

at Mrs. Potter, and smiling. "I guess when a woman that 's been as sick as Mrs. Potter has gets out of bed to cook a dinner like this, I ain't—look out there, Wolcott! Catch her—she 's going to fall!"

Mr. Wolcott turned and caught her as she swayed toward him, and her husband came around quickly and carried her into the house. She came to herself almost immediately.

"Go on and 'tend to 'em; I 'm all right. I 've been a little too smart, that 's all. I 'll have Mrs. Burns to help all day to-morrow, I guess."

Mrs. Potter stood in the door as the farmers drove out of the yard that night, on their way

home. She had fully recovered, and her face was bright with pleasure over the farewell cheers they were giving over the success of her dinner. She had a large basket in her hand neatly covered with red napkins. When Mr. Wolcott's wagon passed, she motioned for him to stop.

"I hope you won't feel offended," she said, going out to the side of the wagon. "I thought I 'd like to send your wife and Addie a little of my cooking." She lifted the basket into the wagon. "It ain't much. If they don't want it, you can bring it back." And then, without giving him time to reply, she turned and went quickly back into the house.

Gertrude Smith.

THE PRESENT STATE OF OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.



OLD TESTAMENT criticism, as the term is generally used, is concerned with the literary structure, date, authorship, and historical credibility of the books of the Old Testament. The interest in this subject centers in the historical books, and especially in the Pentateuch. The question of its analysis and authorship has become almost as familiar and burning in the religious world as the problem of protection or free trade in the political. It is the purpose of this article to give the present features of this question, with their bearing on the Old Testament as a record of history and of a divine revelation.

Criticism has shown that the historical writings of the Old Testament are essentially compilations. "The method of the Hebrew historian was not that of a modern writer of history. The modern writer borrows his materials from ancient sources or documents, but rewrites them in his own language, except where quotation is expressly introduced. The style of his history is thus homogeneous throughout. A Hebrew historian, on the other hand, excerpted from his sources such passages as were suitable, and incorporated them substantially as he found them; sometimes adding comments of his own, but as a rule only introducing such alterations as were necessary for the purpose of harmonizing and fitting them together."¹ This method of historical composition is at once apparent in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. It is clearly seen in the accounts of Saul's election as king (I. Sam. viii-xii), of David's relationship to Saul (I. Sam. xvi: 21-23 compared

with xvii: 55-58), in the last four chapters of II. Samuel (which are of the nature of an appendix), in the various stories of Elijah and Elisha in the books of Kings, and especially in the history in Chronicles compared with its earlier parallel in the other books. Indeed, it is safe to say that all critics concede this to be the method in which all the historical writings of the Old Testament (not considering the two small books of Ruth and Esther), with the single exception of the Pentateuch, were composed. But even in regard to these five books, those who contend for their unity and Mosaic authorship make certain striking admissions. Dr. W. H. Green has said: "It is freely conceded that certain phenomena, particularly in the earlier chapters of Genesis, seem to be best explained by the supposition that it was based in whole or in part upon preëxisting written sources. Before the publication of Astruc's 'Conjectures,' the Dutch theologian and commentator Vitringa expressed the belief that 'the various writings of their fathers were preserved among the Israelites, which Moses collected, digested, embellished, and supplemented.' Such an assertion considered in itself, so far from invalidating the record, rather tends to give it additional confirmation, since it increases the number of witnesses, and, to a certain extent, replaces oral tradition by documentary evidence. And it does not in any way affect the question whether the book in its present form is to be ascribed to Moses."²

Dr. E. C. Bissell also says: "It is a mistake

¹ "Notes on the International S. S. Lessons," by S. R. Driver. New York, 1887.

² "Hebraica," Vol. V., p. 141.

to suppose that those who do not agree with the advocates of the current analysis of the Pentateuch reject altogether the theory that ancient documents may to some extent lie at the basis of the so-called Mosaic books. On the contrary, they regard it not only as possible, but as highly probable. It is a reasonable supposition in itself considered, and at the same time a tolerably safe conclusion from the literary phenomena of the books, especially of the introduction to Genesis." And he further adds: "It is nowhere stated in the Bible that every specific law in the Pentateuch arose *de novo* in the time of Moses. Israel can not have been wholly without laws of its own in Egypt. The terse, laconic form of the first code (Ex. xxi-xxiii) favors the view that in principle it had been to some extent previously observed. And there is documentary confirmation of this (Ex. xviii: 16, cf. 20; Deut. iv: 5). The two other codes, that which respects the tabernacle and its worship and that of Deuteronomy, have on their face wholly different objects in view. The one is for the priests, and is technical in character; the other, in the form of a popular address given near the close of Moses's life, is meant especially for the people, and touches upon the first and second only where emphasis was called for, or where changed circumstances required a modification of form."¹ Dr. Cave, the leading representative of the ultra-conservative critics in England, freely grants and defends a duality or plurality of authorship of Genesis on the following grounds: "The use of the divine names assuredly does point to a duality of authorship. The manifest differences of style unmistakably point to at least two hands; the very phraseology employed as manifestly indicates more writers than one."² He says also that in the Pentateuch there are three strata of laws. "The first stratum of laws—Exodus xx-xxiii—is the rough sketch of the coming theocratic government to be announced by Moses. The second stratum of laws—the remaining laws of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers—was given by Jehovah as the permanent code of theocratic rule in the wilderness. The third stratum was Deuteronomy, a popular presentation of this law made forty years after, immediately prior to the entrance into Canaan."³ Professor Beecher of the Auburn Theological Seminary has proposed a theory of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch which allows its compilation out of any number of documents differing in literary style. He says: "Moses is the author of the Pentateuch; and Moses and Joshua of the Hexateuch, in the sense of being responsible for the literary existence of these books in their present form. But they may have been, and most likely were, authors of them in the way in which one would

naturally expect public leaders, such as they, to be the writers of such writings. That is to say, they are likely to have written some parts personally, some parts through amanuenses; to have caused other parts to be written by directing secretaries to write them, or by accepting documents prepared to their hand, or to have taken other parts from the works of earlier authors. In such a case, whether they themselves gathered their writings into their present form, or left that for their successors to do, is an open question until it is settled by evidence. Their claim to authorship would not in the least be impaired if it could be shown that the writings were collected into a whole, and parts of them written by men of the generation that had been associated with Moses and Joshua, and had survived them."⁴

The present question, then, before Old Testament critics is not that of codes or documents existing in or underlying the Pentateuch. This fact may be regarded as decisively established, and in view of the admissions made by ultra-conservative scholars one may well go a step further, and receive as a most probable result of criticism that the Pentateuch, or, with the book of Joshua, the Hexateuch, is a compilation from three if not four original sources, known as the Priests' Code, the narratives of the Jahvist and Elohist, and the Code of the Deuteronomist, and usually designated by the letters P, J, E, and D. The consensus of all scholars in favor of this view, except those who still maintain the Mosaic authorship and unity of the Pentateuch, is practically unanimous, and even many of these latter, as we have seen, virtually grant the fact. Dr. C. H. H. Wright, the author of the well-known Bampton Lectures defending the unity of the book of Zechariah, in his recent "Introduction to the Old Testament," says: "The composite character of the Pentateuch [from four documents] may be regarded as fairly proven."⁵ So likewise Professor Kirkpatrick of Cambridge University, England, another conservative scholar, as may be seen from his commentaries on I. and II. Samuel, and on the Psalms, in a recent volume says: "A vast amount of labor and ingenuity has been spent on the critical analysis of the Hexateuch, with the result that there is a very general consensus that four principal documents have been combined to form the Hexateuch as it now stands."⁶

¹ "Christian Union." December 26, 1891.

² "Inspiration of the Old Testament," p. 205. London, 1888.

³ "Contemporary Review," p. 896. December, 1891.

⁴ "Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica," Article Pentateuch. Philadelphia, 1889.

⁵ "Introduction to the Old Testament," p. 100. New York, 1890.

⁶ "The Divine Library of the Old Testament," p. 44. London, 1891.

We might refer also to the list of 146 scholars "who stand in a solid phalanx against the traditional theory that Moses is responsible for our Pentateuch in its present form" given in Professor C. A. Briggs's latest work.¹ Professor Briggs is also undoubtedly correct when he says, "The number of professors in the Old Testament department who hold to the traditional theory may be counted on one's fingers."²

The acceptance of this documentary composition and analysis of the Pentateuch or Hexateuch does not mean, however, that we are to receive the frequently verse-splitting partitions of the laws and narratives as fixed with perfect accuracy, or that we are to be at pains to recognize not only the writers or documents known as J, E, D, and P, but also the work of the editor or redactor, R, and R₁, and R₂, and J₁, and J₂, and so on, which are given by many critics. The example of Professor Driver, who, in the analysis of Joshua and Numbers, does not attempt to separate the work of J and E, is well worthy of imitation.³ While a compiled document of great age may unquestionably contain the work of many authors, and while, as an exercise of critical ingenuity, it may be well enough to point all this out, yet the publishing of such refined minutiae as the well-assured result of critical investigations serves to bring such work into derision. "The criticism of the Pentateuch is a great historic drama which needs to be put upon the stage with appropriate scenery and circumstances. When performed by a company of puppets called J, E, D, and P, with their little ones down to J₃ and P_x, it loses its impressiveness. It will not be strange if some spectators mistake the nature of the performance, and go home with the impression that they have been witnessing a farce."⁴

In respect to the date of the documents scholars widely differ. Professors Cave and Bissell endeavor, as has already been said, to crowd them all into the Mosaic period of forty years. This is improbable, owing to the accumulation of evidence against it. And just here we would remark that of the various explanations offered for the phenomena of the Pentateuch, the one which is to be accepted is a question of probability, and that the proof for any view depends not upon any single line of evidence, but upon a combination, and the result is reached by the impression made by this combination as a whole.

The reasons against the documents all ori-

¹ "The Bible, Church, and Reason," pp. 236ff. New York, 1892.

² *Ibid.*, p. 247.

³ "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 32.

⁴ Professor A. B. Davidson in the "Critical Review," January, 1892.

ginating in their present form within the forty years of the sojourn in the wilderness are as follows: first, the documents themselves in their literary and theological differences naturally suggest a greater length of time to explain their origin; secondly, extending through the book of Joshua and forming a Hexateuch, they include the history of a later period; thirdly, they abound not only in incidental references to a post-Mosaic period, but the historic tone and coloring, especially of the Priests' Code, are of a later age; fourthly, the laws, in their differences, imply different historical backgrounds; fifthly, Israel's history furnishes different eras corresponding to these different laws; sixthly, Israel's literature of these different eras corresponds likewise to these different codes and narratives; seventhly, the exceeding improbability that a single legislator within the short space of forty years should give to the same people different codes of legislation, all embracing the same essential laws, and yet each having marked peculiarities, and increasing their differences in an ascending ratio. These reasons, combined with the entire lack of positive historic evidence the other way, present so strong an argument against the traditional view of the Pentateuch, that no counter considerations seem able to break its force. *Did such phenomena appear in any other writings, no one for a moment would think of maintaining that the writings originated in their present form, either in the time of Moses, or within the short space of forty years.* And if no definite conclusion could be reached in reference to their later date, this negative conclusion would yet hold good.

It is true that the scholars who regard these documents as post-Mosaic are not altogether agreed as to their date or order of appearance; yet among them there is not that divergence of view which one might expect. The documents J and E are almost without exception allowed to be the oldest, and not later than 750 B. C., and perhaps one or two centuries earlier. Deuteronomy is by all assigned to the period of Josiah, or to the preceding reigns of Manasseh or Hezekiah, *i. e.*, 725-625 B. C. The only real question in dispute is in regard to the Priests' Code, whether it is earlier or later than Deuteronomy. It has been assigned to the age of David, and regarded as the oldest document of all. But the prevailing view now is that it is the latest document, and belongs either to the exilic or post-exilic period. On this assumption the Pentateuch in its present form dates from the fifth century B. C., or from the age of Ezra. This coincides to a certain degree with the old traditional view which held that Ezra edited and made some annotations in the Pentateuch, and also with the Jewish

story that the law of Moses, lost during the exile, was supernaturally revealed to Ezra.

But more important than the differences of date assigned to the origin or composition of these documents, and their final welding into a completed work, are the differences among the critics respecting the age of the essential elements or the underlying teaching and laws of the Hexateuch. Here, among those accepting the documentary analysis and the post-Mosaic origin of the Hexateuch, we find two schools, a conservative and an advanced one. The question at issue between them is that of the germ of the Old Testament religion, or what is historic Mosaism. The advanced school, represented by Wellhausen, Stade, W. Robertson Smith, Cheyne, and many others, while they give Moses a place as "the founder of the law," "the founder of the nation," regard all the special features of Israel's religion as of later growth. "Moses," it is said, "gave no new idea of God to his people." And it is asserted to be "very difficult to believe that the religion of Israel from the outset was one of a specifically moral character."¹ In short, this school believes that the religion of Israel "may be traced from the lowest stages of animistic worship up to ethic monotheism, and from custom up to the authorized divine law, within the period embraced distinctively in Israel's history as a people." All, then, of the distinctive religious ideas and institutions of Israel are of a relatively late date, and hence all those portions of Scripture which portray them must be of equally late origin. Thus, the great bulk of the Old Testament writings, and even laws, is held to belong to the exilic or post-exilic period. No Psalms, for example, save one or two, are pre-exilic; at any rate none belong to David. And the striking affinity between the earlier chapters of Genesis and the Babylonian literature is due to the contact of Israel with the Babylonians from the period of Ahaz onward. Indeed, we are gravely told that the Israelites were taught of God by their heathen captors. Professor T. K. Cheyne, for example, in his recent Bampton Lectures on the Psalter, says: "If the Canaanites could poison Israelitish religion, should not the Chaldeans have contributed to purify it?"² "May we not reverently think that Israel was brought to Babylon to strengthen its hold on lately acquired truth, just as the Magi from the East, according to a Jewish-Christian tradition, were led by the star to Bethlehem to do willing homage to the infant Christ? And may I not add that Nebuchadnezzar, and Darius, and their wise men, were prophets, not only like Epimenides relatively to heathendom, but also, in some

degree at least, relatively to the central people of revelation?"³

We do not believe that this view of Israel's history, which denies to it any great creative epoch at its beginning, which allows no parallel to be drawn between Christ and Moses, will be able to maintain itself. It stands in too clear contradiction to the accounts given in the Bible itself. It does violence to these sacred writings considered simply as the religious memorials of an ancient people, requiring the assumption of their editing and reëditing in all ages, until not only the Pentateuch, but all the Old Testament writings, become veritable Joseph's coats of many colors — all sentences and paragraphs which are opposed to the critics' theories being regarded as the insertions of later editors. It presents the strange psychological phenomenon of the prophets, whose official basis is said to rest on heathenism, lashing with invective and threatening their contemporaries for forsaking the religion of their fathers. It is not in harmony with discoveries of ancient literature in the East. "The curious spectacle," says Professor Whitehouse,⁴ "is presented by the advanced criticism in that while its tendency is to postdate the literature of the Old Testament by centuries, archæology is antedating the origin of Semitic culture by millenniums."⁵ In a word, the criticism of this advanced school is too subjective, being based upon the assumption that "the rudimentary initial stage in a process of religious development cannot possibly anticipate the features of a more advanced stage, but must necessarily present the religious element in human nature under its rudest form." This, however, is not true. Some of the purest and noblest religious ideas are the oldest, as is seen in the beautiful penitential psalms of Babylonia. First thoughts may be better than the second, and the third a return to the first. The Christian church returns to-day to Paul's description of charity, and to John's conception of God, as the highest and best in ethics and theology.

The present situation has been well stated as follows: "At the present time, if we mistake not, there is especial need for the observance of a critical attitude toward the more advanced school of higher criticism. Just now the wheel has come half circle round, and the religious world, as reflected in many of its organs and reviews, is willing to accept all that the most advanced Bible critics will tell them, with a docility most uncritical. May we venture to remind our readers that the day for proving all things, even though they come under the ægis

¹ "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th Edition. Article Israel, by Wellhausen.

² "Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter," p. 267. New York, 1891.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

⁴ Translator and editor of Schrader's "Cuneiform Inscriptions."

⁵ "Critical Review," p. 13. January, 1892.

of the authority of our most renowned scholars, is not yet past? Certain results in Pentateuchal criticism Kuenen and Wellhausen have, I admit, attained. Nor will a serious scholar venture to assert that the book of Daniel in its present form is pre-Maccabean, or that Isaiah and Zechariah are not composite books. But let not these admissions involve the weakness of yielding to Kuenen's conclusions as to the antiquity of much of the contents and ideas of Israel's literature, and especially of that ethical spiritual monotheism which it is the fashion of the hour to regard as the startling product of the eighth century. And let it be remembered that there are eminent Semitic scholars like Dillmann, Schrader, Nöldeke, König, Baudissin, Bähgen, Strack, and Kittel, whose views respecting the evolution of Israel's religion are very different from those now in the ascendant."¹

With these scholars representing the conservative school of critics is evidently also to be placed Professor S. R. Driver, for in his recent "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," in which he accepts and defends the documentary composition of the Hexateuch, and places its final compilation in the post-exilic period, he also says: "It cannot be doubted that Moses was the ultimate founder of both the national and religious life of Israel; and that he provided his people, not only with a nucleus of a system of civil ordinances, but also with some system of ceremonial observances designed as the expression and concomitant of the religious and ethical duties involved in the people's relation to its national God. It is reasonable to suppose that the teaching of Moses on these subjects is preserved, in its least modified form, in the decalogue and the 'Book of the Covenant' (Ex. xx-xxiii). It is not, however, required by the view treated above as probable to conclude that the Mosaic legislation was limited to the subjects dealt with in Exodus xx-xxiii: among enactments peculiar to Deuteronomy there are many which likewise may well have formed part of it. It is further in analogy with ancient custom to suppose that some form of a *priesthood* would be established by Moses; that this priesthood would be hereditary; and that the priesthood would inherit from their founder some traditional lore (beyond what is contained in Ex. xx-xxiii) on matters of ceremonial observance." "The principles by which the priesthood were to be guided were laid down, it may be supposed, in outline by Moses." "The laws of the Priests' Code, even when they included the later elements, were

still referred to Moses—no doubt because in its basis and origin Hebrew legislation was actually derived from him, and only modified generally."² Professor Driver thus leaves a genuine Mosaic foundation for the Old Testament religion, and is here in hearty accord with the devout and now sainted Professor Delitzsch, who said: "And though in determining the dates of the composition of the codes we should have to advance to more recent times than the Mosaic, yet this does not exclude the fact that the narrative is based on tradition, and that the codified law grows from Mosaic roots. Dillmann, too, acknowledges ancient foundations in the Priests' Code and Deuteronomy."³ Thus, in the light of this criticism, there is preserved to us the Old Testament religion as one grounded and based upon a historic Mosaicism. The order of the law and the prophets has not been entirely reversed; they represent not successive developments, but synchronous ones. This conservative theory allows a place for low stages of belief, for customs rising into law; but the essential things which were finally reached—the belief in a moral deity, the one ruler of the world, and a law divinely given—are there in germ and substance to start with at the threshold of the nation's life.

With this view of Israel's fundamental belief there is no place for the charge of pious fraud, if we hold that the codes ascribed to Moses in their present form are of later date. Deuteronomy was not a forgery, for, to quote again from Professor Driver: "The new element in Deuteronomy is thus not the laws but their *paranetic setting*. Deuteronomy may be described as the *prophetic re-formulation and adaptation to new needs of an older legislation*. 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, to which some of the laws peculiar to Deuteronomy were attached."⁴ Professor James Robertson of the University of Glasgow, in a work defending the traditional view of Israel's religion, calls attention to the fact that the Hebrew language has not developed indirect speech,—a peculiarity which necessitates the regular introduction of speeches or addresses, the characteristic feature of Deuteronomy,—and he then adds: "It is easy to see how a writer, soon after or long after Moses, recalling the events which we may suppose tradition preserved in the nation's mind, and using we know not what documents, produced a book like Deuteronomy. The situation was not one of active events, but of reflective pause and

¹ Professor Owen C. Whitehouse, "Critical Review," p. 15. January, 1892.

² "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," pp. 144ff. New York, 1891.

³ "New Commentary on Genesis," p. 28. New York, 1889.

⁴ "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 85.

consideration, preparatory to the arduous work of the contest, and hence the literary form of the book is different from that of the other books of the Pentateuch. Not by any fiction, not by inventing a story for a purpose, but in perfect good faith, he represents the lawgiver surrounded by the people whose welfare lay so much at his heart, giving them such counsel, warning, and encouragement as were suited to their circumstances. It was but natural that a writer setting himself to such a task should mingle much of his own in the composition. No writer can divest himself entirely of his own personality, or write entirely without reference to the time in which he lived. And a writer succeeding Moses, at a greater or less interval, could not but see the development of events which were only in germ in Moses's time, and could not help representing them more or less in their developed form."¹ Thus there is no place for the charge of fraud or forgery if Deuteronomy did not receive its present form until the time of Josiah, or the Priests' Code until the period of the exile. This accusation, which is most frequently urged as the great and final reason for not accepting the results of Old Testament criticism, has place only as a reply to those critics who hold that the new legislation was assigned to Moses as a device to enhance its respect.

The school of conservative critics, besides differing radically from the advanced school in reference to the question whether the germs of the Old Testament religion belong to the Mosaic age, differ also in their explanation of the similarity between the Babylonian traditions and those of the earlier chapters of Genesis. This similarity is not regarded as due to contact with the Babylonians during the exile or the preceding century, but because the Hebrews brought these primitive legends with them when they came from Ur of the Chaldees. "And hence there are elements in the Hexateuch of vast antiquity coming down from the twilight ages of the childhood of the world before the call of Abraham."²

But if in the light of modern criticism we can still maintain the substantial correctness of the Old Testament as a record of Israel's history and religion, it is very evident that our conception of these writings must differ somewhat widely from the traditional one in the Protestant Church. According to this view the historical books were written either by contemporaries of the main events which they describe, or if by writers of subsequent periods, these latter had access to records made by con-

temporaries, or else were supernaturally inspired to discern the truth of old oral traditions, if not receiving past history by direct revelation. This view made these books practically without error of any kind, and required a continuous miracle for their composition—a supposition which, unnatural in itself, in the light of sober reason falls to pieces beneath the weight of the artifices required to bring into harmony with it the varied facts of Scripture; which facts, upon any other field of investigation, would call for different explanations than those given to square them with the traditional theory of composition. To endeavor to maintain it is labor lost; the price is too high. "Were the difficulties isolated or occasional, the case, it is true, would be different; it could then, for instance, be reasonably argued that a fuller knowledge of the times might afford the clue that would solve them. But the phenomena which the traditional view fails to explain are too numerous for such a solution to be admissible; they recur so *systematically*, that some cause or causes for which that view makes no allowance must be postulated to account for them. The hypothesis of glosses and marginal additions is a superficial remedy: the fundamental distinctions upon which the conclusions of the critics depend remain untouched."³

What theory of historical composition do we find, then, taking the place of the traditional one? "Early history is essentially artistic. Its object is more to charm the fancy, and warm the emotions, than to instruct the understanding. History written under these circumstances has much the character of a prose poem—*carmen solutum*, as Quintilian called it."⁴ This statement illustrates the character of the Old Testament histories. They were written not primarily to give a record of human events, and an understanding of the human course of history, but to reveal God, to give religious instruction, to stir religious emotions, to lead men through repentance and faith into a new and higher life. Their purpose was homiletical. And thus while these historical writings in their great underlying facts are trustworthy and reliable records, yet, in the presentation of those facts, they assume at times what may be called an ideal character, or, in other words, their authors were not kept entirely from viewing the past in the spirit of the age in which they lived. This is especially clear in the case of the author of Chronicles, where we have an opportunity of comparing the record with the earlier one in Samuel and Kings. Here the conclusion is irresistible that the author has interpreted past

¹ "The Early Religion of Israel," pp. 424ff. New York, 1892.

² Kirkpatrick, "Divine Library of the Old Testament," p. 48.

³ Driver, p. 10.

⁴ "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th Edition. Article History.

history in the light of his own time. So conservative a commentator as Zoeckler says: "A marked subjective coloring of his narrative in the direction of the priestly Levitical standpoint may be ascribed to our author."¹ Fuller and firmer is the statement of Professor Driver: "The Chronicler reflects faithfully the spirit of his age. A new mode of viewing the past history of his nation began to prevail: preëxilic Judah was pictured as already in possession of the institutions, and governed—at least in its greater and better men—by the ideas and principles which were dominant at a later day; the empire of David and his successors was imagined on a scale of unsurpassed power and magnificence. The past, in a word, was *idealized*, and its history (where necessary) rewritten accordingly." "In these and similar representations there is certainly much that cannot be strictly historical; but the Chronicler must not on this account be held guilty of a deliberate perversion of history; he and his contemporaries did not question that the past was actually as he pictured it, and the Chronicler simply gives expression to this persuasion. It is not necessary to deny—on the contrary, it is highly probable—that a traditional element lies at the basis of his representations; but this element has been developed by him, and presented in a literary form, with the aim of giving expression to the ideas which he had at heart, and inculcating the lessons which he conceived the history to teach."² When one carefully reads the book of Judges he will also be led to a similar verdict. Professor A. B. Davidson, writing on this subject, says: "The histories preserved in the book of Judges are for the most part external: they are probably traditions preserved among the individual tribes who played the chief part in the events described. That in some instances we have duplicates presenting divergences in details is natural, and does not detract from the general historical worth of the whole." "Besides the main substance of the book, there is a frame in which the histories are set. This frame is probably younger than the histories, and its point of view may be that of a later time. It connects the histories together by giving a summary under the form of an ideal *schema*, in which the same steps are regularly repeated: 'The children of Israel did that which was evil and served Baalim, and provoked the Lord to anger, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies. And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, he raised up a savior who saved them, and the land had rest

so many years.' This regular movement of apostasy, subjugation, penitence, and deliverance is hardly strict history. It is rather the religious philosophy of the history. It is a summary of historical movements written under the idea that Jehovah presided in the history of Israel, and to bring it down to our level we must read second causes into the movements and operations of the people's mind. We shall not misunderstand it if we put ourselves into the author's point of view, and remember that he speaks of Israel as an ideal unity, and attributes to the unity defections which, no doubt, characterized only fragments of the whole; and finally that he uses the nomenclature of his day, calling by the name of Baalim and the like all objects of worship and practices in his view improper in the service of God. Without these considerations the history would not be intelligible; for a falling away of a whole people to Baal, and then a conversion to Jehovah, to be followed by a falling away again twenty years after, is not according to the operations of the human mind."³ Undoubtedly we are compelled to hold a somewhat similar view of the narratives of the Pentateuch. This has, in a sense, been recognized even by those holding tenaciously to the Mosaic authorship and the strictest views of inspiration. Thus, for example, while the older commentators felt called upon to defend the universality of the flood, some of these later ones tell us that the language only means that the deluge appeared universal to those who witnessed it, and that they described it accordingly.⁴ In other words, these eyewitnesses related the event, not as it actually occurred, but as it appeared to them. Their description, given according to their conception or idea, and not according to the actual facts, is, then, an ideal one. A limited flood has been idealized into a universal one. It is only a further application of this view of the narrative of the deluge, when we hold that Old Testament historians described the past according to the ideas of their own time. As the language describing the flood is not strictly accurate, inasmuch as the flood was not universal; as, in short, the fact of a limited flood has been idealized, so likewise we can say of the author of the Priests' Code: "His aim seems to have been to present an ideal picture of the Mosaic age constructed upon a genuine traditional basis, but so conceived as to exemplify the principles by which an ideal theocracy should be regarded. That he does not wilfully desert or falsify tradition appears from the fact that even where

¹ Lange's "Commentary," p. 27.

² "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," pp. 500ff.

³ "The Expositor," pp. 48ff. January, 1887.

⁴ "In all probability we have in Genesis the very

syllables in which the patriarch Shem described to the ancestors of Abraham that which he himself had seen, and in which he had borne so great a part." Canon Cook, in the "Bible Commentary." Genesis, p. 76.

it set antiquity in an unfavorable light, he does not shrink from recording it (Ex. xvi: 2; Lev. x. 1; Num. xx: 12, 24, xxvii: 13 f.). It is probable that, being a priest himself, he recorded traditions, at least to a certain extent, in the form in which they were current in priestly circles."¹

Thus the conclusion of modern conservative criticism respecting the historical writings of the Old Testament is that they contain an ideal element. This does not mean that these writings are fictions. They are not. They are sober and carefully composed histories. From the frequent references to authorities, such as the Book of the Wars of Jehovah, the Book of Jasher, the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel, the Book of Samuel the Seer, the Book of Nathan the Prophet, the Book of Gad the Seer, we may be sure that, as far as possible, the Old Testament histories were based upon contemporary records of the events which they describe. Compared with other ancients' writings, their statements are of wonderful accuracy. Repeatedly, and in the most unexpected manner, have they been confirmed by modern exploration.

An ideal element enters also into all historical narratives written for a moral or spiritual purpose. No orator who, on the Fourth of July or on Forefathers' Day, would stir the emotions of his hearers by a recital of early American history fails to idealize, in some de-

¹ Driver, p. 120. ² Isaiah lv: 7. ³ John vii: 17.

gree, the past. Otherwise eloquence would be wanting; patriotism and religious devotion could not be awakened. Old Testament history was written for the same purpose, and necessarily partakes of the same characteristic.

This conclusion respecting the historical writings of the Old Testament is thought by many to impair it as an embodiment of a divine revelation. This, however, is not so. The divineness of the Old Testament resides not in historical accuracy. It lies in religious teachings; in promises of redemption. These are unimpaired by the results of modern criticism. The protevangelium (Gen. iii: 14), "the Magna Charta of human history," is prophetic of Christ, whether written by Moses or a writer of the exile. The moral quality of the Ten Commandments remains the same, at whatever time, or under whatever circumstances, they were first uttered. The truth of the words, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,"² does not depend upon Isaianic authorship. Its verification is found in the experience of the forgiven soul. The Old Testament is one with the New; the historical outlines of each are firmly established by criticism, but the touchstone revealing the divine quality of each is found in the precept, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."³

Edward Lewis Curtis.

CHICAGO.

THE blue lake ripples to her feet,
The wind is in her hair;
She stands, a maiden wild and sweet,
With sinewy form and fair.

No stress of age her hope restrains,
Nor checks its high emprise;
The blood of youth is in her veins,
Youth's challenge in her eyes.

She seized, with movement swift as light,
The hour's most precious spoil;
Now, glowing with her promise bright,
Her strength makes joy of toil.

With dextrous hand, with dauntless will,
Her pearl-white towers she rears,
The memory of whose grace shall thrill
The illimitable years.

O'er leagues of waste, in sun and storm,
Their proud pure domes shall gleam,
The substance, wrought in noblest form,
Of Art's imperial dream.

Here shall she stand, the Old World's bride,
Crowned with the Age's dower;
Toward her shall set the abounding tide
Of life's full pomp and power.

She hears the nations' coming tread,
The rushing of the ships,
And waits, with queenly hands outspread,
And welcome on her lips.

The races, 'neath her generous sway,
Shall spread their splendid mart;
And here, for one brief perfect day,
Shall beat the world's great heart.

Marion Couthouy Smith.