

# THE MOVEMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

## SOME LEADING DATES IN PENTATEUCH CRITICISM.\*

BY A. S. PEAKE, M.A.

Astruc (Jean). *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moÿse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse.*

*Bruxelles, 1753.*

The criticism of the Pentateuch had already reached some results through the observations of Ibn Ezra, Hobbes, Spinoza, Simon, Le Clerc and others. Astruc, however, first pointed out a clue, in the use of the Divine names, Yahweh and Elohim, by which Genesis could be analysed into its constituent documents. His analysis stopped with Ex. 2, and he regarded Moses as the author of the Pentateuch.

Eichhorn (J. G.). *Einleitung in das Alte Testament.*

*Leipzig, 1780—1783.*

The first great critical Introduction to the Old Testament. In Pentateuch criticism the results agreed independently with those of Astruc, and the Pentateuch was assigned to Moses. The work exercised immense influence on opinion in Germany. The author was the friend of Goethe and Herder, and the teacher of Ewald.

Geddes (A.). *The Holy Bible, or the Books accounted sacred by Jews and Christians, faithfully translated from corrected texts of the originals, with various readings, explanatory notes, and critical remarks.*

*London, (Vol. 1.), 1792; (Vol II.), 1797.*

— *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures, corresponding with a new translation of the Bible.*

*London, 1800.*

The author was a very learned Roman Catholic priest. He did not accept the view of Astruc and Eichhorn that Genesis was compiled out of two main documents. He also denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, regarding it as written not earlier than the reign of David, nor later than that of Hezekiah, probably in the reign of Solomon. But he held that it was compiled out of ancient documents or oral traditions, and incorporated the journals of Moses. He thought Joshua was compiled by the authors of the Pentateuch, thus anticipating the later substitution of Hexateuch for Pentateuch.

Vater (J. S.). *Commentar über den Pentateuch.*

*Halle, 1802—1805.*

Vater incorporated Geddes' "Critical Remarks" in his commentary and expanded them. The "Geddes-Vater hypothesis" is a "fragment-hypothesis," making the Pentateuch consist of a large number of disconnected fragments. In detecting evidences for this view Vater displayed a very keen vision, but failed to combine the fragments into larger wholes.

\* A verbatim reprint of the synopsis printed for distribution at the Lecture given by Professor Peake, M.A., at the John Rylands Library, on the 11th November, 1903.

Ilgen (B. D.). *Die Urkunden des Jerusalemischen Tempelarchivs in ihrer Urgestalt, als Beytrag zur Berichtigung der Geschichte der Religion und Politik aus dem Hebräischen mit kritischen und erklärenden Anmerkungen, auch mancherley dazu gehörigen Abhandlungen. Erster Theil.*

*Halle, 1798.*

The work investigates the composition of Genesis. Ilgen thought it was composed of seventeen originally distinct documents. On this side he joins hands with Geddes and Vater. On the other side he admitted the use of the Divine names as a clue to the analysis, and regarded the seventeen documents as the work of possibly not more than three writers. His great advance on Astruc and Eichhorn lay in the discovery that two writers used Elohim. The second part of the work was never published.

De Wette (W. M. L.). *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament.*

*Halle, 1806—1807.*

Small but very brilliant youthful work. Its chief contributions were perhaps the attempt to trace the development of the Pentateuchal legislation by comparing the various codes with the history of religious institutions in Judges, Samuel and Kings, the unfavourable verdict on the historical value of Chronicles, and the dating of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah. Later, among other important Biblical works he published an Old Testament Introduction, but scarcely fulfilled the expectations excited by his first book.

Reuss (E. W. E.).

In his lecture room at Strassburg, Reuss propounded in 1833 views which he did not venture to publish, as they were so opposed to the usual critical opinions. He argued that the true chronological order was Prophets, Law, Psalms, which roughly expresses the dominant modern view. The most important feature of the criticism was that he made the priestly legislation later than Deuteronomy. Graf and Kayser were his pupils.

Vatke (Wilhelm). *Die biblische Theologie wissenschaftlich dargestellt. Band I.*

*Berlin, 1835.*

This volume contains the first part of the Old Testament portion of the work. No more was published. It was masterly in its grasp and method, but remained long without effect, since many were repelled by its Hegelian dialect and others found its conclusions too revolutionary. Vatke enunciated the now generally accepted view that the priestly legislation was later than Deuteronomy. He reached his conclusions through an investigation of the history of religious institutions, and has thus exercised on Wellhausen a more powerful influence than any other scholar.

George (J. F. L.). *Die älteren jüdischen Feste mit einer Kritik der Gesetzgebung des Pentateuch.*

*Berlin, 1835.*

Also by a Hegelian, and reached results similar to Vatke's. It was equally without effect, the prejudice among critics against the date assigned to the priestly legislation being for many years too violent.

Ewald (G. H. A. von). *Geschichte des Volkes Israel [1st edition].*

*Gottingen, 1843—1852.*

A work of great genius and enormous learning. Ewald dominated the Old Testament scholarship of his time, and while he largely agreed with the literary analysis of the Pentateuch as now generally accepted, he violently and scornfully opposed the views of Vatke and regarded the Book of Origins, *i.e.*, the Priestly Document, as the earliest, and Deuteronomy as the latest document. Among his pupils were Dillmann, Nöldeke, Schrader and Wellhausen.

Hupfeld (H. C. C. F.). *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung.*

*Berlin, 1853.*

Completed the literary analysis of Genesis in its main lines, and is chiefly important for its discovery, anticipated by Ilgen, that two writers (now commonly known by the symbols P. and E.) used Elohim as a proper name. As to the order of the documents, Hupfeld occupied much the same position as Ewald.

Colenso (Bp. J. W.). *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined. Part I.*

*London, 1862.*

Colenso did not concern himself in this part with literary analysis, but with the historicity of the events narrated. The significance of his work lay in this, that while he acquiesced in the current view that the Priestly Document was the oldest, the narratives against the historicity of which he argued

nearly all belonged to it. He failed to draw the inference that the least historical was likely to be the latest. The belief in its antiquity rested largely on the impression of accuracy derived from its wealth of minute detail. Colenso influenced Kuenen, among others, by his contention that the detail was wholly inaccurate.

Graf (B. H.). *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments. Zwei historischkritische Untersuchungen.*

*Leipzig, 1865.*

Of epoch-making importance. It revived the view of Vatke and George that the priestly legislation was later than Deuteronomy. But unfortunately Graf admitted that the priestly narratives were early, and thus committed himself to an untenable division of the Priestly Document. Kuenen accepted Graf's proof that the legislation was late, but since he was convinced that the laws and the narratives must go together, he made the whole Priestly Document late. Graf admitted the validity of Kuenen's argument, and thus "the Grafian theory" received its final form, and the Pentateuch problem was stated and solved in the now generally accepted way.

Nöldeke (Theodor). *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments.*

*Kiel, 1869.*

The first essay on the so-called Grundschrift of the Pentateuch sketches in a masterly way the characteristics of the Priestly Document, and defines its limits, carrying to completion the argument initiated by Colenso. While admitting that it might not be the earliest document, he rejected the Grafian theory, and argued that it must be earlier than Deuteronomy, largely on the ground that the post-exilic period could not have produced such a work.

Kuenen (Abraham). *De Godsdienst van Israël.*

*Haarlem, 1869—1870.*

In the first edition of his Introduction to the O.T. (1861—1865) Kuenen, while accepting the usual critical view, as represented, e.g., by Ewald, felt obliged to make some modifications in it which led towards the Grafian view. In this work on The Religion of Israel, the theory supplied the critical foundation for his history of the religion. The purely critical investigation was carried forward in a series of brilliant articles in the *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, and the second edition of his great Introduction to the Old Testament; the part dealing with the Hexateuch was published in 1885 and translated into English in 1886.

Duhm (Bernhard). *Die Theologie der Propheten als Grundlage für die innere Entwicklungsgeschichte der Israelitischen Religion.*

*Bonn, 1875.*

Till the publication of this work German scholarship had been practically solid against the Grafians. Duhm "broke the consensus of German critics" (Kuenen). He argued that prophecy did not presuppose the Law, but on the contrary Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code alike presuppose the prophets.

Wellhausen (Julius). *Die Composition des Hexateuchs.*

*Berlin, 1876—1877.*

— *Geschichte Israels. Band I.*

*Berlin, 1878.*

The former is the title of a series of articles in the *Fahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* (reprinted in 1885 and with additions in 1889). It dealt mainly with analysis, but made clear his acceptance of the Grafian theory. This was finally established as the dominant critical theory by the latter work, published in later editions under the title Prolegomena to the History of Israel. The chief critics who have refused to accept it are Dillmann, Kittel and Baudissin.