

THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL FROM THE STAND-
POINT OF MODERN CRITICISM.

Two¹ members of the modern critical school have recently devoted special study to the history of Israel: Wellhausen, whose views of the composition and structure of the Pentateuch have already been presented in *THE EXPOSITOR*,² and Stade, whose writings have not yet been given to English readers in English dress. Wellhausen has exhibited only a sketch of his method of dealing with that history;³ Stade has composed a detailed work,⁴ in which the principles of the most advanced historico-critical school are fully illustrated.

We do not dispute for a moment the right of critics to subject the writings of the Old and New Testaments to the same tests as other historical records that have come down to us from a hoary antiquity. However ungrateful and unedifying the task may be, it does not beseem the Old Testament theologian who controverts the views of the

¹ We do not include Seinecke's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Göttingen, 1876-1884), because his work is not nearly as valuable, and he does not belong to the same school, although he is equally radical in some of his views. He complains of Wellhausen's treatment of him (Part ii., p. v.), who tells him: "Ist mir ganz einerlei, wollen Sie mein Schüler sein, so dürfen Sie auch nicht von mir abweichen," as follows: "He spoke in his wonted manner as a complete autocrat, and indeed at the same time when he was bitterly lamenting before me the despotism of the president of the parliament (*Reichstagspräsidentium*), who is honoured by all Germany."

² London, 1886, pp. 81-98.

³ In his "Prolegomena" to the *History of Israel* (Edinburgh, 1885, pp. 427-548; reprinted from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*).

⁴ Five numbers of this have appeared in Oncken's *Allgemeine Geschichte*, under the title "Geschichte des Volkes Israel": Berlin, 1881-1887. The last part brings the history down to the time of the exile.

critics to take refuge behind the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, openly or covertly. In the discussions of Pentateuch criticism, and the historicity of the Old Testament documents, he must lay aside an *à priori* view of the subject, and must choose an inductive method.

It is not our object to discuss the critical positions of Graf and Wellhausen, as set forth in a preceding article. We shall reserve our criticism of those views until after we have considered the history and theology of Israel from the standpoint of the modern critical school. And although our sympathies are strictly with those who hold conservative views on this subject, as that term is understood in England and America, yet we think that nothing can be gained by denying or belittling the force of those arguments which Wellhausen has presented with such power. The attitude of a judge rather than of an advocate is of the highest importance in such discussions. We believe that the Old Testament needs no apology, and no partisan defence, when viewed in the light of the age in which it was produced, and of the needs of the men for whom it was written.

Both Wellhausen and Stade agree that the history of Israel is essentially a religious history.¹ This, to our mind, really strikes the key-note of the whole discussion. Stade not merely gives the religion of Israel the position of one of the principal religions with Kuenen, but the first place.² It was the religion of Israel that made the history of Israel, and Stade admits that that religion and that history are of prime importance to mankind. To all this we agree.

But at the very next step we stand at the point where two ways diverge, until finally they run apart as far as heaven from earth. According to the critics of the modern school the religion of Israel is a natural development,³ based

¹ Wellhausen, "Prolegomena," p. 433; Stade, *Geschichte*, p. 12: "The history of Israel is essentially a history of religious ideas."

² *Geschichte*, p. 3 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

on the principles set forth by Tylor,¹ Herbert Spencer, and others; according to our view it is the fruit of a Divine revelation, sown in a soil which had been infested with the weeds of barbarism and superstition, from which it was more or less cleared by Moses and the prophets,—not to mention other holy men,—in which the enemy of mankind, through the aid of heathen neighbours, sowed tares. The fruit would never have appeared in Israel's history if the seed had not been given by a Divine hand. The limitation and imperfection that we may see is due to the previous character of the soil and the presence of hostile neighbours. In the production of this Divine fruit we may trace progress, but not what the scientists mean by evolution.

We may compare the Christianity of to-day to a tree. Judging from its fruit, we say that it had a supernatural origin; but if trunk and branches are Divine, the tap-root found in ancient Israel must also be Divine. If it be true that Israel's religion made Israel's history, then we claim as a fundamental principle that this history must be different in kind from that of any other people on earth, and that the historical character of Old Testament narratives is not to be doubted because of the occurrence of miracles² and definite predictions in them.

From the standpoint of modern criticism the crises of Israel's history, which are signalized, according to Israel's historians, by supernatural displays of Divine power, are but chapters of happy accidents, or else are struck out as unworthy of credence. While Stade does not recognise any Egyptian bondage or any deliverance at the Red Sea, Wellhausen finds Israel, under a series of natural causes, de-

¹ Stade makes frequent references to Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, especially in his discussion of fetishism, animism, and totemism in Israel.

² Cf. Stade, who says, *Geschichte des Volkes Israels*, p. 526, concerning 1 Kings xviii.: "Es ist bereits bemerkt worden, dass diese Erzählung schon wegen ihres Hanges zum Mirakel unhistorisch ist."

livered from Egyptian bondage,¹ safely transported across the Red Sea,² and finally settled in the land of Canaan.³

But there are certain crises in Israel's history, where the introduction of a supernatural power triumphing over the ordinary course of nature is necessary for their reasonable explanation. Indeed, in this respect the Old and New Testament dispensations are one. The new birth, the resurrection of Jesus, His immaculate conception, and the supernatural origin of Israel's religion fall under the same category. We are aware that other religions, besides those of Israel and of Christianity, lay claim to a supernatural origin; but none can furnish such proof, in their scriptures or in the lives of their followers, of their right to make such a claim.

We conclude therefore that Israel's religion was not the result of natural development, but of supernatural revelation, and that it is attended at certain periods by miraculous displays of God's power in the history; and we lay this down at the very beginning of our criticism of the recent construction of Israel's history as a cardinal presupposition.

We shall consider three points which we derive from the study of the modern theories of Israel's history :

I. The origin and course of Israel's history must have been subject to the same laws as those of other nations.⁴

II. It is impossible that the religion of Israel should have been produced all at once, as a complete whole, like Christianity.⁵

¹ Cf. "Prolegomena," p. 430.

² *Ibid.*, p. 433.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 444.

⁴ Cf. *Current Discussions in Theology*, vol. ii., pp. 23, 24. (Chicago, 1884.) Stade, *Geschichte*, p. 397, finds important analogies between the tribal origin of the Bedouin of pre-Islamic times, the ancient populations of Italy and Greece, and that of Israel.

⁵ Stade: *Geschichte*, p. 8. He says: "Das Christenthum trat in vollendeter Form nur deshalb auf, weil es . . . der Abschluss der alttestamentlichen Religion ist."

III. An examination of Israel's history gives evidence of a gradual progress from fetishism to monotheism.¹

I.

It is claimed that Israel's history in its origin is subject to the same laws as the histories of other nations of antiquity.² The story of the beginning of all other nations is mythical. No scholar any longer believes that Romulus and Remus were nourished by a wolf. The whole account is regarded simply as a specimen of a certain class of myths.³ In the same way, except among scholars of strongly evangelical tendencies, it has become customary in Germany to regard a large part of the Pentateuch as mythical and legendary. The accounts of other nations begin with the stories of gods and heroes. Hence the theophanies (*e.g.* Gen. iii. 8 ff; iv. 6, etc.), the mingling of the sons of God with the daughters of men (Gen. vi. 1-4), and the stories told of giants and heroes (Gen. x. 8, 9; Num. xii. 28; Deut. iii. 11; Jud. xiii.-xvi.; 1 Sam. xvii.) are regarded as precisely the same mythical phenomena which are found in the earlier works of uncritical profane history.⁴ Other peoples derive their national designation from a mythical ancestor or eponym hero, as the Dorians from Dorus, the Pelasgians from Pelasgus, etc. So, not to speak of the names of ancestors found in the tenth chapter of Genesis, which the critics regard mostly as those of countries and peoples, they not only deny all personality to Eber (Gen. xi. 14), but also to Israel. According to this theory, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., at the best stand for typical men or tribes.⁵

¹ Stade: *Geschichte*, pp. 9, 407, 429 ff.

² Cf. Martineau's preface to Ewald's *History of Israel*, vol. i., p. ix. f. (London, 1876.)

³ Lenormant: *Beginnings of History*, p. 140. (New York, 1882.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 352-355.

⁵ Cf. Dillmann: *Die Genesis*, p. 155 ff. (Leipzig, 1882.)

The romance of Jacob's life dissolves into an unsubstantial myth. Esau, whose other name is Edom, is a Phœnician god. Leah, the less beloved wife of Jacob, is another name for the tribe of Levi. Even Joshua is merely the name of a clan.

It is furthermore affirmed that we are to interpret certain things in the sacred history by the peculiarities of Semitic peoples. Such are marriage, sonship, and genealogical tables. Marriage, in the accounts in Genesis, simply indicates the union of two tribes,¹ the stronger being represented by the husband, the weaker by the wife. Tribes of inferior importance, that become lost in another, appear as concubines. Thus, Sarah, Hagar, Keturah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah² do not designate women, but tribes. Moreover, when we see a priestly family traced back to Aaron, although it is distinctly stated that the father begat sons, and that they begat sons down to the remotest generation, we must not understand this literally, according to the critics, but simply as indicating membership in a guild, where blood relationship is neither meant nor indicated. Hence the whole system of genealogies, whether in Genesis or Chronicles, is rejected.

In like manner the descent of the twelve tribes from the twelve patriarchs is dismissed from the realm of sober reality. Stade declares that no people knows its own progenitor.³ The Israelitish tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, etc., were not derived from progenitors of that name, but from a fusion of various elements,⁴ which may subsequently have named themselves after some animal⁵ which they regarded as their totem and at

¹ Ewald, Stade, and others.

² Stade: *Geschichte*, p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-408. Cf. W. Robertson Smith: *Kinship and Marriage in Arabia*, p. 219 f. (Cambridge, 1885.)

the same time their god,¹ or may have ascribed their origin to some eponym hero.

There can be no doubt that in view of certain attested facts of scientific historical investigation, the theories of such critics as Stade and others regarding the mythical beginnings of Israel's history seem very plausible. But the difference between early Chaldæan and Egyptian myths and the accounts that we have in the first ten chapters of Genesis is very striking. In the one we are introduced to the region of the wildest extravagance; in the other, we find an antique beauty and simplicity which might well be Divine.

And certainly the fact that other nations represent their history as beginning with the activity of gods and demigods in human affairs does not prove that those parts of Israel's history which especially represent God as an immediate factor in the course of events are mythical. To arrive at this conclusion, we must first prove that God never does interpose in the affairs of men, and that He never had a chosen people.

If we compare the theophanies in the early history of heathen nations with those of the Old Testament, we shall see the infinite superiority of the biblical representations. Admitting, as we must, that these heathen theophanies never could have occurred, we do not thereby disprove that there are genuine theophanies in the Old Testament history. Moreover we may say, with reference to the heathen theophanies, that a profound truth underlies them, that God is deeply interested in the course of history, and may be expected to interpose when He sees fit.

Besides, we have the consistent representation all through the history, prophecy, and poetry of the Old and New Testaments, that God is a factor in history. This idea is not only expressed in the call of Abraham, the

¹ Stade: *Geschichte*, p. 409.

mission of Moses and Joshua, the office of Samuel and the prophets, but also in the chastisements which follow the people all through their history, until Jerusalem finally falls a prey to the Romans.

The question of genealogies affords more difficulty. There are names in the tenth chapter of Genesis which certainly seem, as Augustine has observed, like those of nations rather than men.¹ But when we reach the patriarchal history, the case is different. Much of New Testament theology is based on God's covenant with Abraham. The history of the people of redemption really begins with God's command to him to leave his home and his native land. We do not deny that there was a tribe of Abraham, perhaps consisting of a thousand persons,² but we hold that there must have been an individual called by that name with whom God made a covenant. The statement that he came from Ur of the Chaldees, that he dwelt for a time in Mesopotamia, that he tented in Canaan and visited Egypt, is entirely credible, as recent studies have shown; and in this way we have a good explanation of the strong resemblances, and yet radical differences, which we find between the Chaldæan Genesis and the Genesis of the Old Testament.

In the same way it is credible that there were twelve patriarchs, sons of Jacob, who were progenitors of the tribes of Israel. Modern criticism, as we have seen, asserts that there is no tribe that knows its progenitor. But American genealogical studies show that in the emigration that came from old England to the New World there were certain families which have attained large numbers. Thick volumes have been published, tracing the genealogy of some thousands of persons to a single progenitor.³ These

¹ "Gentes non homines" (*De Civitate Dei*, xvii. 3).

² Cf. Rawlinson: *The Story of Ancient Egypt*, p. 126. (New York and London, 1887.)

³ Since writing the above, there has casually come to my notice a book,

persons, to be sure, are scattered throughout different States of the Union; but we may suppose, if there had been a reason for it, they might have been gathered together as the tribe of Hollister in one county or state. Besides, the theory of the critics in regard to the formation of tribes through the fusion of various elements is doubtless true to this extent, that the servants were gradually numbered with the tribes.¹ We must remember that the history of Israel was designed to produce a certain result, and that therefore God chose certain men as His instruments.

II.

Stade affirms, as we have stated, that it is impossible that the religion of Israel should have been produced all at once as a complete whole, like Christianity or Moham-medanism. With others, he considers the analogy of other peoples, the critical rearrangement of the documents, and the time when these successive documents appear, as against it.

Undoubtedly the fact of a progressive revelation is too often overlooked in dealing with the Old Testament. But, whatever the experiences of other peoples may have been in painfully groping after the light of nature, we have in the introduction of Christianity by its Founder the best possible illustration of a point which may be urged against the school of naturalistic religious development.

It can be proved that essential Christianity is found in the person of Christ, who did not write a line that has come down to us, and in the writings of Paul. For this Christianity there was indeed a broad foundation in the

entitled, *The Hollister Family of America: Lieut. John Hollister, of Wethersfield, Conn., and his Descendants*. 805 pp. (Chicago, 1886.) In this volume 5,564 persons are traced to Lieut. John Hollister, who is supposed to have emigrated to America in the year 1642.

¹ Cf. Rawlinson: *Moses, his Life and Times*, pp. 1, 2. (London, 1887.)

Old Testament; but after all, to change the comparison, dead Judaism was as unlike spiritual Christianity, as the dry cocoon is unlike the gorgeous butterfly. Christianity began with a miracle, which was the centre of Paul's teaching and writing,—the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If we cut away the patriarchal history, which is based on God's covenant with Abraham, and strike out the residence in Egypt,¹ we certainly remove the ground of Mosaism as a completed system. But if we take the patriarchal history of the Pentateuch as it stands, we have a foundation for the spiritual side of Mosaism, and in the connexion of Israel and their leader with Egypt we may find a further basis for the legal and ritualistic² side of Mosaism.

Israel was born as a people, when it crossed the Red Sea under God's special guidance. Its laws were determined by the personality of Moses³ and the needs of the times, although they were divinely communicated to him. There seems to be no reason for questioning that Mosaism in its essential elements was as truly a finished creation from the hands of Moses, as Christianity was through Christ and His servant the Apostle Paul.

The argument from analogy with regard to the gradual development of Israel's religion from the time of Moses can only be valid if Israel stands on the same plane as other peoples. But the claim of the entire Bible, which is

¹ Stade: *Geschichte*, p. 127 ff.

² Wellhausen, "Prolegomena," p. 440, admits that this is not inconceivable.

³ Cf. *The Old Testament Student*, p. 154 (Chicago, 1887), which gives the following quotation from De Wette: "A law of experience, that is valid in all history, is this, that all great discoveries, creations, and institutions in human life, even if they are based in the susceptibility, longing, and need of the masses, still always belong to the activity of superior individuals. Certain general movements, like the Reformation, the French Revolution, may be referred to the masses, the age, the nation, or the corporation, but the decisive moments in them can be ascribed only to certain individuals."

enforced by the whole history of Christianity as compared with other religions, is that it does not. We must presuppose a cause that accounts for certain effects. Human progress is not sufficient to account for the regenerating power of evangelical Christianity. We must rather see in the history of Israel the same Divine Spirit who has manifested Himself at the most important periods of the Church's history.

Undoubtedly the strongest arguments of the critics for the gradual development of Israel's religion from a very rudimentary stage are found in their rearrangement of the documents, and in the dates that they assign to them.¹ If we accept this rearrangement and these dates as substantially correct, it is difficult to see how we can avoid accepting their construction of Israel's history and their conclusions regarding the origin and growth of Israel's religion.

For us the strength of this theory is in the close relation of two of the codes to certain facts of prophetic literature. While the writings of Jeremiah seem to be saturated with Deuteronomy, and the last chapters of Ezekiel with Leviticus (xvii.-xxvi.), the older prophets, except possibly Joel, who is now held to be post-exilic, afford a very questionable evidence of familiarity with the writings of the Pentateuch. It is therefore a legitimate question why our Pentateuch, if it existed before the most ancient prophets, should not have made more of an impression on their writings?

There seem to us to be different documents in the Pentateuch, and these may easily be arranged as we have seen, so as to mark the stages in a development. Moreover the remaining literature of Israel may be harmoniously grouped around them by accepting the analysis of the

¹ For these see Wellhausen's *Theory of the Pentateuch*, in *THE EXPOSITOR*, p. 85 ff. (London, 1886.)

critics, after the excision of certain priestly elements from Judges,¹ Samuel,² and Kings.³

On the other hand, sober criticism accepts the residence in Egypt and the Exodus as fixed facts.⁴ It seems to us that this admission demands a different theory concerning Israel's history, literature, and religion from that of the critics.

Starting with the traditional view that Abraham and the patriarchs had a knowledge of the true God, we must still remember that they lived in a superstitious age,⁵ that their ancestors had been idolaters (Josh. xxiv. 14, 15), that there was idolatry in the family of Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 19, xxxv. 4), that Joseph married the daughter of an idolater (Gen. xli. 45), that they were among a nation of idolaters in Egypt,⁶ where we are not surprised to learn, considering their antecedents and surroundings, that they practised idolatry (Josh. xxiv. 14; Ezek. xx. 7, 8, xxiii. 3).

It is probable that the most spiritual part of Israel never lost all knowledge of the true God. But in the midst of hard servitude, and a phenomenal increase in the population, which involved early marriages and a constant struggle for existence, we may well believe that the mass of the people sank lower and lower in superstition during the four hundred and thirty years of their residence in Egypt, although the promises to the patriarchs doubtless remained

¹ Stade, *Geschichte*, p. 71, characterizes Jud. xix.-xxi. as a "tendency-programme," which is fully in accord with the *Grundschrift*. Cf. Wellhausen, "Prolegomena," p. 237, who does not assign it as late a date as the priests' code, with the exception of one reference to "the congregation of the children of Israel," and the mention of Phineas.

² Wellhausen, "Prolegomena," p. 256, says that 1 Sam. vii., viii., x. 17 *seq.*, xii., betray a close relationship with Jud. xix.-xxi.

³ In 1 Kings vi.-viii. Wellhausen, "Prolegomena," p. 280, says we meet with signs of the influence of the priestly code, especially in the Massoretic text.

⁴ Wellhausen: "Prolegomena," pp. 429, 430.

⁵ Ur of the Chaldees was the seat of the worship of the moon-god. See Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, p. 130. (Giessen, 1883.)

⁶ Cf. Rawlinson, *The Story of Ancient Egypt*, p. 30 ff.

as a precious possession in the hearts of such people as the parents of Moses¹ and Aaron.

Was this then a fruitful soil to foster and develop the germinal thoughts regarding Jehovah planted by Moses simply by a process of natural development?² Could anything short of the ten plagues, the great deliverance at the Red Sea, the law mediated by Moses on Mount Sinai, and the miraculous sustenance of Israel, have made a sufficiently powerful impression on a people with such antecedents as to account for Mosaism and Israel's subsequent history?

It is objected however, that it is amazing that a revelation like that given in our Pentateuch should have been so long neglected and seemingly forgotten?

But does not the history of the Church in all ages show how easily pagan superstitions are grafted upon a pure faith until they almost choke it out?

What more was to be expected of Israel, which during the life of Moses gave such evidence of a tendency to apostatize, than that, after his death and that of Joshua, they should live as though there were no written Torah, surrounded as they were by heathen neighbours, who were only partially conquered, with whom they had constantly to contend for the maintenance of their new seats, without national unity, and doubtless with a corrupt priesthood?³

It may further be objected, that it is strange that such servants of God as Samuel, David, and the prophets should not have quoted the Torah, and lived more in accordance with its precepts. But at a time when the will of God was sought from the priests and prophets, no Scripture

¹ There seems to be a recognition of the true God in the name of Jochebed (Exod. vi. 20).

² Stade, *Geschichte*, p. 130, says, "Like all founders of religion, he brought his people a new creative idea, transforming their lives." He does not consider this idea original with him, but thinks that he derived it from the Kenites (p. 131).

³ 1 Sam. ii. 12.

could have such power as the living word of God. It was not until the prophetic voices were hushed, and a priest no longer arose with Urim and Thummim,¹ that the law could take such a prominent position as it occupied after the exile.

The Torah was certainly a much rarer book in the time of Josiah than the Bible was when Luther was a monk at Erfurt. It is doubtful whether any private individual possessed a copy of it before the exile. Before the time of Josiah the book of Deuteronomy, or "people's book," had long since ceased to be read in public (2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3).² The ritual contained in the priests' code was for the information of the priests (Hag. ii. 11, Mal. ii. 7); but it is easy to see from the analogy of the history of the Romish Church how they might at least partially, and during some periods wholly, neglect this source of instruction and follow a tradition of their own, for we must remember that what they believed to be God's word to them must have seemed as binding as God's word to Moses.

Under such circumstances, is it very strange that the older prophets do not manifest any clear familiarity with the individual precepts of Moses, until Jeremiah, who lived in the age of Josiah, and Ezekiel, who was a priest as well as a prophet, and whose prophecies in the last chapters of his book were concerned with the same subjects as those found in Leviticus? Was it not rather to be expected that a "thus saith the Lord" would have even more weight with them than "the Lord said unto Moses"?

Why is it not conceivable that the book of the law may have been neglected and practically lost, as the precious Sinaitic manuscript was in the monastery of St. Catherine? And yet the law has left its impress on

Ezra ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65.

² The command that it should be read once in seven years is found in Deut. xxxi. 10-13.

Hebrew history, prophecy, and psalmody, in just such a way as we might expect, if such a view regarding the neglect and final loss of the law be correct. We are aware that all passages in the historical books, in the psalms and prophets, which have any connexion with the spirit of the priesthood as exhibited in the middle books of the Pentateuch are assigned to a post-exilic date. This of course is a necessity for the critics, with their theories concerning the origin and composition of the Pentateuch.

It seems therefore that there is nothing inherently improbable in the supposition that such parts of the Pentateuch as are assigned to Moses were committed to writing by him. Granted that he was an adopted son of a princess in the time of Ramses II., and we have no difficulty in supposing that he was sufficiently acquainted with the Phœnico-Hebrew language¹ to write a Torah for his people; and if we are to accept the historical accounts of the Pentateuch concerning him, even as substantially correct, as Wellhausen does,² we see that he had the motive to give his people a code at the beginning of their history.³

¹ Cf. Rawlinson, *Moses, his Life and Times*, pp. 30, 31 (London, 1887), who says: "As all educated Romans in the days of Cicero learnt Greek, and all Russians in the time of Alexander I. were taught French, so all educated Egyptians had to be familiar with a Semitic dialect, which, if not exactly Hebrew, was at any rate closely akin to it." As a confirmation of this cf. Brugsch, *Geschichte Aegypten's unter den Pharaonen*, p. 552 (Leipzig, 1877): "Die Briefe und Urkunden aus den Zeiten der Ramessiden strotzen von semitischer Wörter-Einfuhr und stehen in dieser Beziehung kaum der deutschen Schrifte sprache nach, deren Schönheit und Kraft durch ausländische Lehnwörter so häufig herabgenüreligt wird." In each case the corruption of the language arose from a similar cause, that of the German through the constant use of French, as in the time of Frederick the Great, and that of the Egyptian through the use of the Phœnician in the time of the Ramses.

² "Prolegomena," p. 433: "But within the Pentateuch itself also the *historical* tradition about Moses (which admits of being distinguished, and must be carefully separated from the *legislative*, although the latter often clothes itself in a narrative form) is in its main features manifestly trustworthy, and can only be explained as resting on actual facts."

³ The motive was in the need of a new nation, in the consciousness of his pre-eminent fitness, and in the call of God to this work. We have every reason to believe that the life of the people of Israel had as distinct a beginning

With such a people as Israel, and such a history as theirs, with God still speaking to priests and prophets in later times with as much authority as He did to Moses, it is credible that at least the essence of the Pentateuch existed in the time of Moses, that it was observed as long as Joshua lived and the elders who survived him (Jud. ii. 7, 10), but that it was greatly neglected, except perhaps in the time of David (Neh. ix. 26-34) until Deuteronomy came into prominence in the time of Josiah as the book for the times (2 Kings xxii. 8-xxiii. 25), and the priestly portions received special emphasis in the time of Ezra. Then it was that the prophet, who uttered God's living word to the people, had ceased to speak, and that the scribe, who could reproduce God's written word, came into special prominence.

The critical dates assigned to various Old Testament documents, which mark the Song of Deborah as the oldest historical source, and the work of the Jahvist as a product of the middle of the ninth century B.C., but which remand the bulk of Old Testament literature to a period subsequent to the exile, seem partially to confound the time when the Old Testament books were gathered together and edited with the date of their original composition.

Are we to believe that at an age when Egypt, Assyria, Phœnicia, and the land of the Hittites possessed an extensive literature,¹ that the time of David and Solomon,²

as that of the American colonies in the Declaration of Independence, and that the Torah of Moses had to some extent as much of a background in the history of the patriarchs and Egyptian civilization as the American constitution had in British law and history.

¹ Cf. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, vol. i., pp. 237, 238. (Stuttgart, 1884.)

² It is an established fact that at this period Assyria was in a state of decline. Tiele, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte*, vol. i., p. 167 (Gotha, 1886), says: "Man hat schon die Bemerkung gemacht, dass diese zeitweilige Ohnmacht der grossen Geisel Westasiens den Königen David und Salomo Gelegenheit gab, ein mächtiges und blühendes Reich zu gründen und im Stande zu halten." Cf. especially Rawlinson, *The Story of Ancient Egypt*, p. 295 (New York and

which was the most splendid period of Israelitish history, produced nothing that has come down to us?

Why when the Israelitish mind was fructified by contact with foreign nations under Solomon should there be no literature, and why should the obscure age between Ezra and the Machabees,¹ which saw the death of prophecy and the disappointment of so many national hopes, be so fruitful?

There is certainly no good reason for such a supposition, except in the necessities of the critics' theories, in a forced construction of Israel's history and of Israel's religious development.

III.

The principle of development in Israel's history, as set forth by the modern critics, finds further illustration in the history of Israel's religion. Four stages are marked: fetishism, polytheism, monolatry, and monotheism.

Evidences of fetishism are seen in the naming of certain tribes after animals,² in the worship of ancestors,³ of stones,⁴ pillars, sacred trees, in their psychology⁵ and in the current doctrine concerning the future state in sheol.⁶

Monolatry⁷ is the worship of one God simply as the God of Israel, who stands on the same plane in the people's minds as Chemosh with the Moabites and Milcom with the Ammonites.

London, 1887): "In the latter half of the eleventh century . . . David began that series of conquests by which he gradually built up an empire, uniting in one all the countries and tribes between the river of Egypt (Wady-el-Arish) and the Euphrates. Egypt made no attempt to interfere with his proceedings, and Assyria after one defeat (1 Chron. xix. 16-19), withdrew from the contest."

¹ I presume to adopt this spelling on the basis of my dissertation, *The Name Mache Dee* (Leipzig, 1876).

² Stade: *Geschichte*, p. 407.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 391, 392, 394, 406.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 448, 457.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 418.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 424, 425, more properly of a continued state in sheol.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 429, 507.

While we must doubtless admit that fetishism and monolatry existed in Israel as well as polytheism, it does not follow from this that they constituted regular steps in a development; indeed Stade himself hardly seems to claim this.

It is not our object to enter into details in regard to the evidences of fetishism in Israel. Whether when Jacob raised the stone as a *maççēbāh* which he had used as a pillow, poured oil upon it, and said it should be a *bēth-'ēlohim* (Gen. xxviii. 22), he in some superstitious way associated the idea of God's presence in it or with it, we do not know. In any case, we do not believe that he had truly spiritual conceptions of God in an age when fetishism was not uncommon. Certainly the fact that, at a later period, he buried the strange gods and earrings of his family (Gen. xxxv. 5),¹ would seem to indicate that he may have had higher conceptions of deity than at an earlier period.

Even if it should appear that certain views of the patriarchs and prophets are tinged with animism, especially in their views of a future state, what of it? We have no indication in the Pentateuch or prophets that God had made any revelation of the future state. It was Christ who shed clear light on this dark subject. The imperfect views of Old Testament saints regarding God and the future life are the result, at least in part, of the age in which they lived.²

¹ Stade, p. 129, says, "Rings, amulets, etc., are used as fetish."

² It is clear not only that God does not give a full revelation of Himself in the Old Testament, but also that He allows views of Himself and of the future life which are imperfect, or even erroneous, to remain, until the set time for a more complete revelation. We learn from the New Testament that He does not approve of polygamy, slavery, and concubinage; but in the Old Testament these things are allowed without direct or even indirect reproof. In the same way there are some views of God and of the future life indicated in the Old Testament which in New Testament light seem to be imperfect and at times erroneous.

If all that the critics assert with regard to the presence of fetishism, polytheism, and monolatry in Israel were to be established, still it remains that the so called Jahvism, which they claim was introduced by Moses, is something more than a stage in a development. Even according to the theory of the modern critics it is a new idea, which, although at times obscured, finally overcomes both fetishism and polytheism, and lays the foundation of the monotheism of the prophets.

But if this be so, why should it not be the one great idea of the God of all the earth, who alone is to be worshipped as set forth in the ten commandments?

This idea, if we accept the testimony of Scripture divinely revealed to Moses, shone forth like the sun among the mists and fogs of low-lying meadows at the beginning of Israel's history. At other times it seems to have been almost entirely obscured by clouds; until, after the exile, it burst in undimmed splendour upon the Jewish world.

We conclude therefore, that Israel's religion and Israel's history, while conditioned by human development, are not a result of it, but of the power of God working through human instrumentalities to provide a people of redemption, through whom the written and incarnate Word should be given to man.

SAMUEL IVES CURTISS.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

PROFESSOR SALMON, in the interesting paper contributed by him to *THE EXPOSITOR* of last July, begins by saying, that "speculations concerning the origin of the Christian ministry have for him only a historical interest"; and he grounds this statement upon the consideration that, just