THE KERNEL OF CRITICISM.

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A brief discussion of some of the outstanding advantages of the modern theories concerning the origin of the Old Testament.

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Preface.

The following discussion is an attempt to set forth briefly some of the outstanding advantages of the modern theories of the origin of the Old Testament.

The documentary hypothesis is here to stay. We have already recoiled far from some of its confident assertions, and the reaction is still in progress. But however much we may revise its conclusions, and whatever lines may open up to the future study of the Bible, the old theories of constant and infallible authority in the writers of the books of the Old Testament and of absolute fidelity in their preservation will not again have a very general sway.

Out of the effort to harmonize my belief in the divine origin of Israel's religion with the implications of modern criticism has come this apology for both of them. It has been a long road and a difficult one. It has been traveled by many before me, whose sympathy I can feel; and it must be traveled by an ever increasing number for some time to come, to whom my own sympathy and anxiety go out. But at the end of the journey is a better grasp of the Bible, a saner use of it in Christian work, and a richer sense of
fellowship with the heroes through whose religious experiences the Bible arose. The Old Testament has come to have more blood and nerve than it used to have for me, and is a pleasanter companion. These worth-while results at the end of the journey I have tried to suggest in the title, the Kernel of Criticism.

I am not a heart-and-soul adherent of the critical theory. I am sympathetic toward its principles and I believe its results are good. But I find in it the same fault against which it raises so loud a protest: a literal interpretation and dogmatic exactness are as hurtful in the new method of Bible study as in the old. I have no objection to believing that there may be duplicate accounts worked together in many places of the Old Testament, or that the different books are many of them the final result of centuries of tradition, and it seems to me only the natural thing to expect if the Mosaic law grew up gradually through many generations and the later laws were inserted in the Mosaic code as they arose, exactly as the codes of states and nations are growing today. But when I attempt to pick out
the different strands of a compound narrative, or separate the historical from the homiletic in the miracles recorded, or determine when and how any particular law was adopted, I find the task as obnoxious as ever. As long as the critical theory is an iconoclast it has my sympathy; as soon as it attempts to be an idol I turn iconoclast. It has made its way into the world of reverence and worship by virtue of a letter of introduction furnished it by the gospel: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," and it needs constantly to remember its credentials. I am as badly repulsed by the lengths to which the critics can go as ever one of them was by the vagaries of conservatism. The following quotation, quoted from a criticism in the Bible Champion for January, 1916 (page 42), illustrates an extreme critical analysis:

"The Polychrome Bible was such a transparent humbug that it was never completed, in spite of the great name of the editor, Prof. Paul Haupt, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, the ability and prominence of the authors selected to write the books, and the high standing of the publishers, Dodd, Mead & Co. It fell flat even as a joke. We have selected the exhibit from Joshua by Rev. W. H. Bennett, Professor of Old Testament Languages and Literature in a London university, the first four verses, of eight lines, taken from the sixth chapter.

"Jericho had shut its gates, and was shut up at the approach of the Israelites: none went out, and none came in. (JE about 630 B. C.) But Jehovah
said to Joshua (J about 750-650 B. C.): Behold I have given Jericho and its king (D about 570-540 B. C.) and fighting men (J about 750-650 B. C.) into your hand; (D about 570-540 B. C.) ye shall compass the city (J about 750-650 B. C.) all the armed men (R about 440-400 B. C.) going once around it; thus shalt thou do six days. (J about 750-650 B. C.). Seven priests shall carry in front of the Ark seven ram's horns; (M about 650 B. C.) on the seventh day (R about 630 B. C.) ye shall compass the city seven times (M about 650 B. C.), while the priests shall blow the horns. (R about 440-400 B. C.)' 

"Here are four verses that contain twelve fragments from six documents; two fragments have three words, two, four words, two, five words, one, six words, and two, seven words. It will be seen that the documents are J, E, JE, D, and two R's; they cover a period from 750 to 400 B. C., or three and one-half centuries."

But it is not wise to condemn the documentary theory utterly because of the extremes to which it has been pushed. The very fact that the Polychrome Bible was unfinished indicates that criticism has retracted its first statements. All efforts along such lines are now made much more mildly and much more tentatively.

The critical theory has not solved all the problems. It has laid some mighty ones, but it has raised others in their place. It is not to overestimate its strength to say that it is entitled to favorable study, but there is abundant work ahead of it and always will be, because of the inexact nature of its data.
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A man's religion is his citadel; it is the home of his soul. And therefore that which concerns his religion comes most close to himself. With the same energy with which one clings to life do we buttress our faith. It is only natural if we have run to extremes—if the man who doubts has overlooked insistently things that were big with faith-making, and if the man who believes has exalted everything connected with his belief too highly. And then the former finds it necessary to rail at whatsoever things he knows not, and the latter sets himself for the defense of the gospel.

There has always been a kind of scholarship which can not see a divine revelation in the Bible because of certain features of its record. There has always been an opposing scholarship which stops at nothing in its acceptance of the Bible as the word of God. The Bible therefore has always been a storm center.
And the storm has been both constant and bitter. Neither side can claim to have won a decisive victory, for the fight goes on. The number of active leaders has been a thousand times greater in defense of the Bible, but the vast multitude of men who spend their lives in silent disregard of the Bible indicates that the field is by no means cleared. The very history of the combat ought to suggest that the truth is not wholly on either side.

Practically within a half century there has arisen a new party whose weapon I shall call the critical theory. They insist on sweeping both the old contenders out of the way. If they can be reckoned as reinforcements for either side, they are allies of the defenders of the Bible, although they grant large elements of truth to its enemies. They say to both the older schools that they are partly in the right and greatly in the wrong. They insist that there is a divine revelation in the Bible, but that the Bible is not the infallible record of that revelation. It marks the surrender of infidel attacks on the Bible. It also marks the surrender of verbal inspiration or anything approaching it. It sees truth in the arguments set forth by the enemies of the Bible and does not charge them with lack of intelligence or honesty. Neverthe-
less it grants to the friends of the Bible the essentials for which they contend. To the one it says the Bible is not all human; there is indisputably a divine message in it. To the other it says the Bible is not all divine; its revelation has been mediated through men, as men were able to receive it, and it bears the imperfections of its human mediums. Nor is the critical theory an attempt at compromise. It presents sincere arguments for itself.

Because the critical theory stands on halfway ground, it has been bitterly denounced by many Christian scholars. It is lamented that once the enemies of Christianity were men outside, openly called infidels; but now the same arguments are presented by men who hold prominent place in the church. It is not uncommon to see quotations from Tom Paine placed side by side with quotations from Christian scholars, with warning against yielding a point to the dangerous argument. To such students the critical theory does not seem to be a retreat to a more defensible position; it seems to be the surrender of the field. Any soldier would rather stand his ground no matter what the odds than to fall back under fire: it requires the highest kind of courage to begin a retreat and prevent headlong flight. The situation is exactly the
same in the religious controversy. It has seemed that to grant any truth to the foes of the Bible is to grant their whole contention. Many an earnest soul has felt himself driven from the heights of Verbal Inspiration and Infallibility and had nothing left to defend. When one begins to yield the traditional ground, he does not know where he can stop. He cannot be sure of any result short of that of the soul fugitive without a faith, and he dreads such a sad possibility.

The critical theory does mean a retreat. There is certainly a great difference between saying that the Bible is true from cover to cover, every word direct from God and a reliable guide for our faith, and saying that the Bible contains a divine revelation but that it is mediated through the slow advance of Israel’s history and has wrapped up in it much of superstition and error and narrowness and that we must learn to “take forth the precious from the vile.” The latter pushes the principle of private interpretation to an unpleasant limit. The former is much more satisfying to most men’s souls. Those divines whose creed declares that “the Bible is the word of God” are not quibbling over a mere form of statement when they protest that it is not
at all the same to say, "The Bible contains the word of God." The latter statement makes room for all manner of uncertainty. It is, however, the creed of modern criticism and will probably remain. It constitutes a bitter mouthful for those who seek an authoritative infallible Bible, but inside the shell there is a kernel that is worth while.

The fact that the critical theory can be regarded as standing on halfway ground between the two extremes of biblical criticism is an argument in its favor. When any subject has monopolized the interests of men as fully as the Bible has done for many generations, and still leaves a great number of problems and difficulties to be wrestled with, there is at least a presumption that the method of attack has not been entirely correct. The perplexity of the world has been due to the lack of a middle ground.
The critical theory makes a healthful transfer of emphasis from an inspired book to an inspired message.
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The critical theory recognizes that God has spoken to men. We have the message preserved in writing. But the writings were left by men, have been reproduced by men, and have finally been sifted out by men from other literature and judged to be inspired. How accurately has God's message been preserved? How much of human interpretation is mixed with it? How much of fable has gathered about the men through whom God spoke before the message was written down? How much has it been tampered with after being written down? How much change can be ascribed to scribal error, misreading of torn and faded copy, and similar unavoidable sources of change? The answers to these questions make the difference between the advanced critic and the conservative. That such factors are more or less present is acknowledged by all. The Bible has not been miraculously preserved from error. The thousands of variations in the oldest manuscripts that remain is proof of that. Furthermore, it has been transmitted through generations of men who
lacked our modern appreciation of literary honesty. They had many leaders like those who stand out as the murderers of Jesus; narrowminded, bigoted, bitter, capable of using any means to gain their ends. They sent deputations to catch him up, they watched for months for any opportunity to make way with him, they finally condemned him upon the first false evidence that could be made to hold together. It is crediting the ancient Jew with an unselfish zeal for which there is no evidence, when we insist that the Bible passed through his hands without the slightest alteration.

The critical theory does not rest on infidelity. Its adherents may be as devout and reverent and as certain that God's message is in the Bible as are its opponents. A man may believe that George Washington never wielded a hatchet against his father's favorite tree, but at the same time believe that Washington deserves all the honor that is heaped upon him as the founder of our nation. It is possible to doubt that Columbus ever stood in the midst of his disheartened convict sailors and promised to turn toward home if land were not sighted in a few days, and still to believe that Columbus discovered America.
Such stories may be fancies which vivid and reverent memories have built around our heroes. Our religious feeling makes it hard to grant that there may be similar accretions about the heroes of the Bible. But it is possible to doubt that Elijah ever called down from heaven such a fire as to burn flesh and wood and stone and dust, and still to grant to Elijah a first place among those to whom God spoke and through whom men learned God's will. Without denying that God may have performed the miracle, the critic says that belief in Elijah's work does not depend upon belief in all the stories that are preserved about him. It cannot be denied that the Hebrew nation gave to the world in its Old Testament Scriptures a religion far superior to that of any other people. It is very commonly accepted too that the religion was not the result of human factors alone, but that God was working in the lives of his chosen people. The evident God-consciousness of the prophet declares it; and the fact that nowhere else in the world, with more than two milleniums longer to develop, has the Hebrew ideal even been approached, corroborates it. But it does not necessarily follow that the book which tells of that chosen people and their slow acceptance of God's message is infallible. God's work was done
through men, and it does not destroy the divine in
the work to acknowledge that the men were human.
The record of God's work also has been made by men,
and it does not deny the divine in it to admit that
the record bears the marks of very human fingers.

It is worth while insisting on the possibility
of being a modern critic and retaining one's faith.
The whole strife between liberal and conservative
has been embittered by the calling of names on both
sides. On one side has been the insistence that
the opponents were unbelievers, and on the other
has been the charge of bigoted belief. The epithets
in both cases were often earned. It may be that in
the early days of controversy it was necessarily so.
And it may be that, with a fund of arguments on
either side, the strife must end in a compromise,
with the faith and reverence of the one sweetening
and heightening the "assured results" of the other.
It would be only a common experience if it should
be so. No scholar follows Robert Ingersoll today,
but he certainly helped the pulpit to break away
from some of its blind infatuation; and it may be
that some of the unbelieving criticism may help to
a saner understanding and use of the Bible. At any
rate there is growing up a higher criticism which
does represent a union of the two contenders and which accepts the theories of criticism and yet accepts the Bible as the record of a revelation of God.

Nor does the critical theory rest upon subjective arguments alone. The lengths to which the critic goes depend more upon his own temperament than upon his evidence; but at least he starts with evidence. He has many corroborating facts. The Bible evidently is not infallible. The most conservative scholar living is forced to agree. There are many little discrepancies which can be passed with the statement that they are due to some error in copying. A famous one is that which says that Absalom was forty years preparing his revolt (2 Sam. 15.7). A similar one is the mention of Michal as the wife of Adriel the Meholathite (2 Sam. 21.8; cf. I Sam. 18.19). A comparison of 2 Sam. 21.19 and I Chron. 20.5 indicates that words have been omitted from one text or words inserted in the other. The day is past when we could declare that Elhanan slew two men and feel that we had settled the problem. There is quite a number of similar difficulties in the Old Testament as it exists; and if we allow any significance to the variations in
the Septuagint and other versions (translated from a Hebrew text several hundred years older than the text from which the Bible was translated), the number of sins to be laid at the door of the careless copyist is remarkable. The text of the English Bible is manifestly not perfect.

One of the blundering faults of scholarship is to feel that not one jot or tittle of the Bible can pass away or the whole book becomes a heap of rubbish. It shows itself in the conservative who fills libraries with his defense of single words or statements in the Bible and proclaims loudly a mighty triumph when some unverifiable theory of his gets around a difficulty. Most of the scientific confirmations leave one as helpless as ever to explain the miracles they are aimed at: Suppose a landslide does sometimes occur in the Jordan. What sort of landslide must it have been in Joshua's day which so completely dammed up the rushing, swirling river in its flood time as to leave the whole bed for more than twenty miles (if Adam, Josh. 3.16, is properly identified) a dry pathway for the Israelite families and herds until all had passed over? It is as easy to believe the story as it stands as a miracle wrought directly by God as it is to pin faith to any explanation. One
critic explains it away as a later hero tale exaggerating or even inventing events in the early conquest. Another explains it away as a magnified natural incident. And then they fall upon one another to cut themselves to pieces, although they started out as members of the same camp.

Blundering faults are by no means confined to the conservative. There is a kind of radical scholarship which makes light of the whole Old Testament because certain statements exceed the imagination. Solomon did sacrifice an enormous amount of live stock at the temple dedication (1 Kings 8.63); and they count up the waste of beef and mutton and smile at the whole story. The word translated "ravens" for the benefactors of Elijah may also be translated "A'fabs." Presto: the miracle is gone and an assumption is gained which may be of use in half a hundred other miracles. It is possible so to bend over a philological microscope as to be blind to things that are big with meaning. It is true of many a scholar's spirituality that the letter killeth.

The commonest kind of Bible study is this literalism which looks for a book above error. It does harm in every way. Many a person has held the theory and retained his faith; but it has bred subter-
fuge and shallowness. Many a person has held the theory and lost his faith. A little study showed him countless difficulties. He must justify everything or discard everything. Being of too practical and literal a turn of mind, narrowly honest, he fails to accomplish the justification, and faith dies. Many a person has held the theory and prevented faith. A man once came to me very seriously with his Bible to ask why Jesus was called the son of David. He had discovered that there was a thousand years between their generations: Jesus therefore could not be the son of David. He thought he had found a mistake in the Bible. If the statement that Jesus was the son of David could be discredited, the whole Bible went overboard! and he was justified in his unbelief.

There is no denunciation of the Bible more frequent than his narrow literalism. The professor in his library is a rare specimen compared to the throngs of shallow scoffers who lack his dignity. "The Bible contradicts itself." "The Bible has so many difficulties you cannot tell what to believe." "The Bible countenances every sin in the catalogue, because it praises men of whom these sins are related." "I have no use for the God of the Bible." These and a
great many like objections find their warrant only in an attitude which demands of the Old Testament that it be judged by a literal interpretation according to the standards of our modern world. The whole, from the ignorant ranting of the street corner to the "mistakes of Moses," evaporates like the crowd that harassed the woman taken in adultery before a wiser criticism that sees in the Bible many things that are wrong but transfers its emphasis from the Bible itself to the message of which the Bible is the human record. The transfer is valid. It puts the emphasis where it belongs, and therefore it is healthful.
Probably the spur toward the transfer of emphasis from the record to the message was found in the view which the Bible itself suggested and which has been reinforced by a larger knowledge of comparative religion and of the history of Israel's neighbors. Israel was not unique in her early religious ideas; she shared them with all the ancient cousins of Asia. And furthermore, Israel's record of her history is not free from prejudice and narrow interest; instead of standing the test of clear historical judgment it is colored with the interpretations and antipathies of its human writers. In other words, the history in the Bible is subject to the same limitations that imperil all the other history that was ever written. Without discounting the fact of God's revelation, the critical theory therefore asserts that the Old Testament record of that revelation arose as other literatures arise.

This is probably the crux of the whole dispute. It forms a serious parting of the ways. The attitude toward the Bible is at stake. Having effected a transfer of emphasis from the record to the message, the critic proceeds to disparage the record. It is not strange that he arouses vehement displeasure.
The Christian world is not more than two generations from those who regarded the Bible as verbally inspired, and religious beliefs do not die in two generations no matter how roughly they are handled. We have been driven to acknowledge that our grandfathers were mistaken, but we are annoyed to have to admit it, and we cling stubbornly to every point that cannot be taken away completely. Our intellects have passed beyond our ancestors', but our spirits are theirs. And because the conclusions of the critic are so constantly supported by no evidence except his own assertion, and since the assertions of any two critics seem to vary to an extreme, the attacks of the critics upon the Bible of our parents make slow progress. And yet there are several features of the critical position which would appeal to all if we could look at them without prejudice.

In the study of any other literature it appears that the oldest bits of writing are victory songs and hero praises. These remain and are ultimately incrusted with simple statements of history. Then there comes a written form of the folklore about the victories and the heroes. This lore has been accumulating for many generations, and among no peo-
ple do these tales hold themselves to strict historical prose. Nature myths and battle legends are everywhere. Childhood has always said, "Tell me a story mamma," and mother has always been generous. The American Indian listened with crude wonder but with satisfaction to nature tales of the mountains and rivers and animals about him. The Roman youth heard stories of the prehistoric kings, and was a readier citizen because of them. The Norse child had his fjords and crags woven into weird ghost garments or marked by the hands of the gods. The Greek rose to some of his noblest culture in behalf of the gods who had been his companions for unknown centuries. Much of Christian teaching has been by parables and allegories, and one of the perennial tasks of Christendom has been to purge itself of the romance that insists on creeping in. Our New Testament itself became a necessity as a canon against gospels of the infancy and apotheoses of saints. From the time Christianity crossed the strait of Dover until now Jesus has been the hero of an endless flow of English tales and poems which clothed the truths of the gospel in every imaginable form. Jesus himself did much of his teaching by means of stories
that had their basis in human nature and human
feeling but not in history. Religious truths as well
as military ardor and poetic culture may be taught
by stories. All mankind seems fitted to learn its
early lessons that way. And the critical theory
says that ancient Israel was not a dull exception
to the universal rule.

According to this rule the oldest elements of
the Old Testament are stories and poems relating to
early heroes. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and
the judges performed deeds which left vivid memories. Criticism does not hesitate to say that the
stories may have grown and may have had marvelous
elements added to them since they were first told:
the present form is not by any necessity the one in
which they started. Their final development may be
late; but that is not to doubt that the heroes lived
and wrought deeds which molded Israel's religious
life and faith. "Inspiration" in the sense we have
thought of it is not relied upon in the treatment
of the hero tales; but the men who shaped the stories
are credited with the honesty of primitive culture
and ancient faith and with the guidance of such a
spirit as made their tales adapted to help their age
toward the final goal. Crude as he judges the age
of hero tales to have been, the critic does not laugh
at the stories. They are part of the long, patient
process which culminated in the noble faith of later
Israel.

With the coming of Saul and David and Solomon
national prowess built up so great a stock of glories
that written records were necessary, and so men were
appointed to the office of scribe and recorder (2
Sam. 8.16,17, 1 Kings 4.3) and a mass of court ar-
chives was slowly prepared. It was the period when
Israel was doing the same thing that we find inscribed
on the tombs and temples of Egypt to the praise of
their kings and the same thing that gives us our
knowledge of the proud records of the kings of As-
syria and Babylon. Israel's records were probably
as onesided and vainglorious as the records of their
neighbors, for the pride of an Israelite is very
similar to the pride of an Egyptian. The original
records are lost, but the evidence that remains in
the Bible is too monumental for us to doubt that
the Hebrews were men animated by human feelings
and not a peculiar angelic race.
At a later time the glories of David and Solomon were only distant memories and the history of the later kings abounded in nothing except disappointment. The old annals needed copying, but it was no longer any pleasure to plod through roll after roll of accounts whose very pride only heightened the feeling of their vanity. The scribes were speculating on the causes of their downfall, and felt like attempting to warn their own generation to profit by the fate of their fathers. And so all we have left is the name of the king and the poor advice that if we want to look up his record we can find it in the chronicles of the kings (1 Kings 11.21, 14.19,29 and so on). It lacks a great deal of being "history" to say of a king that "he restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah" (2 Kings 14.25), which is the sole record we have of the reign of Jeroboam II; and the account of his contemporary in Judah is even less satisfying (2 Kings 15.1-7). These kings were the mightiest and most prosperous in their respective kingdoms; the one reigned forty-one years and the other fifty-two. How we wish we did have the old chronicles! The purpose of the writer was to record the triumph of those who worship Jehovah, and a
few stories are told at more or less length because they have a religious interest. But the choice of materials is not made with anything like modern historical judgment, and a satisfactory comprehension of Israel's history cannot be had.

The stories with which Genesis opens were written by one to whom God was one and unrivaled and to whom the least infraction of his will was a mortal sin. Are they literally true? and have they been preserved unchanged through all the vicissitudes of Israel's history since Moses? There are similarities between the early stories of Genesis and the folk tales of other peoples. When stories of the flood are found in China, India, Europe, America, and some of the ocean islands, by what warrant do we reject them as fanciful descriptions of some far ancient deluge of which a verbally correct account is found in the Bible? The story of creation is found in Babylonia as well as in Israel; why must one account be given directly by inspiration and the other be considered a human paraphrase—especially as the human seems to have preceded the divine? The best reason we have is that our fathers considered the Bible inspired word for word, and our religious faith
makes us want to regard it so. If we could be made to rid ourselves of prejudice long enough to look for other things than literal meanings, we should see that we have been clinging to a shell and missing the kernel of the stories. Whether or not they are literally true, their value depends on their spiritual meaning. The religious teaching is more significant than the historical setting. He would be foolish who should insist that the story of the prodigal son referred to a definite father and his wayward child and described literally and in order the actual experiences of the wanderer. Is there any more necessity for the wanderings of Cain to be literally true? If Jesus taught his disciples by means of stories, and he was the Son of God, may not some one before him have taught truths by means of stories and have been inspired? If the stories of the Bible are adapted to teach high religious truths to a primitive age, we have found a better reason for believing in them than dogmatic insistence on their literal truth. The account of creation taught monotheism, the goodness of matter, the dignity of life, and the immanence of God to an age that was set upon contrary things; and I may
consider it inspired without contending that therefore the creation occupied six literal days because the Bible says so. Think of the awful history of womanhood—and you need not go to ancient history or heathen lands for my purpose—and then remember that the Bible story of her creation makes her flesh and blood of her husband and bids him leave all other ties and cling to her. There is nothing preposterous in such a holy truth being given in the setting of a story, and there is danger of a misplaced emphasis if we insist that woman was created fullgrown in a fraction of a day from a rib taken from the sleeping man. It is possible to doubt the literal interpretation of the record and still accept it as teaching truths so noble as to be beyond the invention of ancient Israel. The truth is divine and was imparted by inspiration—nothing else will account for it—but the form of the truth may be adapted to its time. May it be a jewel placed in a setting that would endure? or must it all be jewel?

I am not denying that the early chapters of Genesis may be literally true. It is a matter where indisputable proof would be difficult to furnish on either side. I am only attempting to make a new way
of looking at some old truths seem possible. We cannot burn men at the stake any more, but we do condemn them as bitterly and with as little acquaintance. If we could bring the culprit and his judge to sympathy with one another (a difficult thing in religious matters), they might learn a lesson from history and find that neither was utterly worthy of annihilation. One school of criticism looks upon the story of the fall as teaching that a serpent spoke to a woman in an ideal garden we cannot locate now, that he suggested that the eating of a wonderful fruit would make her wise, that she had been commanded by God not to become wise, and that God came walking in the garden after the mischief was done and cast the man and woman out. In my own Bible school experience I do not remember ever having heard the lesson treated in any other way than (1) a discussion of where the garden of Eden probably was, (2) an argument that a serpent might have spoken if God planned it so, (3) a question or two, which were never answered, as to what the fruit may have been like, and (4) a useless speculation as to what would have happened if the couple had not eaten the fruit. How sadly we missed its meaning! That kind of treatment has divided the
world into two classes, one wonderingly accepting
the story but failing to get much out of it besides
the story, the other rejecting it and all things
connected with it because they were required to be-
lieve it literally true. There is another school
of criticism which does not scoff at the story—it
is sacred as an instrument of divine revelation:
it no more thinks of making fun of it than it does
of laughing at the story of the prodigal son. It
tries to do with it what we do without effort with
the stories Jesus told—see beyond the husk of the
story and learn its spiritual teaching. For the
woman and the fruit stand eternally for the universal
experience of sin: a temptation comes subtly and is
spurned at first; but it appeals to some native de-
sire and we do not dismiss it completely; we begin
to debate with sin, and that means defeat; our loved
ones are inevitably drawn into the suffering—no
man sinneth to himself alone—and remorse comes to
stay through all time because of consequences that
cannot be averted. You can locate the garden of
Eden now: it is wherever man and temptation meet.
You can explain the forbidden fruit now: it is the
perversion of any natural impulse. You have as in
the literal interpretation the fact of sin as a dis-
obedience to God. You can account for the casting
out of God's garden for ever: it is the fate that
follows inevitably from the surrender of ideals and
purity that can never be recovered. No, the story
is not to be laughed at. It is an inspired descrip-
tion of sin. But how truly is it one where the let-
ter killeth but the spirit giveth life.

The critical theory says the introduction to
Genesis is made up of stories whose present form is
late. The fund of tales common to ancient Asia was
reduced and polished by striking out the crude poly-
theism and extravagant unnaturalness until the teach-
ings became general and abiding. It is an achieve-
ment which speaks of more than human impulse, to pro-
duce a literature which could suit the state of mind
and the culture of prechristian times and yet endure
as a consistent and important element in the moral
and religious life of to-day. We had supposed the
inspiration came to Moses 1,400 B. C. No, they say,
the inspiration came to some unknown or group of un-
knowns about 400 B. C. Some people have lost their
faith on account of it, discarding everything because
Mosaic authorship was questioned. Some have joined
issue and fought so vigorously that both sides often-times have lost all Christian spirit and insight. Some have felt that the whole dispute was a begging of the question, because the spiritual values of the stories do not depend on authorship and date. And for those of the last viewpoint it does not diminish the worth of the early chapters of Genesis, or take the spirit of God out of them, to believe that they are tales of the childhood of the race worked over.
The critical theory places revelation in line with the other great movements of the universe by saying that here too God's method has been by evolution.
III

The critical theory places revelation in line with the other great movements of the universe by saying that here too God's method has been by evolution.

Evolution has had a more or less stormy candidacy. But by this time it has established itself pretty comfortably in almost every branch of life.

Whatever way one accounts for the earth and the solar system, he describes a process. Whether he advocates the nebular hypothesis or the planet-essimal theory, whether he charts the rise and decay of mountains and the spread of seas, whether he studies a piece of limestone or a bed of coal, he is working in the realm of evolution. It is one of the appealing arguments of the reverent student of the world we live in, that he can detect a guiding intelligence in the world's formation.

In the field of life, both vegetable and animal, the same development appears; until men classify into families the whole multitude of forms of life with tolerable satisfaction. Evolution is no longer thought of as a rival of God. It is looked upon as the method by which Intelligence produced the differ-
ant forms of life. Life has become no less sacred, God has lost none of his glory, because he is now believed to have worked by slow changes instead of by fiat. On the contrary teleology has doubled its force. We can do more than admire the finished product of the Worker; we can look into the workship and watch him at his work. Faith has become empirical.

Human history has followed the same patient course. Egypt had a well organized civil life at about 5,000 B.C. Back of that the traces of man fade off into the shadow. The oldest traces are of a very primitive culture. It has been a long story from the stone age to the triumphs of the air, but it has been a continuous one.

The rise of evolution has not disturbed our confidence in God in any of these subjects. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork," we sing as reverently as did the psalmist, and with better understanding of what we say. "O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches (or creatures)", is not obsolete in any man's Psalter. And of the race of men we declare with fuller truth than did they of old, "Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of
thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."

The critical theory declares that evolution has been the method of God in the spiritual kingdom as well as in those of the mineral, vegetable, and animal world; otherwise the religion of man has come to him after a manner different from all the other creations of that God who delights first in law.

The arguments for this proposition are not a priori. They rest upon the history of religion and upon the evidence furnished by the Old Testament. Men has gradually grown to an apprehension of God. He began with knowledge of him as badly limited as was his knowledge of the world. Everywhere he has had the elements of religion: belief in gods, soul, worship, sacrifice. The Semitic peoples shared such beliefs and practices with the rest of men. Nowhere else did the religion develop very far. But just as God must have used some species of animal life to develop a higher species, so he developed a higher religion through the Hebrews. The traces of the most primitive religious customs are not easy to find in the Old Testament, although unsteady arguments are made for many of them. But there is indisputable evidence that the Hebrew religion made great advance after the days of Moses. The idea of
a future life with distinctions between the good and the bad arose late in Hebrew life. The hope of individual immortality is not even expressed until after the nation has died. The dead are thought of as huddled in the same place with no difference among them, and passing a dreary time (Compare, for example, Job 3.11-19, 30.23, Ps. 6.5, Eccl. 3.17-22, Isa. 14.9-11, with Dan. 12.2,3). The idea of Satan would have helped the Hebrews mightily at a thousand points in their career, but he is mentioned in only three passages (1 Chron. 21.1 [cf. 2 Sam. 24.1], Job, and Zech. 3.1,2), and in none of them is he a violent opponent of God. The idea of God grew. Jacob and David had images in their own families (Gen. 31.19, 35.2, and 1 Sam. 19.13); a grandson of Moses appears to have been the first of a line of hereditary priests who served before images which had originally been dedicated to Jehovah (Judg. 18.30 and 17.3). Solomon built places of worship about Jerusalem in order that his wives from many lands might worship their native gods (I Kings 11.1-8). From the very days of Joshua until Judas Maccabaeus, in spite of countless high-souled leaders, Israel mingled her worship of Jehovah with the worship of other gods. High places existed all over the land, on some of which at least Jehovah
was worshiped (1 Sam. 9.12, 10.5, 1 Kings 3.2, 4, 15.14, 22.43, 2 Kings 12.3, 15.4, 35, 23.9); and it was not until Hezekiah (2 Kings 18.4), when Israel was lost and Judah had only a little more than a century to live, that an active campaign was begun against them. The constant backslidings of Israel testify to the inadequate idea of God which they held. Jehovah could not have been the God of the universe to them, or the heathenism of the days of the judges would have been escaped, the persecutors of David could not have expected to drive him outside Jehovah's domain (1 Sam. 26.19), Solomon would not have been led to worship the gods of his wives (1 Kings 11.5), Ahab would not have permitted a foreign god to come so near appropriating the field as he seems to have done, Ahaz would have shunned the reasoning recorded of him: "Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me" (2 Chron. 28.23). The character of God was as slow in impressing the conscience of Israel as was his supremacy, or Amos would not have stood at Bethel (where so far as we know no other god than Jehovah was ever worshipped) and denounced the licentious worship of a throng of guilty worshipers who were looking confidently for a manifestation of God on their behalf (Amos 5.18-20).
Frequently there arose a man with a high conception of God, a Nathan, an Elijah, an Amos, a Hosea, a Jeremiah; but it was late in the history of Israel when their teachings became triumphant.

We had tried to believe that a revelation of God was made to primitive man, and that this revelation was preserved inviolate among those particular descendants of Adam who are enrolled in the Scriptures, and was enormously perverted throughout the rest of mankind. Suffice it to say that the history of Israel subsequent to Moses demonstrates that the Hebrews were no better fitted to preserve a revelation than were the heathen nations. In view of God's method of working in all the other great movements of the universe, and of the slow development of a worthy religious conscience among the Old Testament people, the doctrine that in the spiritual realm too the method of realization was by evolution must commend itself; and in this realm equally with the others the doctrine upholds the finished product as peculiarly the work of God.
IV

The critical theory makes Hebrew history run parallel to the development of religious ideas instead of being constantly divergent.
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With these two principles—the conception of evolution in religion and the idea that the Hebrew Scriptures rose as other literatures arise—the critical theory proceeds to its task. It finds its greatest usefulness in the effort to harmonize the ideals of Israel with the facts of its history, and it is praiseworthy in proportion as it is able to accomplish that task. It goes about it arbitrarily enough. Given the idea that religious ideas developed in regular order, and the notion that the Old Testament is as unreliable as other ancient literature, the critic proceeds to re-arrange and revise the Scriptures to accord with the "facts." It is a heartbreaking operation to the friend of the Bible, for the critic is drastic and blunt. But if his two presuppositions are valid, he has a right to proceed as he does. It cannot be a very substantial process, for after all the principal guide is the critic's own temperament: if a certain situation appears reason-
able to him, the Bible account is accepted as it stands; but if it does not read as he thinks it ought to read, he proceeds to alter it to suit his fancy. It is true that he is scholarly and honest and brings to bear all the data of ancient history, and variant readings of the Old Testament, and the evidence of other passages which are relevant to the one under discussion, but the impression it makes on himself is after all the criterion of truth. The final result, however, among a multitude of scholars is a conception of the rise of the faith of the Old Testament which is accepted by all in its general outlines and which does much to harmonize the ideals of ancient Israel with the history.

It is strange that Moses should have commanded: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24.16); and that immediately, under such a man as Joshua, the sons and daughters of Achan should have been stoned to death with their father (Josh. 7.22-26). The critic says it is simple enough: Under the old idea of family solidarity no distinction was seen between Achan and his children; all must die.
But at a much later time the idea of individuality developed. The above law was then adopted and placed in the code with no thought of deceiving students of later days.

Deuteronomy 12 appears to legislate for a single central sanctuary, and the historian of Kings makes the criticism of every king of Judah down to Hezekiah (1 Kings 14.23, 15.12, 14, 22.43, 2 Kings 8.18, 27, 12.3, 14.4, 15.4, 35, 16.4) that he permitted the worship on the high places or did worse. It contrasts singularly with the practice of some of the early leaders who worshiped God on various high places. It clears the situation to think of the central sanctuary as settled upon only after long experience had shown that the many sacred places could not be kept from Canaanitism, and that then Deuteronomy 12 was made law.

There are said by the critics to be three distinct laws in the Pentateuch concerning the enslavement of Hebrews (Ex. 21.2-6, Lev. 25.39-43, Deut. 15.12-18). The three passages do not conflict noticeably in any particular, and it is easy to combine them into one after the familiar manner of conservatism. But when the old presupposition has
been somewhat weakened it is more natural to think of them as laws enacted at different times.

Think of all the centuries of backsliding from Jehovah, beginning, say, at the death of Joshua and continuing to the Captivity, although neither is a terminus. Is it reasonable that all that time they possessed the exalted idea of one great God who made heaven and earth, and that there existed a command to teach the things concerning him diligently to their children, to make them the constant subject of conversation, to wear them on forehead and arm, and to write them on door and gate? Can the matter be dismissed by saying that the book of the law was lost almost as soon as it was written and was not found until after the prophets began to teach the idea of one great God who made heaven and earth? Since the book of the law was found in the temple, it must have been in the leaders' hands from Moses to Solomon, but remarkably poor use of it must have been made if it contained all the things it contains today.

It would appear from the record of the Conquest that Jehovah led a united band of faithful worshipers into Canaan with specific directions to
exterminate everything. So long as they followed
his bidding they were as terrible as Huns, over-
powering city after city and "devoting" the citi-
zens with the sword. They did not succeed entirely,
and the failure is laid to their apostasy from
Jehovah. They were preserved as conquerors of the
land by means of judges whom Jehovah raised up at
times of extreme need and repentance. Finally all
the elders of the people united in a request for
a king, that they might be like other nations.
Jehovah granted the request and directed the coro-
nation of the first king, although he knew it was
against their best interests. God's dealings with
Canaan constitute an unpleasant problem in theodicy,
but it disappears when the critic boldly asserts
a distinction between the things that God did and
the things that ancient Israel felt he did. If the
morals of the Conquest can be called the morals of
primitive men, and if we can say that they gave
God credit for directing their impulses (as relig-
ious men of all ages have done),—then a sigh of
relief and thanks to the critical theory.

The Bible seems to be written under the im-
pression that from the beginning man was in fellow-
ship with the one God, and that the fellowship was never lost. We of later days have accepted the impression and have elaborated it: we credit our ancestors with having had from the start a conception of God which was in some respects as high as our own and in no respect could grow much; the subject which most embarrasses the comprehension of man is regarded as the only one which early man knew well. When we pause to consider, we realize that if there is anything which God cannot do, he cannot impart an accurate idea of himself to primitive intelligence; the idea of God, like all other ideas, must grow. And a study of the ragged religious history of Israel makes it certain that the idea did grow. The critical theory is not a parody. It is a sincere attempt to account for stubborn facts that are abundant.

Rearranging, then, the data given by the Bible in accordance with the theory of orderly development, we have a history of the Hebrews which begins to take definiteness with the work of Moses. Back of him is nothing but traditions of more or less historical value about individual heroes; but nothing of national life. Moses organised scattered tribes
into a loose nation whose center was the worship of Jehovah—loose, because of a Semitic weakness toward centralization. They were shepherds from the desert who invaded Palestine and battled for a foothold. They became political masters of the country, much as the Normans conquered England. It was several centuries before the old inhabitants and the invaders became fused into a nation. Canaan was consequently chaotic and the prey of neighboring tribes during the days of the judges. At last their political situation was solved by the rise of the kings. How feeble had been the "conquest," and how slow had been the amalgamation of Canaanite and Hebrew, is shown by the condition when Saul was crowned. He had a band of two thousand men with himself, and a thousand more were with Jonathan; there was no other military. If there had been, the Philistines would have dispersed them; for the Philistines were the real conquerors of the land and had garrisons scattered at various points. Saul battled against them until they overthrew him and bequeathed the task to David. David was successful, and under him and Solomon the Hebrew nation sprang to leadership in western Asia. The chief cause of their success
was that the older nations were at that generation in decay. That they fell so soon was due to the native incapacity of Semitic kings to organize and of Semitic subjects to submit, coupled with the rejuvenation of the older nations. As it was, they had endured as long as any Semitic power has ever endured.

The religious situation was much slower in clarifying. We are not dealing with a distinct family of Hebrews who entered Palestine as a unit and kept themselves aloof from the native people. From the days of the invasion "the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons" (Judg. 3:5,6). It is a situation that is obscured in the Bible as it stands, but it is written in capitals in the life of the land. The final result was an amalgamation of Hebrew and Canaanite. The latter furnished the culture, the former provided the character. The situation of the Hebrews in Canaan is suitably compared to that of a healthy, high-principled young man who leaves the farm to make his
fortune in the city. At first the Hebrews were overwhelmed. It was not simply a case of copying the licentious practices of Canaan. Canaan was actually a part of the forming nation. The Baal worship that endured so long was the ancestral faith of a large element of the people. Certain leaders arose, as leaders still arise, with high ideals of God and of his requirements; but the great mass of the citizens remained, as they still do, unable to rise above the old standards. The Hebrew nation was not less true to its God than are modern nations. What should be the outcome remained for centuries uncertain. It was a battle of the gods.

The evolution of Israel's religion can no more be accounted for as a purely natural process than can the evolution of the different species of animal life: at certain steps in the development God injects a new factor. Amos stood at Bethel in the midst of an elaborate worship of Jehovah (Amos 4. 4,5). The worshipers also served the Baalim on other alters (compare the work of Hosea), but they were certain that Jehovah was pleased by their offerings at Bethel (Amos 5.18, 7.10-13). Amos had
a new idea about God. He declared that elaborate offerings were not the things that held God's favor; the worship must be supported by right conduct toward one's fellows. And here his standards are as high as we proclaim today. Hosea appeared at about the same time with a principle that went even farther. He declared that Baal worship must cease: Jehovah was the nation's God, and they must be as true to him as a spouse to his companion. It was new doctrine to Israel, and it was long before it was appreciated. The same condition of worship was in existence in Judah. Ase and Jehoshaphat promoted Jehovah worship, but the latter brought a daughter of Jezebel to Jerusalem and for a time Jehovah was neglected for Baal; Joash began bravely as a follower of Jehovah, but ended as a worshiper of other gods (2 Chron. 24.18); Amaziah conquered Edom and brought home the gods of Edom to worship (2 Chron. 25.14); Azariah and Jotham restored Jehovah to the supremacy, but he lost it again under Ahaz. The sentiment attributed to the last-named was one familiar to all Israel at that time: "Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me" (2 Chron. 28.23). And when it is said further that he
"sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree" (2 Kings 16.4), we know that all Judah was resorting to those high places and hills and trees. The appeals of Isaiah and Micah bore fruit in the reign of the next king, Hezekiah, who inaugurated a drastic reform (2 Kings 18.4). It had at last dawned upon the consciousness of the leaders that the worship of Jehovah could not be maintained as it ought until the high places were entirely destroyed. It was a recourse similar to that of temperance workers who have at last determined that a national prohibitory amendment is necessary. But the nation was unready for the sweeping change. The old order returned with emphasis under Manasseh (2 Kings 21.3-7). It was not the apostasy of a king alone. It was the worship of the nation (2 Kings 23.5-9). Jehovah came back to power with Josiah and had a brief supremacy; but each of the kings who followed him "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his fathers had done." The nation fell: Jehovah had lost!

Permission was given by Cyrus to the Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem and restore the worship of Jehovah. A comparatively small number of
those most loyal to Jehovah went back. The years had taught a lesson. They rigorously separated themselves from the old influences. They reforged their laws in the fires of experience. The new condition lasted long enough to form a religious background. Under its influence they wrote the history of their entire national life. It was written by men who were honest with the honesty of the scribes of Jesus' day, and it inevitably bears the prejudice and suppositions of its time. Before the seal of the re-builders of Jerusalem had disappeared this literature was canonized. In the Greek period their faith wavered and the ancient chaos threatened to return, but there was a body of Scripture in existence then which finally steadied the Jews and insured the continuance of the religion of Israel as Jesus found it.

The critical theory is a drastic treatment of the sources, but it does have the merit of harmonizing Hebrew history and Hebrew ideals, and it does it under the authority of law.
The critical theory is of practical value in the religious world.
V

The critical theory is of practical value in the religious world.

The Bible is rightly regarded as the chief source of knowledge of religious truth. It is the safest anchor for one's own faith and the best tool for the impartation of faith to others. Much emphasis is being laid by this generation on religious experience. It is an emphasis that has been here before, and it is not altogether healthy. Life is a chaos of contrary experiences, and not all of them are safe guides. A canon of faith is absolutely essential. It was necessary that the Scriptures should be exalted into supremacy, and it is necessary to keep them there. The Bible is a record of religious experience. Nothing else in all the world is so certainly the work of men in whom the spirit of God was. While we emphasize religious experience we must remember that the men of the Bible had experiences which time has validated and which no other men have equaled. Any thing which helps us to value rightly their experience is of practical value in the religious world.
The critical theory, however, is not to be exploited. It is only a theory, calculated to help in the wise handling by the religious teacher of the best material he has. When he feels tempted to proclaim his theory as a gospel, he has lost his calling.

"The artist must know anatomy though he never paints a skeleton, but sets before us the fair, human form clothed in graceful drapery. The doctor must have studied anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and other sciences, but he does not visit the sickroom for the purpose of lecturing on the structure of the body or the functions of its organs. In like manner the work of the preacher will be more effective if, behind his intelligent teaching and passionate appeals, there lies careful consecutive work upon the literature which, as a rule, forms the basis of his discourse." W. G. Jordan, Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought, pages 5 and 6.

Irrespective of our views about the literary structure of the Bible, the principles of faith, comfort, steadfastness, morality, the danger of sin, the need and method of salvation, remain the same. There is enough that is definite and positive about these subjects to occupy the preacher's energy, and how abiding is the need for their heralding! Every time he faces an audience he looks down into the souls of men who need help, and he is guilty of gross negligence if he dallies with his opportunity.
The critical theory places weight upon the ethical programme which is the culmination of the Old Testament and not merely an incident.

When the law of Moses is considered to be the discipline whereby a simple nation were developed from desert shepherds to be the teachers of the world, we shall subordinate the law itself to the lesson the teachers give. When the sacrifices of the Old Testament are considered to be rooted in the impulses of men and not in the necessities of God, we shall understand that the altar of incense is of better material than the altar of burnt offering. It may be that the conception will affect our exposition of the sacrifice of Jesus; if so, the exposition probably needed to be changed. The early church roused itself from the meditations of the cross to enjoy communion with a living Savior. Then they scattered over the world to preach. Their message ever had in it the proclamation of a suffering Christ for the sinner and a living Christ for the saint. A thousand times they ran from the cross to the tomb, and then ran again to bring the disciples word. Since their day the church has huddled too close about the cross.
The critical theory relieves Christian apologetics of its task of defending God and justifying many Old Testament acts and standards.

After all it seems peculiar that it should ever be necessary to vindicate the ways of God to men. But the old way of thinking about the Bible made it necessary, and it was anything but a poet's task. How countless have been the sermons delivered, and how large the libraries heaped up, to justify the commands of God! And how constantly has the disappointed world risen up and gone away feeling that the problem was still unsolved! It was said by one whose word never failed that if he were lifted up he would draw all men unto himself. But we have lifted him up with the sins of the Old Testament clinging to him, who knew no sin; with the curses of the psalms drowning his prayer for his murderers, with the blood of the Canaanites staining his own, with the vagaries of nomad law annulling the pure word of Christ, with the face of the Master masked by the veil that obscured the view of ancient Israel. And the multitude that ought to be attracted to him has asked in perplexity, "Can this be the Christ?"
The critical theory saves the Bible from abuse as a chamber of proof texts and robs the schismatic of his stock in trade.

One of the curses of Christendom has been the misunderstanding and abuse of the Bible. We have regarded it as bearing a message to every individual of every age in its every phrase, and it has thereby become an enigma to multitudes. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable" for many things; it is not the Bible's fault that we have robbed it of its profit. It is the record of a process whose end was the thing of importance. Much of the Bible itself is only scaffolding, and we have marred the temple by maintaining the scaffold. An understanding of the character of the Bible will save us from seizing upon every sentence as of valid significance for every occasion. The man who preached against the prevalent style of hairdressing from the text, "Topknot come down" (Mat. 24.17), was no more at fault than have been millions in their application of Bible statements. The Christian world is united upon the things that are vital; it is cut into unknown fragments by the practice of exalting private interpretations of wayside texts into the fundamentals of the gospel.
A Group of Witnesses.
A Group of Witnesses.

"The Hebrews were a Semitic people, and shared with their neighbors many similar laws, institutions, customs, and beliefs; in art, also, as the excavations have especially shown, they borrowed much from the civilizations about them: but religiously, there was a great gulf fixed, which, if possible, has been widened rather than narrowed by the new knowledge which has come to us......Archaeology demonstrates, shows us more clearly than we could see before, that though the religion of Israel was built upon the same material foundation as those of other Semitic peoples, it rose immeasurably above them; it assumed, as it developed, a unique character, and in the hands of its inspired teachers became the expression of great spiritual realities such as has been without parallel in any other nation of the earth." S. A. Cooke, The Religion of Ancient Palestine, page 90.

"The gradual self-revelation of God to man, while normally working upon the principle of Evolution, or, in other words, while adapted to man's capacity for apprehension, reaches, at certain times a stage at which the ordinary course of that Revelation is suspended, and an extraordinary step is taken, whereby man is placed within reach of a new conception and a new knowledge of God, to which it would have been impossible for him under normal circumstances to attain." W. O. W. Oesterley, The Development of Monotheism in Israel, published in the "Expositor" for August, 1902, pages 93-105; quoted from pages 94 and 95.

"So long as criticism recognizes the presence and operation of God in the history of the Hebrew people, it may change our opinion of the mode, but it does not affect our conviction of the fact of a Divine revelation." A. E. Garvie, in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 5, 328a.

"We have come to see that revelation was a process in history and in experience; working at first slowly and almost imperceptibly because its sphere
was coextensive with a whole nation, but, as it moved to higher levels, selecting as its vehicle the choicer spirits, through whose experience it might be apprehended and then conveyed to the people as a whole. . . . . This [record] we have in the Bible, which is not the revelation itself but its record, made by men who under the Spirit's impulse created a literature which adequately preserved what it was essential for us to know." A.S. Peake, The Bible: its Origin, its Significance, and its Abiding Worth, introduction, viii, ix.

"It was only after the freshness and initial force of the Reformation had spent itself, and it was when against the Roman attack the Lutheran and Reformed Churches were driven to seek for infallible authority to pit against the infallible Church that they took the backward step of asserting infallible Scripture." Idem, page 74.

"The Bible has irretrievably lost the place once accorded to it by the consent of Christendom, and this is coming to be realized by an ever increasing number. . . . . It is the writer's conviction that while a position injudiciously selected can be no longer held, the defenders of the Bible have been driven to ground from which they will not easily be dislodged. If some of the claims made for it cannot be sustained, other claims, and those the most vital, may be substantiated." Idem, introduction, vii.

"We realize how tremendous must have been the power of a religion, which could take up and transform materials so unpromising into the finest and mightiest creation that pre-Christian religion ever achieved. It attests the action of a Divine power which alone was adequate to a task so great. If we put the question, Why did the religion of this people alone scale those dazzling and dizzy heights, while the religions of kindred peoples remained in stagnant indolence in the valley below? the only answer can be that the Spirit of God was at work in it to an altogether unparalleled degree." Idem, page 229.
"The universal existence of religion also testifies to a nature made for God and thus to the nature of Him who formed a creature capable of communion with Him. Yet it is but a troubled and distorted reflection of God that we see in the mirror of man's religions. If God was to be known as He truly is and not as man darkly conceives Him to be, it was necessary that God Himself should take action; and He revealed Himself as we have seen through history and experience." Idem, page 288.

"We are no longer tempted to impose unnatural meanings upon its [the Old Testament's] words, to fill with Christian content its inferior teaching, to discern a Christian significance in its crude and repulsive rites. Scarcely even by stretching them on the rack could our predecessors extort a Christian confession from them. And we take them for what they are, the utterances of those who stood at a position we have largely left behind. For us they are precious landmarks helping us to retrace the path by which the race has risen. We discern how the Spirit has moulded His reluctant material into growing conformity with His ideal. Hence we expect to find imperfections in full measure, low thoughts of God, low ideals of conduct, false views of life. What is really remarkable to those who come to the Old Testament thus prepared, is that this element should be so much less than we might have expected." Idem, page 377.

"Instead of arguing, as some would do, that these lower stages discred the higher, I would rather argue, referring to the point I have already indicated, that they are the lowly prophecies of the ultimate achievement. The important thing is not the form which the instincts assumed, or the crude explanations which were given of the phenomena, but the fact that the instincts were there and forced themselves into expression. The devout Christian, looking back over that long history in which God did not leave Himself without witness, as he ponders with tender respect even the darkest and most repulsive features of primitive religion, reverently recognizes that even here the Spirit of God was at work, coaxing, one might almost say, the tiny spark of spiritual life into a clearer and a brighter flame." Idem, page 387.
"Not untruly has it been said that in matters of religion the Hebrews appear among the peoples of antiquity as a sober man among drunkards. And their religious development was guided and inspired by a series of teachers who stand alone in the history of our race." —Idem, pages 488 and 489.

"While it seems to me that we find abundant evidences of development in the Old Testament, from very simple concrete representations of God to those which are profoundly spiritual, I am not able to account for this development on naturalistic principles. In it I see God at all times and everywhere coworking with human instruments until the fulness of times should come. The messages which we find in the Old Testament seem all the more divine to me because of the great gulf which is fixed between primitive Semitic conceptions of God and the noble, spiritual views of Him set forth under divine illumination by an Isaiah. The great prophet is a product of many ages of divine revelation and teaching, and cannot be accounted for as a natural representative of his age and people." —S..I. Curtiss, Primitive Semitic Religion To-day, page 14.

"When we pass from the pure lofty teaching of our Lord and such great expounders of Christian truth as Paul and John into the Old Testament, we feel as if we had gone from a brilliantly lighted room into a darkened chamber; but if we try a different process, namely, to read a fair impartial account of ancient Canaanite religion and then turn to even the earlier and cruder parts of the Hebrew history, we find that the light is clear and strong compared with the dense darkness of the world outside. But that is no reason why we should think of Moses, Amos, Isaiah, and other pioneers as perfect theologians of the Anglican, Presbyterian, or any other modern type. All through this book there has been with me the twofold conviction that there is something creative, that is, divine, in the movement of Hebrew history and the growth of Israelite religion; and that this divine element is most clearly seen when we, as a result of a critical examination of the documents, watch this distinctive faith fighting its way through all kinds of hindering circumstances and natural entanglements." —W.G. Jordan, Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought, page 157.
"We compare these various accounts, psalms and historical narratives, and find in one a something which seizes hold of us, moves us powerfully, elevates us, inspires us. We look for this same element in the other, but it is wholly lacking. Instead, there is a dulness, a flatness, an insipidity, which disappoints, and at times almost disgusts. Why this difference? There is but one possible answer. This writing, or series of writings, is human, only human. The other is human, to be sure, but also divine. The evidence is direct; it is absolutely conclusive and must be convincing." W. R. Harper, comparing Assyrian and Babylonian writings with Hebrew Scriptures. Quoted by H. A. Johnston in Bible Criticism and the Average Man, page 71.

"Revelation was progressive. It did not begin by furnishing the people with highly elaborated laws, irrelevant to their situation; nor did it end by leaving them four hundred years without a divine witness. It gave them what they needed and could understand. It taught them what they could bear. It had many things to say, but it was in no haste to say them; it said them here a little and there a little. It led them as a father leads his child. On the part of the great interpreters of God's will and purpose, the appreciation of truth grew. In the words of a French scholar [Alfred Loisy, Études Bibliques]: 'God took men where they were, in order to lift them _progressively_ to Himself.'" J. B. McFadyen, Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church, pages 75 and 76.

"This development of Israel's religion across the centuries is a thing not less admirable, not less worthy of God, not less visibly supernatural, than the idea of a revelation complete from the beginning and which would not have been understood before the end of the captivity; of an immobile legislation written in the desert and observed only in the time of the second temple." _Idem_, pages 252 and 253; quoted from "a Roman Catholic scholar."

"To-day one of the most vital issues before the Christian Church is whether it will follow the guidance of its Founder and accept the testimony of the Bible itself or cling blindly to the traditions of the rabbis and Church Fathers." C. F. Kent, The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament, page 15.
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The following books have been read within the past year in the study of which this thesis is the outgrowth.

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