs in 1883 admitted the first, *viz.*, the successive development of the codes in the order, Covenant code, Deuteronomic code and Priest code; but denied the second, *viz.*, their origin at widely separate periods (*Review* p. 114).^{*} He held that the codes were all Mosaic; that it was not

“necessary to postulate a thousand years to account for this development” (*Review*, p. 114). “To an evangelical man, transgression and silence do not prove the *non-existence* of the code, but only a general *neglect* and *ignorance* of it for reasons that may be assigned” (*Review*, p. 123). “That the law was buried in oblivion as to its most essential parts and hid away in the temple for centuries, while the nation followed traditional usage, is no more strange than that the Gospel should have been buried in monastic chambers for so many centuries away from the use of people, kings, and even pious priests and bishops of the Church, while they followed canons, missals and traditional usage to a large extent in violation of the first principles of the Gospel” (*Review*, p. 126). “The Mosaic legislation was *delivered* through Moses, but it was enforced only in part, and in several stages of advancement, in the historical life and experience of Israel from the conquest to the exile” (*Review*, p. 129).

And thus, while holding that the Deuteronomic code first came into full operation in the reform of Josiah and the Priest code in the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah, he maintains that this did not prejudice their Mosaic origin (*Review*, p. 127):

“Nought but ancient, undisputed, divine documents, long neglected, but all the more impressive on that account from the experience of the divine discipline which that neglect involved, could so influence and control the pious leaders and the pious part of the nation who followed them in these reforms.”

How the Priest code could be a development from the Deuteronomic code, and both alike Mosaic, when the latter was given in the last month of Moses' life (Deut. i. 3), the professor sought to explain thus (*Review*, p. 115):

“It claims to be Mosaic legislation, but if we should suppose that Eleazar or some other priest gathered these detailed laws and groups of laws into a code in the time subsequent to the conquest, all the conditions of variation and development might be explained.”

Then this whole development “in the *chief* features of the ceremonial system,” all in which the Levitical law goes beyond Deuteronomy in respect to ritual, would be post-Mosaic, and the Priest code would be the law of Eleazar, not of Moses. Could the laws of the great legislator have been so seriously altered within a gen-

^{*} This and all subsequent references to the *Review* denote the *Presbyterian Review* for 1883.

eration? Or could Eleazar have taken such liberties with what he had received direct from Moses himself? The sentence above quoted has accordingly been altered thus (p. 108):

“It claims to be Mosaic legislation, but if we should suppose that later priests gathered the detailed laws and groups of laws into codes at any times subsequent to the conquest, this claim would be satisfied.”

He escapes from his former self-contradictory position by taking a step in advance and accepting not only the first postulate of the development hypothesis, but the second likewise, thus abandoning his belief in the Mosaic origin of the codes, reversing all his former arguments on that subject, and claiming that the different codes were separated by several centuries from each other and from the time of Moses (p. 123). By accepting these unproved postulates he surrenders the whole case at the outset, and the conclusions of the critics follow as a matter of course.

The fallacy in the critical reasoning on this subject lies in the primary assumption that the Priest code was a further development of the Deuteronomic code; whereas both are different and mutually supplementary parts of one comprehensive system of legislation. They are distinct in the matters treated, in their aim and purpose and in the parties for whom they were respectively designed. One is occupied with the ritual, and was intended for the direction of the priests: the other was for the guidance of the people in the practical affairs of life. These codes were developments from the Covenant code, one in one direction and the other in another. The Covenant code was a preliminary body of laws, setting forth in brief compass the civil and religious obligations of the people as conceived in the spirit of the religion of Jehovah. It is placed (Ex. xx-xxiii) just between the appointment of judges to administer the affairs of the people (Ex. xviii. 25, 26) and the ratification of the Covenant between Jehovah and Israel (Ex. xxiv), and it has an obvious relation to both. It furnished a body of statutes to govern the judges in their decisions, to which the people promised obedience as the Covenant people of Jehovah.

In both respects it was preliminary and rudimental. The ratification of the Covenant was first followed by the enactment of the Priest code, in which the few and simple ritual requirements of the Covenant code were developed into a minute and extensive ceremonial, designed to give full expression to the worship of Jehovah and the religious life of the people, as directed by the priests, the ministers of religion. And later on, when the people had reached the borders of Canaan, the great legislator gave to the people at large the Deuteronomic code, a body of enactments covering the whole of their practical life, being a renewal and enlargement of

the Covenant code in all its particulars with such modifications as the altered circumstances demanded. The Priest code was thus not developed out of the Deuteronomic code, nor the Deuteronomic code out of the Priest code; but both were developments on different sides from the original and primary Covenant code.

To sunder these great divisions of the Mosaic legislation from one another and assign them to distinct epochs in the history of Israel is as unreasonable as it would be to treat the several articles of the Constitution of the United States in a similar manner. It is as though some one were to insist that the articles on the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, instead of describing coördinate branches of the same government, really set forth distinct forms of government, which grew up one after another, proceeding from the simple to the complex, and implying great social and political changes which it would require long periods of time to effect. The second article would seem to be the most primitive, in which the government was by a single chieftain, called President, who was chosen to office for a brief term. At a later period this was superseded by Article 3, which established an aristocracy, denominated Judges, who held office for life. Finally Article 1, which must have been the latest in the series, introduced institutions of a more popular cast by substituting a body of representatives elected by the people. Nothing but confusion and perversion can result from such an unwarranted proceeding.

Dr. Briggs explicitly acknowledges that the relation between the several codes, which he urges (pp. 101–107) in proof of their successive development, is due to the difference in their design (pp. 107, 108):

“A code for the elders and judges of tribes or clans in their various localities, a code for the instruction of the nation as a whole in rhetorical and popular form, and a code for the priests of the holy place as a centre, in the nature of the case will show a progress from the simple to the more and more complex and elaborate in matters of ritual observance. The Priest code is from the priestly point of view in connection with the tabernacle and its institutions. It will necessarily exhibit progress and development on the technical side in the details of the ritual. This code is scattered in groups in the middle books, and broken up by insertions of historical incidents, but when put together exhibits an organic whole, a unity and symmetry which is wonderful in connection with the attention given to details.”

If a greater elaboration of the ritual in the Priest code is explicable from the reason here given, his entire argument from this source for its later development is null and void.* And the unity,

*The only instance adduced, which even apparently suggests the legislation of different periods, is the alleged contrariety in the laws Ex. xxii. 31; Deut. xiv. 2; Lev. xvii. 15, 16, xi. 39, 40. Of these he says (p. 106): “Several generations are necessary to account for such a series of modifications of the same

which it is admitted to possess, speaks for all being the product of a single mind, and not a conglomerate formed by the accretions of ages.

In 1883 it was admitted in a passage already quoted, that transgression of the codes and silence respecting them do not disprove their existence, but only a general neglect and ignorance of them for reasons that may be assigned. But now the same facts repeated in identical terms are held to establish a different conclusion (p. 123):

“There are evidences of the presence from time to time in the history and literature of certain laws of D before Josiah, and of certain laws of P before Ezra, but not of these codes and writings as such.”

It was also affirmed (*Review*, p. 120), that “the *most essential* things of the Priest code” are “the most striking features in the religious history of the Books of Samuel,” and he went on to say:

“These things, in which the holy places and things culminated, and in which the clothing and office of the priesthood attained their climax, point with unmistakable force to the Priest code. That these *essential features* remained, argues the prior existence of the *legislation* of the Priest code, notwithstanding its general neglect and violation.”

This entire paragraph has now been dropped, and instead of it the following sentence is appended to a previous statement regarding the wilderness as the scene of the legislation of the middle books of the Pentateuch.

“This, however, does not force us to think of the antiquity of our present Priests' code, but only of the antiquity of those laws and institutions in it which are ascribed to the earlier times” (p. 116).

On this method of reasoning, unless every requirement in the Priest code is mentioned in the history and was regularly obeyed, the code itself could not have been in existence, but only such of its statutes as chance to be expressly attested. The unreasonableness of such a test is obvious, especially in relation to a code which was for the government of the priests and the regulations of which could not be expected to come within the scope of the general history of the people unless in the most incidental and occasional way. The same impracticable test is applied to the code of H (Lev. xvii-xxvi), (p. 128):

“Ezekiel's resemblance to it in many respects implies a knowledge of its legislation whether he knew it in its present form of codification or not. It is

law.” But there is no serious discrepancy after all, and nothing that cannot be readily harmonized. Even Dillmann here takes issue with the professor, and claims that the difference is not due to earlier or later date, but to the changed point of view from which the subject was regarded (*Comment. on Lev. xvii. 15, 16*).

probable that Ezekiel knew of it, but it is difficult to prove the existence of the code prior to Ezekiel."

As Ezekiel did not transcribe these chapters in full, his numerous allusions to them and citations from them are not allowed to prove their prior existence. If some classical critic were to demand similar proof from ancient authorities of the existence of Greek and Latin writings, where would it be found even in the case of the best attested works?

Dr. Briggs agrees with the advocates of the development hypothesis, as we have seen, in their two preliminary assumptions, and in affirming the validity of their principal arguments; does he accept their conclusions? He claims that he differs from them in two respects, to which we must devote a brief consideration.

He censures the early opponents of the school of Eichhorn (p. 54), for "not discriminating between those who were attacking the Scriptures in order to destroy them, and those who were *searching* the Scriptures in order to defend them." There is some ground for this censure then and since. Nevertheless Eichhorn and his collaborators, though enthusiasts in the study of the Old Testament as Hebrew literature, had no sympathy with it as a supernatural revelation. Eichhorn defended the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in the main, because by the rationalizing exegesis then in vogue he was able to explain away all that was miraculous, and reduce it to the level of extraordinary natural events. But when this insipid rationalistic interpretation fell into disrepute, there was no resource for those who denied the reality of the supernatural but to dispute the contemporaneousness of the Mosaic record. The documentary hypothesis was eagerly seized upon as the most effective method of setting aside the authorship of Moses and allowing a sufficient interval for the growth of miraculous legends. The various critical hypotheses, which have been successively elaborated, have been wrought out under the same bias, and have led to corresponding results. In consequence of this prevalent perversion it is not surprising that a prejudice has been conceived against the Higher Criticism itself, as though it were essentially rationalistic, and antagonistic to the truth of Scripture and to evangelical religion. But it is a serious mistake to reject a valuable instrument because it has been misapplied. The Higher Criticism is simply a scientific method of inquiring into and ascertaining the facts respecting the books of the Bible. If proper methods are pursued right results will be reached. The true way to deal with a "radical and revolutionary theory" like the development hypothesis is, as Dr. Briggs well says (p. 98), "to look the facts in the face, and inquire whether the theory of the school of Reuss accounts for them in whole, or in part, or at all."

No one who has a sincere faith in the Bible will hesitate to say Amen to these noble words. The cause of the Bible cannot be damaged by the frank acceptance of the truth in criticism, or in any other branch of scientific inquiry. It may be and it has been discredited in the estimate of intelligent and thoughtful men to their own unspeakable injury by the blind and obstinate hostility of professed advocates of religion to clearly established truths, as though they were antagonistic to the Bible.

Beyond question Dr. Briggs is honestly aiming to defend the revealed Word of God and evangelical religion against the hostile attacks of a destructive and revolutionary criticism. Convinced that the critics have established much that is at variance with what has been currently believed hitherto respecting the origin and structure of the books of the Bible, he is persuaded that the only honest and safe course is frankly to accept these conclusions and adjust the belief of the Church accordingly. He confidently maintains that nothing which is essential to the Christian faith will be lost by so doing; while, if this is not done, the Bible will be put in apparent opposition to the sure results of modern scholarship, to the serious disadvantage of the Christian faith, a disadvantage to which it cannot rightfully be subjected. This is an intelligible position. It is conscientiously taken, and it is entitled to respectful consideration. If it can be shown that critical conclusions do not affect the Christian faith, that the latter will remain intact whatever be the results at which the Higher Criticism may arrive, that the great verities of our religion are quite independent of all questions of the date and authorship and literary character of the books of the Bible, a decisive point of vantage will unquestionably be gained. The believer may then regard with entire unconcern the varying phases of the critical combat. Terminate as it may, his serenity will be undisturbed. The realm of critical inquiry will then stand in no relation to the realm of Christian faith. They lie in distinct and independent spheres. Human authorship is nothing; divine authorship is everything. Earnest minds who have been entangled in the meshes of critical speculation, or hampered by doubts arising from the oppositions of science and philosophy, may welcome such a solution of the difficulties which have obstructed their acceptance of Christian truth, and eagerly grasp the relief thus afforded them. And it is cause for gratulation, if they who are in darkness and doubt can by any means be led into clearer light.

But the serious aspect of the matter is that the divorce which the professor proposes to effect is impracticable. The books of the Bible are the charter of the Christian faith. If the former are unsound, the latter cannot be maintained. In attempting to adjust the

relations between the Christian faith and critical science, Dr. Briggs lowers the former into conformity to the demands put forth in the name of the latter, instead of elevating the latter to the just requirements of the former. There must be a new doctrine of the province of reason, a new doctrine of inspiration, a new doctrine of the evidential value of miracles, a new doctrine of the fulfillment of prophecy, a new doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible. Every thing must be graded down to the level of the last critical hypothesis. The objective arguments for the truth of Christianity must be surrendered; or at least the Church must be ready to surrender them, if need be. The subjective arguments are the only ones that can be depended upon. The *fides humana* is worthless; the *fides divina* is alone of any account. But what God hath joined together cannot thus be put asunder. The *fides divina* is the only faith that saves the soul. The testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart can alone work that persuasion of the truth of the Scriptures which is connected with salvation. But that persuasion is not wrought in opposition to, nor apart from rational grounds of conviction. The Holy Spirit does not persuade the soul to embrace that as divinely true which is evidenced to the understanding as critically false. On the contrary, the persuasion which He produces of the infallible truth of the Word of God is an irrefragable basis of the conviction that the books of the Bible, which are the channels through which the divine truth is conveyed to men, are thoroughly trustworthy, and must prove themselves so under the most searching investigation; and that a true criticism cannot set aside their integrity, their authenticity, or any claim which they make for themselves.

Dr. Briggs claims that he differs from the advocates of the development hypothesis not only in his animus but also in his critical results. He sums up the case thus (p. 128):

“We have now gone over the arguments relied upon by the school of Reuss for their theory of the development of the Hexateuch. These sustain the theory so far as the codification of the legislation in its present literary forms is concerned, but not so far as to disprove earlier traditional Mosaic legislation and earlier Mosaic codes which have been used by holy men with historic reverence and under the influence of the divine Spirit in their codification of ancient laws and their composition of the historic documents into which the codes were taken up.”

But the most radical advocates of that hypothesis admit the existence of “earlier traditional Mosaic legislation,” which was subsequently embedded in the codes. Thus Wellhausen, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. “Pentateuch,” p. 513:

“It is asked what is left for Moses if he was not the author of the Torah? But Moses may have been the founder of the Torah, though the Pentateuchal

legislation was codified almost a thousand years later; for the Torah was originally not a written law, but the oral decisions of the priests at the sanctuary. . . . Questions of clean and unclean belonged to the Torah, because these were matters on which the laity required to be directed; but, speaking generally, the ritual, so far as it consisted in ceremonies performed by the priests themselves, was no part of the Torah. But, while it was only at a late date that the ritual appeared as Torah as it does in the Priestly code, its usages and traditions are exceedingly ancient, going back, in fact, to pre-Mosaic and heathenish times. It is absurd to speak as if Graf's hypothesis meant that the whole ritual is the invention of the Priestly code, first put into practice after the exile."

At the utmost, then, the difference can only be one of comparative amount. Possibly more may be traceable to Moses in the reckoning of Dr. Briggs than in that of Wellhausen; but in the indefiniteness with which both express themselves it is impossible to affirm that this is so.

Dr. Briggs enumerates the five characteristic points of the development hypothesis (pp. 96, 97), and, if we can understand the meaning of his language later on in his discussion, he affirms his acceptance of every one of them.

"The theory of the school of Reuss attempts to account, (1) for the variation of the codes by three different legislations at widely different periods of time, *e. g.*, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, of Josiah, and at the restoration."

The professor simply substitutes three codifications for "three different legislations," but he means the same thing. For he says (p. 123): "There are evidences of certain laws of D before Josiah, and of certain laws of P before Ezra, but not of these codes and writings as such." All that was in the codes except these "certain laws" was of course new legislation, and, as we have already learned from Wellhausen, the hypothesis does not assert the novelty of all the legislation in the codes.

"(2) For the silence and the infraction, the discrepancy between the Pentateuchal legislation and the history and the literature, by the *non-existence* of the legislation in those times of silence and infraction."

This was denied in 1883, but the denial is now explicitly withdrawn, and much of the argument on pp. 110-124 is unmeaning otherwise.

"(3) For the development of the religion of Israel in accordance with these codes by the representation that the *origin* of these codes corresponds with that development."

It is claimed (pp. 125, 126) that "we can trace in the history of Israel a religious progress in remarkable accordance with the codes." This is indicated by the fact that there was a "development of the legislation in successive codifications" as the basis of the reforms of Josiah and of Ezra. And the codes as such are said to

have originated then, though "certain laws" incorporated in them existed before.

"(4) For the difference in point of view of the authors of Kings and Chronicles, on the ground that the author of Kings knew *only* of Deuteronomy, while the author of Chronicles was filled with the spirit of the new Priest code."

It is (p. 126) declared in so many words that the Priest code "was not known to him (the compiler of Kings) or used by him;" and that the difference between Kings and Chronicles "suggests the natural supposition that the Priests' code was subsequent in origin to the Book of Kings."

"(5) For the peculiar position of Ezekiel's legislation by the statement that his legislation was in fact an *advance* beyond the Deuteronomic code, and a *preparation* for the Priest code, which was post-exilic."

Dr. Driver unambiguously asserts and argues for this view of the closing chapters of Ezekiel. And Dr. Briggs quotes from him with apparent approval of the statement that cogent arguments "combine to make it probable that the *completed* Priests' code is the work of the age subsequent to Ezekiel."

In one respect it might seem as though Dr. Briggs parted company with the school of Reuss, viz., in affirming the trustworthiness of the Books of Chronicles, which they unhesitatingly deny. Thus he says (p. 115):

"Some of the most essential things of the Priest code are mentioned by the chronicler. These cannot be explained by the theory of the school of Reuss. The way that Kuenen and Wellhausen meet the difficulty is hardly creditable to their fairness and good judgment. We cannot consent to the denial of the historical sense of the chronicler for the sake of any theory."

This passage, repeated *verbatim* from 1883, might lead one to think that he still gave full credit to the statements of Chronicles. But there are other indications that his mind has changed on this subject. On p. 114 he repeats from 1883 the regulations of the Priest code, which Chronicles declares to have existed in the time of David and Solomon. But he twice inserts a caveat not in the original passage: "But the other writers knew nothing of these things," "But these things are unknown to the prophetic histories." Why is the silence of Kings remarked upon unless with the view of discrediting what rests solely on the authority of Chronicles? The Books of Kings in general pay little attention to ritual; on the contrary, this is a prominent feature of Chronicles. This is a difference in the plan of these two histories that grows out of the design with which they were respectively written, but does not in the least affect their trustworthiness. In 1883 Dr. Briggs said (*Review*, p. 127):

"The theory of the school of Reuss, that the chronicler colors the history

from his point of view and misrepresents it, cannot be justified. It was natural that each should examine the history from the point of view of the code most familiar to him; and that the author of Kings and the chronicler should, therefore, occupy different planes of judgment, but that does not show any misconception or misinterpretation on the part of either of them."

Now he says (p. 126):

"The theory of the school of Reuss that the chronicler so greatly colors the history from his point of view as to falsify it cannot be justified. It was natural that each should examine the history from the point of view of the code most familiar to him, and that the author of Kings and the chronicler should, therefore, occupy different planes of judgment. We could not reasonably demand that they should be colorless. These differences do not show any intentional misinterpretation on the part of either of them, or that the chronicler undertook to invent the history."

The author of Chronicles is acquitted of falsification, of intentional misrepresentation and of inventing history, but not, as before, of misconception and unintentional misrepresentation likewise. This saves his honesty and lays the blame on inadequate sources of information; but the history is no longer entirely reliable.

In accepting the development hypothesis, Dr. Briggs thus has to reckon not only with the explicit and reiterated statements in Chronicles of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, which he vainly attempts by forced constructions to invalidate (pp. 21-25), warning those who cannot understand them as he does of the peril they incur:

"Those who insist upon interpreting such phrases in such a way as to force belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch . . . should beware lest they risk the canonicity of the writings of the chronicler by bringing him in conflict with the mass of evidence that may be presented from the Pentateuch itself to show that, if the chronicler held that opinion, he was altogether mistaken."

But he must reckon likewise with the fact, which he not only admits, but insists upon and argues from, that Chronicles surveys the history from the point of view of the Priest code. Its existence is assumed throughout the entire period that Chronicles covers, viz., from the reign of David to the exile. This is the divine norm to which rulers and people are held to be responsible, and by which their acts are judged. The history is conceived and represented from this point of view. And if this is a mistaken point of view the history is colored and misconceived and misrepresented. And the best apology that can be made for the author is that he was honest, but mistaken.

It is to be noted further that Dr. Briggs' acceptance of the development hypothesis not only leads him to discredit Chronicles, and brings him into conflict with the direct statements of the Pentateuch as to the Mosaic origin of all its laws without exception, but obliges

him likewise to treat as untrue the facts which are there recorded. In 1883 he said of the period of the Judges (*Review*, p. 117):

“The ark of the Covenant, the tent of meeting . . . are only found in the Priest code,”

He now says (p. 112):

“The ark of the Covenant, the tent of meeting . . . are different from these things as presented in the Priest code.” And (p. 113) he says of the “sacred things of the Priest code” in the time of Samuel: “They are in a different form and of a different character from that in which they appear in the Priest code.”

Now if, as he imagines and magisterially affirms, the ark of the Covenant, tabernacle, shew-bread, ephod, and Urim and Thummim of the time of the Judges and Samuel were not such as are described in the Priest code, and we are asked to infer from this that the Priest code was not yet in existence, it can only be because these things had not yet been constructed after the pattern described in the Priest code. And yet we are expressly informed that the pattern of all these things was given to Moses in the mount (Ex. xxv–xxx), and that Bezaleel and Aholiab made the tabernacle and all its vessels in precise accordance with these directions (Ex. xxxvi–xxxix), and that on the first day of the first month of the second year of the Exodus (Ex. xl. 17 *sq.*), the tabernacle was reared up, and all its vessels put in place, that a contribution of oxen and wagons was made for their transportation through the wilderness (Num. vii), and that when Israel left Sinai, the tabernacle and all its appurtenances were taken with them (Num. x. 17, 21). If these things were not made in the Mosaic age, as described in the Priest code, all these detailed statements are false. It might indeed seem as though the professor did after all believe in the reality of the legislation attributed to Moses in these matters from his language on p. 116:

“The Davidic legislation and the organization of the temple service point backward to the simpler Mosaic legislation of which it is an elaboration. The temple of Solomon is easier to explain on the basis of the tabernacle of Moses than the latter on the basis of the former.”

But the omission of this sentence, which followed in 1883 (*Review*, p. 120), is significant:

“There is a development in these two particulars, from the Priest code to the Davidic institutions, that is more remarkable than the development from the Deuteronomic to the Priest code, and this development is a constant one in all the details of the buildings and the vessels and the ministry.”

This makes it plain that he is no longer willing to concede that the elaborate tabernacle of the Priest code ever had any real existence. The real Mosaic tabernacle in his view was quite different.

And so, if there were space to do so, we might go through all the particulars, in which he finds a post-Mosaic development in the

Priest code, and show in every instance that not only is the statute, declared by the record to have proceeded from Moses, but there is besides a record of the actual observance of the statute, either in the Mosaic age or that immediately succeeding. The sin offering is not only certified by the various passages, which he vainly seeks to set aside (p. 117 *note*), but was actually offered at the consecration of Aaron to the priesthood (Lev. viii. 14, ix. 7,8), and on the day that Nadab and Abihu met their death, it is stated that Moses was displeased because one particular in the ritual of the sin offering was disregarded (Lev. x. 16). The law of the central altar, of which he finds no evidence before Hezekiah and Josiah (pp. 102, 120), was certainly in force, when all Israel assembled to war against the two and a half transjordanic tribes because of an imagined violation of this ordinance (Josh. xxii). The distinction of priests and Levites, which is alleged to be a development of P beyond D (p. 104), was the very thing against which the rebellion of Korah was directed (Num. xvi), which, as well as the awful catastrophe which overwhelmed the conspirators, must be a mere figment, if no such distinction then existed. The whole Pentateuchal record becomes untrustworthy, if the laws of the Priest code are not Mosaic.

In pp. 146-155, the professor brings together "a number of arguments from the field of Biblical theology," which "might be increased to an indefinite extent," and which "show the same order of development" that he finds "in the legislation and in the language, and indicate that the documents were composed at such epochs as best explain this development." To this reasoning in support of the development hypothesis it is sufficient to oppose his language in 1883 (*Review*, p. 116), which apart from its unproved assumption of the composite character of the Pentateuch is as true now as it was then:

"The Elohist and the Elohist Priest code differ in their doctrinal and ethical conceptions in many respects from the Jehovist and the Deuteronomist and their codes, but these differences are in *type* and point of view. The doctrines and morals of the Elohist are still at the basis of the doctrinal and ethical development of Old Testament theology. . . . The four constituent parts of the Pentateuch resemble one another in theology far more than any of them resemble the Prophets, the Psalter, or the ethical writings. They differ from one another and yet resemble one another, as do the Gospels, and lie at the roots of Old Testament theology, as do the Gospels at the basis of the New Testament."

And, now, as the result of the whole matter, how much does the professor find in the Pentateuch that is genuinely Mosaic? In the narrative portion the itinerary (Num. xxxiii. 1-49) and a single sentence in Ex. xvii. 14; no more (p. 10). Of the Ten Commandments the brief words of command with which they severally begin; but not the specifications and reasons which constitute the

bulk of them in their present form; these are later additions by J, E and D (pp. 181-187). The Book of the Covenant (Ex. xxi-xxiii), which Moses is said to have written and read to the people, is not preserved in its original form, but has been subjected to "omissions, insertions, transpositions and revisions." What we possess is the codification of a later date current among the ten tribes (p. 6). Deut. i-xi professes to be "the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond Jordan in the wilderness." But it is a post-Mosaic production, and the best that can be said of it is in language quoted approvingly from Dr. Driver (p. 86): "It is highly probable that there existed the tradition—perhaps, even in a written form—of a final address delivered by Moses in the plains of Moab." The Deuteronomic code (Deut. xii-xxvi), which is expressly said to have been written by Moses and delivered by him for safe preservation to the custody of the priests to be kept by them in the sanctuary, is not what Moses wrote, but is (p. 157) a recodification of the Judaic recension of the old Covenant code of Moses. The Judaic writer (p. 156) attributes no legislation to Moses except "the moral law of the Ten Words, the decalogue of worship (Ex. xxxiii. 14-26) and a special law of the Passover" (Ex. xiii. 3-10). But it is assumed that there was a Judaic recension of the Covenant code, parallel to the Ephraimitic recension in Ex. xxi-xxiii, and that this was the ancient code found in the temple in the reign of Josiah, and was then expanded into the Deuteronomic code. The Priest code, which is said in all its parts and enactments to have been directly given by God to Moses, is a codification a thousand years after Moses "of the priestly ritual and customs coming down by tradition from Moses and Aaron in the priestly circles of Jerusalem" (p. 157). How much is Mosaic and how much is later priestly usage is left to conjecture. The proportion which these indeterminate constituents bear to each other may be inferred from the following passage, which is quoted with approval from Dr. Driver's "moderate and cautious statement" (p. 159):

"In matters of ceremonial observance, which would remain naturally within the control of the priests, regulations, such as those enjoined in Ex. xx. 24-26, xxii. 29-32, xxiii. 14-19, would not long continue in the same rudimentary state; fresh definitions and distinctions would be introduced, more precise rules would be prescribed for the method of sacrifice, the ritual to be observed by the priests, the dues which they were authorized to receive from the people, and other similar matters. After the priesthood had acquired, through the foundation of Solomon's temple, a permanent centre, it is probable that the process of development and systematization advanced more rapidly than before."

It is to this, then, that the Mosaic legislation shrinks: the kernel of the Ten Commandments after all extraneous additions have been stripped off; the original form of the Book of the Covenant, sub-

sequently codified in the way of "omissions, insertions, transpositions and revisions" into Ex. xxi-xxiii, and at a still later time in another recension recodified into Deut. xii-xxvi, and a few simple ritual regulations incapable of being definitely identified, which in the long ages of temple practice were expanded into the ceremonial law of the middle books of the Pentateuch. The enormous disparity between this representation of the law of Moses and the claims which are made for it in the Pentateuch and throughout the Bible will answer the question with which this article began, Is the Higher Criticism of Dr. Briggs Biblical or anti-Biblical? It also shows that the question which the late General Assembly was obliged to face was not that of the inerrancy of the Scriptures in certain trivial matters, in no wise affecting their infallibility in matters of faith, but their historical truth in all that pertains to the foundation period of revealed religion.

PRINCETON.

WILLIAM HENRY GREEN.