**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 1; CHAPTER 3. FALLACIES OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM**

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The errors of the higher criticism of which I shall write pertain to its very substance. Those of a secondary character the limits of my space forbid me to consider. My discussion might be greatly expanded by additional masses of illustrative material, and hence I close it with a list of books which I recommend to persons who may wish to pursue the subject further.

**DEFINITION OF "THE HIGHER CRITICISM."**

As an introduction to the fundamental fallacies of the higher criticism, let me state what the higher criticism is, and then what the higher critics tell us they have achieved.

The name "the higher criticism" was coined by Eichhorn, who lived from 1752 to 1827. Zenos, ("The Elements of the Higher Criticism") after careful consideration, adopts the definition of the name given by its author: "The discovery and verification of the facts regarding the origin, form and value of literary productions upon the basis of their internal characters." The higher critics are not blind to some other sources of argument. They refer to history where they can gain any polemic advantage by doing so. The background of the entire picture which they bring to us is the assumption that the hypothesis of evolution is true. But after all their chief appeal is to the supposed evidence of the documents themselves.

Other names for the movement have been sought. It has been called the "historic view," on the assumption that it represents the real history of the Hebrew people as it must have unfolded itself by the orderly processes of human evolution. But, as the higher critics contradict the testimony of all the Hebrew historic documents which profess to be early, their theory might better be called the "unhistoric view." The higher criticism has sometimes been called the "documentary hypothesis." But as all schools of criticism and all doctrines of inspiration are equally hospitable to the supposition that the biblical writers may have consulted documents, and may have quoted them, the higher criticism has no special right to this title. We must fall back, therefore, upon the name "the higher criticism" as the very best at our disposal, and upon the definition of it as chiefly an inspection of literary productions in order to ascertain their dates, their authors, and their value, as they themselves, interpreted in the light of the hypothesis of evolution, may yield the evidence.

**"ASSURED RESULTS" OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.**

I turn now to ask what the higher critics profess to have found out by this method of study. The "assured results" on which they congratulate themselves are stated variously. In this country and England they commonly assume a form less radical than that given them in Germany, though sufficiently startling and destructive to arouse vigorous protest and a vigorous demand for the evidences, which, as we shall see, have not been produced and cannot be produced. The less startling form of the "assured results" usually announced in England and America may be owing to the brighter light of Christianity in these countries. Yet it should be noticed that there are higher critics in this country and England who go beyond the principal German representatives of the school in their zeal for the dethronement of the Old Testament and the New, in so far as these holy books are presented to the world as the very Word of God, as a special revelation from heaven.

The following statement from Zenos (Page 205) may serve to introduce us to the more moderate form of the "assured results" reached by the higher critics. It is concerning the analysis of the Pentateuch, or rather of the Hexateuch, the Book of Joshua being included in the survey. "The Hexateuch is a composite work whose origin and history may be traced in four distinct stages: (1) A writer designated as 'J'. Jahvist, or Jehovist, or Judean prophetic historian, composed a history of the people of Israel about 800 B.C. (2) A writer designated as 'E'. Elohist, or Ephraemite prophetic historian, wrote a similar work some fifty years later, or about 750 B.C. These two were used separately for a time, but were fused together into 'JE' by a redactor [an editor], at the end of the seventh century. (3) A writer of different character wrote a book constituting the main portion of our present Deuteronomy during the reign of Josiah, or a short time before 621 B.C. This writer is designated as 'D'. To his work were added an introduction and an appendix, and with these accretions it was united with 'JE' by a second redactor, constituting 'JED'. (4) Contemporaneously with Ezekiel the ritual law began to be reduced to writing. It first appeared in three parallel forms. These were codified by Ezra not very much earlier than 444 B.C., and between that date and 280 B.C. it was joined with 'JED' by a final redactor. Thus no less than nine or ten men were engaged in the production of the Hexateuch in its present form, and each one can be distinguished from the rest by his vocabulary and style and his religious point of view."

Such is the analysis of the Pentateuch as usually stated in this country. But in Germany and Holland its chief representatives carry the division of labor much further. Wellhausen distributes the total task among twenty-two writers, and Kuenen among eighteen. Many others resolve each individual writer into a school of writers, and thus multiply the numbers enormously. There is no agreement among the higher critics concerning this analysis, and therefore the cautious learner may well wait till those who represent the theory tell him just what it is they desire him to learn.

While some of the "assured results" are thus in doubt, certain things are matters of general agreement. Moses wrote little or nothing, if he ever existed. A large part of the Hexateuch consists of unhistorical legends. We may grant that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael and Esau existed, or we may deny this. In either case, what is recorded of them is chiefly myth. These denials of the truth of the written records follow as matters of course from the late dating of the books, and the assumption that the writers could set down only the national tradition. They may have worked in part as collectors of written stories to be found here and there; but, if so, these written stories were not ancient, and they were diluted by stories transmitted orally. These fragments, whether written or oral, must have followed the general law of national traditions, and have presented a mixture of legendary chaff, with here and there a grain of historic truth to be sifted out by careful winnowing.

Thus far of the Hexateuch.

The Psalms are so full of references to the Hexateuch that they must have been written after it, and hence after the captivity, perhaps beginning about 400 B.C. David may possibly have written one or two of them, but probably he wrote none, and the strong conviction of the Hebrew people that he was their greatest hymn-writer was a total mistake.

These revolutionary processes are carried into the New Testament, and that also is found to be largely untrustworthy as history, as doctrine, and as ethics, though a very good book, since it gives expression to high ideals, and thus ministers to the spiritual life. It may well have influence, but it can have no divine authority. The Christian reader should consider carefully this invasion of the New Testament by the higher criticism. So long as the movement was confined to the Old Testament many good men looked on with indifference, not reflecting that the Bible, though containing "many parts" by many writers, and though recording a progressive revelation, is, after all, one book. But the limits of the Old Testament have long since been overpassed by the higher critics, and it is demanded of us that we abandon the immemorial teaching of the church concerning the entire volume. The picture of Christ which the New Testament sets before us is in many respects mistaken. The doctrines of primitive Christianity which it states and defends were well enough for the time, but have no value for us today except as they commend themselves to our independent judgment. Its moral precepts are fallible, and we should accept them or reject them freely, in accordance with the greater light of the twentieth century. Even Christ could err concerning ethical questions, and neither His commandments nor His example need constrain us.

The foregoing may serve as an introductory sketch, all too brief, of the higher criticism, and as a basis of the discussion of its fallacies, now immediately to follow.

**FIRST FALLACY: THE ANALYSIS OF THE PENTATEUCH.**

**I.** The first fallacy that I shall bring forward is its analysis of the Pentateuch.

**1.** We cannot fail to observe that these various documents and their various authors and editors are only imagined. As Green ("Moses and His Recent Critics," pages 104, 105) has said, "There is no evidence of the existence of these documents and redactors, and no pretense of any, apart from the critical tests which have determined the analysis. All tradition and all historical testimony as to the origin of the Pentateuch are against them. The burden of proof is wholly upon the critics. And this proof should be clear and convincing in proportion to the gravity and the revolutionary character of the consequences which it is proposed to base upon it."

**2.** Moreover, we know what can be done, or rather what cannot be done, in the analysis of composite literary productions. Some of the plays of Shakespeare are called his "mixed plays," because it is known that he collaborated with another author in their production. The very keenest critics have sought to separate his part in these plays from the rest, but they confess that the result is uncertainty and dissatisfaction. Coleridge professed to distinguish the passages contributed by Shakespeare by a process of feeling, but Macaulay pronounced this claim to be nonsense, and the entire effort, whether made by the analysis of phraseology and style, or by esthetic perceptions, is an admitted failure. And this in spite of the fact that the style of Shakespeare is one of the most peculiar and inimitable. The Anglican Prayer Book is another composite production which the higher critics have often been invited to analyze and distribute to its various sources. Some of the authors of these sources lived centuries apart. They are now well known from the studies of historians. But the Prayer Book itself does not reveal one of them, though its various vocabularies and styles have been carefully interrogated. Now if the analysis of the Pentateuch can lead to such certainties, why should not the analysis of Shakespeare and the Prayer Book do as much? How can men accomplish in a foreign language what they cannot accomplish in their own? How can they accomplish in a dead language what they cannot accomplish in a living language? How can they distinguish ten or eighteen or twenty-two collaborators in a small literary production, when they cannot distinguish two? These questions have been asked many times, but the higher critics have given no answer whatever, preferring the safety of a learned silence; "The oracles are dumb."

**3.** Much has been made of differences of vocabulary in the Pentateuch, and elaborate lists of words have been assigned to each of the supposed authors. But these distinctions fade away when subjected to careful scrutiny, and Driver admits that "the phraseological criteria are slight." Orr, ("The Problem of the Old Testament," page 230.) who quotes this testimony, adds, "They are slight, in fact, to a degree of tenuity that often makes the recital of them appear like trifling."

**SECOND FALLACY: THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION APPLIED TO LITERATURE AND RELIGION.**

**II.** A second fundamental fallacy of the higher criticism is its dependence on the theory of evolution as the explanation of the history of literature and of religion. The progress of the higher criticism towards its present state has been rapid and assured since Vatke ("Die Biblische Theologic Wissenschaftlich Dargestellt") discovered in the Hegelian philosophy of evolution a means of biblical criticism. The Spencerian philosophy of evolution, aided and reinforced by Darwinism, has added greatly to the confidence of the higher critics. As Vatke, one of the earlier members of the school, made the hypothesis of evolution the guiding presupposition of his critical work, so today does Professor Jordan, ("Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought," T. and T. Clark, 1909.) the very latest representative of the higher criticism. "The nineteenth century," he declares, "has applied to the history of the documents of the Hebrew people its own magic word, evolution. The thought represented by that popular word has been found to have a real meaning in our investigations regarding the religious life and the theological beliefs of Israel." Thus, were there no hypothesis of evolution, there would be no higher criticism. The "assured results" of the higher criticism have been gained, after all, not by an inductive study of the biblical books to ascertain if they present a great variety of styles and vocabularies and religious points of view. They have been attained by assuming that the hypothesis of evolution is true, and that the religion of Israel must have unfolded itself by a process of natural evolution. They have been attained by an interested cross-examination of the biblical books to constrain them to admit the hypothesis of evolution. The imagination has played a large part in the process, and the so-called evidences upon which the "assured results" rest are largely imaginary.

But the hypothesis of evolution, when applied to the history of literature, is a fallacy, leaving us utterly unable to account for Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare, the greatest poets of the world, yet all of them writing in the dawn of the great literatures of the world. It is a fallacy when applied to the history of religion, leaving us utterly unable to account for Abraham and Moses and Christ, and requiring us to deny that they could have been such men as the Bible declares them to have been. The hypothesis is a fallacy when applied to the history of the human race in general. Our race has made progress under the influence of supernatural revelation; but progress under the influence of supernatural revelation is one thing, and evolution is another. Buckle ("History of Civilization in England.") undertook to account for history by a thorough-going application of the hypothesis of evolution to its problems; but no historian today believes that he succeeded in his effort, and his work is universally regarded as a brilliant curiosity. The types of evolution advocated by different higher critics are widely different from one another, varying from the pure naturalism of Wellhausen to the recognition of some feeble rays of supernatural revelation; but the hypothesis of evolution in any form, when applied to human history, blinds us and renders us incapable of beholding the glory of God in its more signal manifestations.

**THIRD FALLACY: THE BIBLE A NATURAL BOOK.**

**III.** A third fallacy of the higher critics is the doctrine concerning the Scriptures which they teach. If a consistent hypothesis of evolution is made the basis of our religious thinking, the Bible will be regarded as only a product of human nature working in the field of religious literature. It will be merely a natural book. If there are higher critics who recoil from this application of the hypothesis of evolution and who seek to modify it by recognizing some special evidences of the divine in the Bible, the inspiration of which they speak rises but little higher than the providential guidance of the writers. The church doctrine of the full inspiration of the Bible is almost never held by the higher critics of any class, even of the more believing. Here and there we may discover one and another who try to save some fragments of the church doctrine, but they are few and far between, and the salvage to which they cling is so small and poor that it is scarcely worth-while. Throughout their ranks the storm of opposition to the supernatural in all its forms is so fierce as to leave little place for the faith of the church that the Bible is the very Word of God to man. But the fallacy of this denial is evident to every believer who reads the Bible with an open mind. He knows by an immediate consciousness that it is the product of the Holy Spirit. As the sheep know the voice of the shepherd, so the mature Christian knows that the Bible speaks with a divine voice. On this ground every Christian can test the value of the higher criticism for himself. The Bible manifests itself to the spiritual perception of the Christian as in the fullest sense human, and in the fullest sense divine. This is true of the Old Testament, as well as of the New.

**FOURTH FALLACY: THE MIRACLES DENIED.**

**IV.** Yet another fallacy of the higher critics is found in their teachings concerning the biblical miracles. If the hypothesis of evolution is applied to the Scriptures consistently, it will lead us to deny all the miracles which they record. But if applied timidly and waveringly, as it is by some of the English and American higher critics, it will lead us to deny a large part of the miracles, and to inject as much of the natural as is any way possible into the rest. We shall strain out as much of the gnat of the supernatural as we can, and swallow as much of the camel of evolution as we can. We shall probably reject all the miracles of the Old Testament, explaining some of them as popular legends, and others as coincidences. In the New Testament we shall pick and choose, and no two of us will agree concerning those to be rejected and those to be accepted. If the higher criticism shall be adopted as the doctrine of the church, believers will be left in a distressing state of doubt and uncertainty concerning the narratives of the four Gospels, and unbelievers will scoff and mock. A theory which leads to such wanderings of thought regarding the supernatural in the Scriptures must be fallacious. God is not a God of confusion.

Among the higher critics who accept some of the miracles there is a notable desire to discredit the virgin birth of our Lord, and their treatment of this event presents a good example of the fallacies of reasoning by means of which they would abolish many of the other miracles. One feature of their argument may suffice as an exhibition of all. It is the search for parallels in the pagan mythologies. There are many instances in the pagan stories of the birth of men from human mothers and divine fathers, and the higher critics would create the impression that the writers who record the birth of Christ were influenced by these fables to emulate them, and thus to secure for Him the honor of a celestial paternity. It turns out, however, that these pagan fables do not in any case present to us a virgin mother; the child is always the product of commerce with a god who assumes a human form for the purpose. The despair of the higher critics in this hunt for events of the same kind is well illustrated by Cheyne, ("Bible Problems," page 86.) who cites the record of the Babylonian king Sargon, about 3,800 B.C. This monarch represents himself as having "been born of a poor mother in secret, and as not knowing his father." There have been many millions of such instances, but we do not think of the mothers as virgins. Nor does the Babylonian story affirm that the mother of Sargon was a virgin, or even that his father was a god. It is plain that Sargon did not intend to claim a supernatural origin, for, after saying that he "did not know his father," he adds that "the brother of his father lived in the mountains." It was a case like multitudes of others in which children, early orphaned, have not known their fathers, but have known the relations of their fathers. This statement of Sargon I quote from a translation of it made by Cheyne himself in the "Encyclopedia Biblica." He continues, "There is reason to suspect that something similar was originally said by the Israelites of Moses." To substantiate this he adds, "See Encyclopedia Biblica, 'Moses,' section 3 with note 4." On turning to this reference the reader finds that the article was written by Cheyne himself, and that it contains no evidence whatever.

**FIFTH FALLACY: THE TESTIMONY OF ARCHAEOLOGY DENIED.**

**V.** The limitation of the field of research as far as possible to the biblical books as literary productions has rendered many of the higher critics reluctant to admit the new light derived from archaeology. This is granted by Cheyne. ("Bible Problems," page 142.) "I have no wish to deny," he says, "that the so-called 'higher critics' in the past were as a rule suspicious of Assyriology as a young, and, as they thought, too self-assertive science, and that many of those who now recognize its contributions to knowledge are somewhat too mechanical in the use of it, and too skeptical as to the influence of Babylonian culture in relatively early times in Syria, Palestine and even Arabia." This grudging recognition of the testimony of archaeology may be observed in several details.

**1.** It was said that the Hexateuch must have been formed chiefly by the gathering up of oral traditions, because it is not to be supposed that the early Hebrews possessed the art of writing and of keeping records. But the entire progress of archaeological study refutes this. In particular the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets has shown that writing in cuneiform characters and in the Assyrio-Babylonian language was common to the entire biblical world long before the exodus. The discovery was made by Egyptian peasants in 1887. There are more than three hundred tablets, which came from various lands, including Babylonia and Palestine. Other finds have added their testimony to the fact that writing and the preservation of records were the peculiar passions of the ancient civilized world. Under the constraint of the overwhelming evidences, Professor Jordan writes as follows: "The question as to the age of writing never played a great part in the discussion." He falls back on the supposition that the nomadic life of the early Hebrews would prevent them from acquiring the art of writing. He treats us to such reasoning as the following: "If the fact that writing is very old is such a powerful argument when taken alone, it might enable you to prove that Alfred the Great wrote Shakespeare's plays."

**2.** It was easy to treat Abraham as a mythical figure when the early records of Babylonia were but little known. The entire coloring of those chapters of Genesis which refer to Mesopotamia could be regarded as the product of the imagination. This is no longer the case. Thus Clay, ("Light on the Old Testament from Babel." 1907. Clay is Assistant Professor and Assistant Curator of the Babylonian Section, Department of Archaeology, in the University of Pennsylvania.) writing of Genesis 14, says: "The theory of the late origin of all the Hebrew Scriptures prompted the critics to declare this narrative to be a pure invention of a later Hebrew writer. The patriarchs were relegated to the region of myth and legend. Abraham was made a fictitious father of the Hebrews. Even the political situation was declared to be inconsistent with fact. Weighing carefully the position taken by the critics in the light of what has been revealed through the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions, we find that the very foundations upon which their theories rest, with reference to the points that could be tested, totally disappear. The truth is, that wherever any light has been thrown upon the subject through excavations, their hypotheses have invariably been found wanting." But the higher critics are

still reluctant to admit this new light. Thus Kent ("Biblical World", Dec 1906) says, "The primary value of these stories is didactic and religious, rather than historical."

**3.** The books of Joshua and Judges have been regarded by the higher critics as unhistorical on the ground that their portraiture of the political, religious, and social condition of Palestine in the thirteenth century B.C. is incredible. This cannot be said any longer, for the recent excavations in Palestine have shown us a land exactly like that of these books. The portraiture is so precise, and is drawn out in so many minute lineaments, that it cannot be the product of oral tradition floating down through a thousand years. In what details the accuracy of the biblical picture of early Palestine is exhibited may be seen perhaps best in the excavations by Macalister ("Bible Side-Lights from the Mound of Gezer") at Gezer. Here again there are absolutely no discrepancies between the Land and the Book, for the Land lifts up a thousand voices to testify that the Book is history and not legend.

**4.** It was held by the higher critics that the legislation which we call Mosaic could not have been produced by Moses, since his age was too early for such codes. This reasoning was completely negatived by the discovery of the code of Hammurabi, the Amraphel (On this matter see any dictionary of the Bible, art. "Amraphel") of Genesis 14. This code is very different from that of Moses; it is more systematic; and it is at least seven hundred years earlier than the Mosaic legislation.

In short, from the origin of the higher criticism till this present time the discoveries in the field of archaeology have given it a succession of serious blows. The higher critics were shocked when the passion of the ancient world for writing and the preservation of documents was discovered. They were shocked when primitive Babylonia appeared as the land of Abraham. They were shocked when early Palestine appeared as the land of Joshua and the Judges. They were shocked when Amraphel came back from the grave as a real historical character, bearing his code of laws. They were shocked when the stele of the Pharaoh of the exodus was read, and it was proved that he knew a people called Israel, that they had no settled place of abode, that they were "without grain" for food, and that in these particulars they were quite as they are represented by the Scriptures to have been when they had fled from Egypt into the wilderness. (The higher critics usually slur over this remarkable inscription, and give us neither an accurate translation nor a natural interpretation of it. I have, therefore, special pleasure in quoting the following from Driver, "Authority and Archaeology," page 61: "Whereas the other places named in the inscription all have the determinative for 'country,' Ysiraal has the determinative for 'men': it follows that the reference is not to the land of Israel, but to Israel as a tribe or people, whether migratory, or on the march." Thus this distinguished higher critic sanctions the view of the record which I have adopted. He represents Maspero and Naville as doing the same.) The embarrassment created by these discoveries is manifest in many of the recent writings of the higher critics, in which, however, they still cling heroically to their analysis and their late dating of the Pentateuch and their confidence in the hypothesis of evolution as the key of all history.

**SIXTH FALLACY: THE PSALMS WRITTEN AFTER THE EXILE.**

**VI.** The Psalms are usually dated by the higher critics after the exile. The great majority of the higher critics are agreed here, and tell us that these varied and touching and magnificent lyrics of religious experience all come to us from a period later than 450 B.C. A few of the critics admit an earlier origin of three or four of them, but they do this waveringly, grudgingly, and against the general consensus of opinion among their fellows. In the Bible a very large number of the Psalms are ascribed to David, and these, with a few insignificant and doubtful exceptions, are denied to him and brought down, like the rest, to the age of the second temple. This leads me to the following observations:

**1.** Who wrote the Psalms? Here the higher critics have no answer. Of the period from 400 to 175 B.C. we are in almost total ignorance. Josephus knows almost nothing about it, nor has any other writer told us more. Yet, according to the theory, it was precisely in these centuries of silence, when the Jews had no great writers, that they produced this magnificent outburst of sacred song.

**2.** This is the more remarkable when we consider the well known men to whom the theory denies the authorship of any of the Psalms. The list includes such names as Moses, David, Samuel, Nathan, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the long list of pre-exilic prophets. We are asked to believe that these men composed no Psalms, and that the entire collection was contributed by men so obscure that they have left no single name by which we can identify them with their work.

**3.** This will appear still more extraordinary if we consider the times in which, it is said, no Psalms were produced, and contrast them with the times in which all of them were produced. The times in which none were produced were the great times, the times of growth, of mental ferment, of conquest, of imperial expansion, of disaster, and of recovery. The times in which none were produced were the times of the splendid temple of Solomon, with its splendid worship. The times in which none were produced were the heroic times of Elijah and Elisha, when the people of Jehovah struggled for their existence against the abominations of the pagan gods. On the other hand, the times which actually produced them were the times of growing legalism, of obscurity, and of inferior abilities. All this is incredible. We could believe it only if we first came to believe that the Psalms are works of slight literary and religious value. This is actually done by Wellhausen, who says, (Quoted by Orr, "The Problem of the Old Testament," page 435.) "They certainly are to the smallest extent original, and are for the most part imitations which illustrate the saying about much writing." The Psalms are not all of an equally high degree of excellence, and there are a few of them which might give some faint color of justice to this depreciation of the entire collection. But as a whole they are exactly the reverse of this picture. Furthermore, they contain absolutely no legalism, but are as free from it as are the Sermon on the Mount and the Pauline epistles. Yet further, the writers stand out as personalities, and they must have left a deep impression upon their fellows. Finally, they were full of the fire of genius kindled by the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for us to attribute the Psalms to the unknown mediocrities of the period which followed the restoration.

**4.** Very many of the Psalms plainly appear to be ancient. They sing of early events, and have no trace of allusion to the age which is said to have produced them.

**5.** The large number of Psalms attributed to David have attracted the special attention of the higher critics. They are denied to him on various grounds. He was a wicked man, and hence incapable of writing these praises to the God of righteousness. He was an iron warrior and statesman, and hence not gifted with the emotions found in these productions. He was so busy with the cares of conquest and administration that he had no leisure for literary work. Finally, his conception of God was utterly different from that which moved the psalmists.

The larger part of this catalogue of inabilities is manifestly erroneous. David, with some glaring faults, and with a single enormous crime, for which he was profoundly penitent, was one of the noblest of men. He was indeed an iron warrior and statesman, but also one of the most emotional of all great historic characters. He was busy, but busy men not seldom find relief in literary occupations, as Washington, during the Revolutionary War, poured forth a continual tide of letters, and as Caesar, Marcus Aurelius, and Gladstone, while burdened with the cares of empire, composed immortal books. The conception of God with which David began his career was indeed narrow (1. Sam. 26:19). But did he learn nothing in all his later experiences, and his associations with holy priests and prophets? He was certainly teachable: did God fail to make use of him in further revealing Himself to His people? To deny these Psalms to David on the ground of his limited views of God in his early life, is this not to deny that God made successive revelations of Himself wherever He found suitable channels? If, further, we consider the unquestioned skill of David in the music of his nation and his age (1. Sam. 16:14-25), this will constitute a presupposition in favor of his interest in sacred song. If, finally, we consider his personal career of danger and deliverance, this will appear as the natural means of awakening in him the spirit of varied religious poetry. His times were much like the Elizabethan period, which ministered unexampled stimulus to the English mind.

From all this we may turn to the singular verdict of Professor Jordan: "If a man says he cannot see why David could not have written Psalms 51 and 139, you are compelled to reply as politely as possible that if he did write them then any man can write anything." So also we may say, "as politely as possible," that if Shakespeare, with his "small Latin and less Greek," did write his incomparable dramas, "then any man can write anything''; that if Dickens, with his mere elementary education, did write his great novels, "then any man can write anything"; and that if Lincoln, who had no early schooling, did write his Gettysburg address, "then any man can write anything."

**SEVENTH FALLACY: DEUTERONOMY NOT WRITTEN BY MOSES.**

**VII.** One of the fixed points of the higher criticism is its theory of the origin of Deuteronomy. In 1. Kings 22 we have the history of the finding of the book of the law in the temple, which was being repaired. Now the higher critics present this finding, not as the discovery of an ancient document, but as the finding of an entirely new document, which had been concealed in the temple in order that it might be found, might be accepted as the production of Moses, and might produce an effect by its assumed authorship. It is not supposed for a moment that the writer innocently chose the fictitious dress of Mosaic authorship for merely literary purposes. On the contrary, it is steadfastly maintained that he intended to deceive, and that others were with him in the plot to deceive. This statement of the case leads me to the following reflections:

**1.** According to the theory, this was an instance of pious fraud. And the fraud must have been prepared deliberately. The manuscript must have been soiled and frayed by special care, for it was at once admitted to be ancient. This supposition of deceit must always repel the Christian believer.

**2.** Our Lord draws from the Book of Deuteronomy all the three texts with which He foils the tempter, Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-14. It must always shock the devout student that his Saviour should select His weapons from an armory founded on deceit.

**3.** This may be called an appeal to ignorant piety, rather than to scholarly criticism. But surely the moral argument should have some weight in scholarly criticism. In the sphere of religion moral impossibilities are as insuperable as physical and mental.

**4.** If we turn to consideration of a literary kind, it is to be observed that the higher criticism runs counter here to the statement of the book itself that Moses was its author.

**5.** It runs counter to the narrative of the finding of the book, and turns the finding of an ancient book into the forgery of a new book.

**6.** It runs counter to the judgment of all the intelligent men of the time who learned of the discovery. They judged the book to have come down from the Mosaic age, and to be from the pen of Moses. We hear of no dissent whatever.

**7.** It seeks support in a variety of reasons, such as style, historical discrepancies, and legal contradictions, all of which prove of little substance when examined fairly.

**EIGHTH FALLACY: THE PRIESTLY LEGISLATION NOT ENACTED UNTIL THE EXILE.**

**VIII.** Another case of forgery is found in the origin of the priestly legislation, if we are to believe the higher critics. This legislation is contained in a large number of passages scattered through Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It has to do chiefly with the tabernacle and its worship, with the duties of the priests and Levites, and with the relations of the people to the institutions of religion. It is attributed to Moses in scores of places. It has a strong coloring of the Mosaic age and of the wilderness life. It affirms the existence of the tabernacle, with an orderly administration of the ritual services. But this is all imagined, for the legislation is a late production. Before the exile there were temple services and a priesthood, with certain regulations concerning them, either oral or written, and use was made of this tradition; but as a whole the legislation was enacted by such men as Ezekiel and Ezra during and immediately after the exile, or about 444 B.C. The name of Moses, the fiction of a tabernacle, and the general coloring of the Mosaic age, were given it in order to render it authoritative and to secure the ready obedience of the nation. But now:

**1.** The moral objection here is insuperable. The supposition of forgery, and of forgery so cunning, so elaborate, and so minute, is abhorrent. If the forgery had been invented and executed by wicked men to promote some scheme of selfishness, it would have been less odious. But when it is presented to us as the expedient of holy men, for the advancement of the religion of the God of righteousness, which afterwards blossomed out into Christianity, we must revolt.

**2.** The theory gives us a portraiture of such men as Ezekiel and Ezra which is utterly alien from all that we know of them. The expedient might be worthy of the prophets of Baal or of Chemosh; it was certainly not worthy of the prophets of Jehovah, and we dishonor them when we attribute it to them and place them upon a low plane of craft and cunning of which the records concerning them are utterly ignorant.

**3.** The people who returned from the exile were among the most intelligent and enterprising of the nation, else they would not have returned, and they would not have been deceived by the sudden appearance of Mosaic laws forged for the occasion and never before heard of.

**4.** Many of the regulations of this legislation are drastic. It subjected the priests and Levites to a rule which must have been irksome in the extreme, and it would not have been lightly accepted. We may be certain that if it had been a new thing fraudulently ascribed to Moses, these men would have detected the deceit, and would have refused to be bound by it. But we do not hear of any revolt, or even of any criticism.

Such are some of the fundamental fallacies of the higher criticism. They constitute an array of impossibilities. I have stated them in their more moderate forms, that they may be seen and weighed without the remarkable extravagances which some of their advocates indulge. In the very mildest interpretation which can be given them, they are repugnant to the Christian faith.

**NO MIDDLE GROUND.**

But might we not accept a part of this system of thought without going to any hurtful extreme? Many today are seeking to do this. They present to us two diverse results.

**1.** Some, who stand at the beginning of the tide, find themselves in a position of doubt. If they are laymen, they know not what to believe. If they are ministers, they know not what to believe or to teach. In either case, they have no firm footing, and no Gospel, except a few platitudes which do little harm and little good.

**2.** The majority of those who struggle to stand here find it impossible to do so, and give themselves up to the current. There is intellectual consistency in the lofty church doctrine of inspiration. There may be intellectual consistency in the doctrine that all things have had a natural origin and history, under the general providence of God, as distinguished from His supernatural revelation of Himself through holy men, and especially through His co-equal Son, so that the Bible is as little supernatural as the "Imitation of Christ" or the "Pilgrim's Progress." But there is no position of intellectual consistency between these two, and the great mass of those who try to pause at various points along the descent are swept down with the current. The natural view of the Scriptures is a sea which has been rising higher for three-quarters of a century. Many Christians bid it welcome to pour lightly over the walls which the faith of the church has always set up against it, in the expectation that it will prove a healthful and helpful stream. It is already a cataract, uprooting, destroying, and slaying.