

changeable, the Faithful, etc. The Hebrew mind must of necessity have undergone two difficult processes, which could not have been wrought upon it elsewhere than in the isolation of the wilderness. It must be relieved of its polytheistic tendencies, and correct conceptions of the true character of the one universal God must be introduced. Hence, the new distinctive name, Jehovah, and the complex, rigid, and peculiar institutions of Moses.

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## OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM IN THE AMERICAN CHURCH.

BY PROFESSOR GEORGE H. SCHODDE, PH. D.,  
Columbus, Ohio.

Old Testament criticism in its present phase has a somewhat peculiar history in the American church. What seemed but a short time ago as a cloud the size of a man's hand in the far distance, has in a remarkably short period increased and covered the theological heavens; in which aspect some, pessimistically inclined, see only the threatening blackness and thickness, while others know that behind these clouds is the shining sun. Without exaggeration it can be fairly said that no purely theological question has for many decades, if ever, succeeded in attracting such general attention and in drawing forth such widespread sympathy and antipathy in so many circles as the pentateuchal problem has done. It has become a "burning question" in the study of the professor, in the lecture room of the theological seminaries, and in the pages of scientific journals. It at once sprang into prominence also in the editorial and literary columns of the religious periodical press, and even found its way into the leading literary and political papers. In short, its agitation showed that it was decidedly a popular question, on which the general reader, and not only the student and specialist, wished to be informed. Even in Germany, the land of critics and of criticism, no problems of Biblical science, not even the agitation attending the publication of Strauss' popular "Life of Christ," provoked such a general and animated discussion as have the claims of advanced criticism in the American church. It is true that this discussion has been on both sides more dogmatical than critical, but this fact has rather added to the interest taken in the problem than detracted from it.

And peculiar, too, has been the origin and source of this agitation. Only a few years have passed since the appearance of such articles as "Bible," and "Deuteronomy" in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, from the pen of Professor W. Robertson Smith furnished

the outward occasion of a discussion for which a number of circumstances had been making the inward preparation for quite a while. The new views that there found their expression and the innovations that were there proposed, immediately became the themes for lively debates. The two trials of Professor Smith before the ecclesiastical courts, which ended in his condemnation and retirement from his professorship, were followed by the whole English-speaking theological world, especially in America, with a remarkable keenness and interest, which was awakened not so much by sympathy for the man, but rather by interest in the views of which he was properly regarded as the representative. The points of Biblical criticism that were involved in the trials were at once taken up for discussion; attack and defence, condemnation and approval showed themselves in strong proportions; neutrality was deemed inconsistent with honesty.

Thoughtful men could not fail to notice the great difference between the public treatment of this case and of a somewhat similar one scarcely a generation earlier. When Colenso, the bishop of Natal, drank deep draughts of negative criticism and by his analysis and dissection of the Pentateuch gave great offence to the traditional views of the church, he could find sympathizers enough in Germany, but not in England or America. Beside a passing interest in his trial for heresy, but little notice was taken of his new departure even by professional theologians, and among these there are probably not many who have read or studied his ponderous volumes. The English church took it for granted that his teachings were dangerous to the purity of doctrine, and found ample encouragement in this judgment in the conservatism, or, perhaps, lethargy of the church.

In the Smith case, however, matters took an entirely different turn. Although his methods are more radical and his results more revolutionary than were Colenso's, yet his case did not prove to be a contest in which the combatants were all on one side. He has found firm friends as well as bitter foes, and the struggle is raging all along the line. For certainly those who already dream of peace and think the struggle over, are sadly mistaken; the discussion has scarcely begun. The peculiar popularity and intensity of this agitation in the American church and the remarkable rapidity with which it found a home in our midst, must certainly, especially when compared with similar episodes in past decades, suggest the question as to what produced this change, and why American theological soil was so much better prepared for the seeds of criticism now than was the case earlier. It seems to us that the answer is not hard to discover. The seed was furnished and to a great extent the soil was prepared by hands other than American.

In these days of cosmopolitanism and rapid exchange of ideas in every department of human activity and thought, theology, too, has to a considerable degree broken down geographical and national boundaries. Especially has Germany, the land of scholars, succeeded in making a powerful impression upon American theological thought and literature. Hundreds of American students sit at the feet of German professors; the theological lore of Germany is made accessible in many ways to the scholars of this country, and the ups and downs of theological thought in that country are followed with a lively interest here at home. From these sources our theology has learned many things old and new, good and bad; we have listened to the radical and rationalistic as well as to the conservative and biblical German scholar. In this manner German models have been quite a factor in forming leading American theological thought, and in this manner the way has been prepared for the reception and consideration of methods and views that otherwise could probably have found no sympathetic chord in our systems. But German theology, both in its good and its bad features, has through various channels been absorbed in our land, and has succeeded in many points in modifying our conservative ways of thinking.

It is from this source, too, that the critical problems of the Old Testament have found their way into our midst. That they came *via* Scotland makes no difference; Robertson Smith can lay no claims to originality whatever; his works are simply a reproduction of continental, chiefly German, views. Modern biblical criticism, both in its positive and in its negative features, is essentially a German product. Whatever work other countries have done, France, Italy, Holland and especially the British Isles and America, has consisted chiefly in following the German advance line. As far as thorough independence in the various phases of the problem is concerned, this is found almost exclusively among the Germans. They are and have ever been the pioneers in the work, and are yet far in advance of their rivals and imitators.

Nor must the form in which this discussion has made its appearance in our theological journals and assemblies be forgotten. It is really incorrect to say that we have been discussing the problems of Old Testament criticism; we have been debating merely on Wellhausenism. We have become acquainted only, or mostly, with the views of extreme radical criticism, and in no way or manner with the whole field of critical discussion, both as to its extent and as to the manner of its cultivation. Wellhausen's views are not identical with Old Testament criticism; they present this theological discipline only in an

extreme and erratic outgrowth. A beginning has been made only lately by such works as Briggs' *Biblical Study* to bring before us the whole scope and extent of Biblical criticism and study; but the greatest portion of all the discussions going on during the past few years has been not on Biblical criticism properly so called, nor have these discussions tended to recommend this most important study in all its attractive and important features to the earnest study of American scholars; on the contrary one school of pentateuchal analysts has succeeded in monopolizing all attention and debate.

These facts are undoubtedly all known to students who have been following the interesting discussions on the Pentateuch. But we mention them with a purpose. They explain to us the peculiar condition in which Biblical study, or rather the pentateuchal problem and its discussion, are found among us, and thus prepare the way for the consideration of how this discussion can be put on such a basis that it can be worked out systematically and correctly. We doubt whether the discussion as carried on so far has been satisfactory to any thoughtful member of the advanced or of the conservative party. It certainly has been neither scientific nor thorough. Coming over to us, as it did, in the shape of a well-developed and attractive hypothesis, which, however, was the result of long and patient discussion and analysis, American theology was called upon to sit in judgment upon results of whose processes it had scarcely an idea. And just herein lay the germ of all the superficiality and unsatisfactory nature of this whole discussion. America began where Germany had arrived only after decades of continued research, and she was unacquainted with the conditions and antecedents of these results. Not having gone through the critical history and experience of Germany, she suddenly found herself unprepared in the labyrinth of the pentateuchal problem, and not having gone through the processes of analysis and the philological disciplines preparatory to reaching these results she could not find the Ariadne thread to guide her out of this labyrinth. The friend of advanced thought argued from the standpoint that the analysis of the Pentateuch into various documents was a sure result and settled fact of criticism; the conservative hesitated to acknowledge this analysis both as a theological principle and as a fact. In this way both parties wanted to debate the same question, but stood on entirely different ground. Both thus began by a *petitio principii*, disregarding and neglecting what must necessarily precede a thorough and satisfactory discussion of the question. In Germany, where all the problems as to method and principles of the analysis of the Pentateuch have been discussed over and over again, and where there is a virtual unanimity as to the

fact that an analysis of these books is not only allowed but is necessary, men can start out presupposing these important points as proved, as e. g. Dillmann does in the *Vorbemerkungen* to his Genesis; but such is not the case in America. It is never well to erect a building before a foundation has been laid; and if the discussion of not only the pentateuchal problem but of the whole field of Old Testament criticism is to be thorough and not superficial, is to be a blessing to the church and not an injury, is to bring forth the whole truth and not half truth or error, then it would be well to heed a *festina lente* and to have a thorough understanding as to aim and object, method and manner of the discussion. The problems the debate involves are of too great importance to be judged hastily. Theoretically they may involve the character of the Old Testament as the revelation of God, and are practically a question of conscience and rule of life.

But how to remedy the matter? This is not an easy question to decide. It is always easier to detect the presence of a disease than to find the proper remedy. But of one thing we can be assured, namely that for us a proper analysis of the Pentateuch is the first desideratum. This is the basis of all discussions as to the Pentateuch, and a thorough investigation must begin here. In Germany these investigations have been going on ever since the days of Astruc, and there they have a history; with us they have yet to make their history. As yet English theology has produced no independent analysis of the Pentateuch, much less an exhaustive one, such as are found in the larger German Isagogics and especially such as Wellhausen has made. In the English version of Lange's Commentary on Genesis the Elohist and Jehovistic sections are indeed marked; but this is result and not process. And yet no one is competent to discuss intelligently and thoroughly the pentateuchal problem unless he has made the investigation as to whether this analysis, the *origo et fons* of all pentateuchal theories, is fact or fiction. The problem which is purely a philological one and one that must be decided with the aid of grammar and dictionary alone, is as interesting as it is important. To go through one or all of the five books, verse for verse and chapter for chapter, with the best critical aids at our disposal is full of surprises, not all of which, however, are in favor of the advanced views. And to this piece of patient toil every thorough student of the Pentateuch must subject himself; here least of all will it do to adopt views at second hand; nowhere is tradition more injurious than in the domain of biblical study and divine truth. A careful analysis based on proper principles and lawful hermeneutics, is assuredly a *sine qua non* of critical accuracy, and this is a work for every one who would in the best

sense of the word be a critic of the Pentateuch, and this is a phase through which the American discussion must pass if it intends to reach tangible results and lawful conclusions.

Not that all the work is to be done in the private study. Magazines devoted to biblical research, such as the *Hebraica*, could from time to time bring from the pen of competent men a proposed analysis of this or that section as a sample, or of especially difficult sections for special assistance. But even here the student must follow step by step the work of the writer. Of course the work would have to be begun by those who are convinced that the Pentateuch is a composition from various documents; on them lies the *onus probandi*. For the present it will suffice to have drawn attention to the character of the Old Testament discussions and to have stated what, in our view, is the only thorough and satisfactory foundation for its further prosecution and development.

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## STUDIES IN ARCHÆOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

### III.

#### Tradition, in its Relation to History; (1) To History in General.

##### II.

So far we have noticed some of the ways in which tradition on the one hand and history on the other originate and grow. The chief question remains—How do these two, history and tradition, stand related, one to the other?

##### 1. THE HISTORICAL BORDER-LAND.

There is a point in the secular life of the world where we find history and tradition meeting in a kind of border-land. This point of contact is, perhaps, best represented in Herodotus, born in the year B. C. 484. His birth-place, the city of Halicarnassus, in Caria, a province of Asia Minor, was at the time under Persian rule. How he collected his materials for history is illustrated in these few sentences by Prof. Jebb, of Glasgow: "Favored by his two-fold quality as a Persian subject and a Greek citizen, he traversed almost the whole of the known world, from Ecbatana, Susa and Babylon in the east, to South Italy in the west, from the northern shores of the Black Sea to the first cataract of the Nile, an area of about 1,700 square miles. No Greek before him had explored foreign lands so widely and so intelligently." The purpose of these travels, as we know, was to gather materials for his history. He is often called "the Father of History;" one might with equal propriety call him "the Father of the Interviewers." The newspaper reporter of our time is not more omnipresent and persistent than this insatiable querist, penetrating everywhere and questioning everybody. Of course, he heard and wrote down many an extraordinary story, and many a childish one. Prof. Jebb speaks justly of his "child-like simplicity," and yet says, truly, that "he is one of the most delightful of story-tellers." "Often," it is added, "he stops to tell some quaint little story by the way—like that of Hippo-