The Wave of Unbelief.

By Professor D. B. Willson.

Theodore Parker was born at Lexington, Massachusetts, in the year 1810, and died at Florence, in Italy in the year 1860. He was a Unitarian of the advanced liberal school. He had studied at Cambridge. Mr. Parker was ordained at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1837. In 1851 he preached a discourse on the Transient and the Permanent in Christianity. In it he declared that the Church makes an idol of the Bible; that it loves Jesus Christ as God, though he is not God; that the Christian ministry and Sabbath are regarded as Divine institutions, though they are merely human.

His Unitarian brethren were shocked. He refused to withdraw from connection with them. In view of their own liberalism, they could hardly expel him, but he was left to himself. In 1853 he went to Europe, and when he came back he began to preach to a congregation in Boston. The assembly

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has been described as made up of "atheists, deists, physical and spiritual pantheists, fatalists, spiritualists, come-outers, universal sceptics, and secularists."

De Wette, the German critic, was born in 1780, near Weimar, and died in 1853. Among his writings was an Introduction to the Old Testament. In this he treated the miracles of the Old Testament as mythical. He taught the fragmentary character of the Pentateuch, and placed the earliest portion in the time of David, and the latest in the time of Josiah. He held that the Pentateuch was the work of many hands; that the writer of the Chronicles had arbitrarily altered and changed the history in the interests of the Levitical hierarchy. But he held in his own way to the sacredness of the Bible, and was on the side of Revealed Religion.

In 1845 Theodore Parker translated the Old Testament Introduction of De Wette. Mr. Parker's views as to the Bible did not lay hold of his brethren, lax and liberal as we would count them to be. The cause of an inspired, authoritative Bible lost ground with the younger scholars, the rising teachers.

All through the Reformation period the Bible was the seat of authority for Protestants, while Rome did not disparage the Bible but by admixture, adding to it both written—that is, apocryphal—and oral—that is, traditional—matter. The lapse of half a century has made a complete change. The views of the Bible which Theodore Parker gave forth, to the abhorrence of his Unitarian brethren, are far distanced in Evangelical churches, not by men who are tolerated in the Church, as Parker was in the Unitarian society, but by men who occupy chairs of instruction, training the rising ministry of the Evangelical churches. The cause has come in like a flood.

Of course, there had always been inquiry as to how the books of the Bible were prepared and transmitted, especially as to that portion of it prior to the period of Moses. Schemes of literary partition were drawn up, one after another. These did not stop with Genesis, content with studying the question of what early documents Moses might have had, but went beyond. They postponed the date of the entire Pentateuch, one step requiring another, till the books were held up as, in their present form, the patchwork of late revisers. De Wette, in 1853, had assigned Genesis to the reign of David and Deuteronomy to the time of Josiah. Wellhausen soon after assigned Deuteronomy and the completed Hexateuch, that is, the five books and Joshua, to the latter part of the reign of Moses, about 100 B.C. So far the destructive critics rested in Deuteronomy as the last part of the Pentateuch. Then the order was changed of priest and prophet, and the Pentateuch, as finally arranged, was placed after the walls.

Julius Wellhausen was born in 1844, and studied under Dietrich at Gottingen. He has written a History of Israel, the first volume appearing in 1883. He has analyzed the books of the Old Testament on
righteousness, thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand the
Lord thy God drive them out from before thee, and from the land
of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against
the Lord.”

The contents of the five books of Moses have been distributed all along through the history from
the beginning till the exile. The early religious
history of Israel is thus only, what they had
in common with the children of the East. The early
line of their Jehovah-worship is in the Book of the
Covenant, Exodus 20-23. The written Book of the
Covenant is assigned to the eighth or ninth century
before Christ. Thus its contents were committed
to writing many centuries after the events related
in the record.

Meanwhile Israel worshipped on the high places.
They were much as the people about them in many
ways. Their development appears in the later re-
cords in Deuteronomy, with the one appendix
of service, as laid down in the Priestly chapter. This
book is assigned to the time of Josiah, a king,
ruled, rather than discovered, by the hands that
gave it to the world.

The complexity of services in Leviticus, with the
minute directions as to priests and sacrifices, shows
a ritual only reached after centuries of develop-
ment, and is ascribed to the period near the exile.
This seems to be the reasoning of opinion at pres-
cent, though the theories have a flexible consistency.
To the conscientious view of the structure of
the books of the Old Testament, many scholarly men
have assented. They have in truth been led by the
naturalistic view of the religion of Israel. The
theory to be unfolded in the light of modern critical
investigation. The results are gathered up in two

for thou art a stiffnecked people. Remember, and
forget not, how thou provokest the Lord thy God
to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou
didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came
unto this place, ye have been rebellious against
the Lord.”
Cyclopedia of recent date—Hastings' Bible Dictionary, and the more radical Encyclopaedia Biblica.

I have given my subject as The Woes of Unbelief, because the process is condemned, and, once begun, there appears for these men no world by wisdom below the God, as in a word of the works of transient unbelief, because the contents of the books and the various colors are used to show the materials of the composition; and every page is as Joseph's coat. The history has been lately rewritten by a Yale professor, in the way the results de-
period, to the effect that the laver was made of the bronze mirrors of the serving-women which served at the door of the tent of meeting. The latter, needless to say, was not yet in existence.

Of the structure of the tabernacle he says:

"The fondness of the priestly writers for proportion has again led to strange results. For even with the colossal boards of previous writers reduced to frames, the loads of the Merarites were out of all proportion to those of the Gershonites."

He speaks of the writers describing certain parts with "amazingly obscurity," and of P's "awkwardness and inconstancy" in his attachment to numbers in the construction of the tabernacle. Of the whole account he says:

"The attitude of modern Old Testament scholarship to the priestly legislation as now formulated in the Pentateuch, and in particular to those sections of it which deal with the sanctuary and its worship, is patent on every page of this Dictionary, and is opposed to the historicity of P's tabernacle."".

With this conclusion agrees the writer of the article on the Temple, Dr. Davies, Professor in the Bunting Baptist College, who says:

"The assumption of Ferguson, based on the oldest authorities, falls to the ground, when it is remembered that the tabernacle in question had an actual existence at any time, and no existence in thought until about the time of the exile."

Thus these writers agree in arguing out of existence the tabernacle, whose structure and arrangement and services occupy so large a part of Exodus and Leviticus. Professor Kennedy uses the prophet Ezekiel's temple to idealize the history of the early books, these books being taken as, in these present form, subsequent to Ezekiel. The priestly writer, the critics' own invention, is made real, while the Bible characters, as Bezalel and Aholiab, are idealized. Professor Kennedy declares that the tabernacle is ideal, because no account of it is given in the historical books. That is, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are robbed of criticism of historicity, and the situations in the early life of Samuel and in the Psalms are set aside, while the closing words of 1 Kings 9, which speak definitely of the tabernacle in Solomon's day, are said to be a later insertion. The account of the early tabernacle of the wilderness journey, around which compassed the host in regular order, and which was set up at Shiloh, is made nothing of, because no Bezalel or Aholiab in that day could have made it. Yet Israel had come from Egypt, whose ruined temples testify to the skill of her builders, while the opened tombs display the arts of the painter and the weaver. The Pyramids, with their recesses for the dead, were ancient when Abraham entered Egypt. It seems as if the exclusive linguistic study, so of the Germans, narrows the mind. Bishop Molesworth says in his Preface to Sir Robert Anderson's book, The Bible and Modern Criticism:

"As the bar we sometimes find a man's logic swamped by his learning; and so it is in theology. Thus wrote the late Lord Halsbury to me in a private letter thirty years ago. He went on to say that he wished for leisure to illustrate the poor reasoning power of some of the greatest German scholars."

Wendell Phillips' lectures on the Lost Arts might instruct these men; but no. The priestly writers of the various strata in the books, they say, had fixed their creation on the minds of the Jews, and the action of the tabernacle has thus "dominated Jewish and Christian thought from the days of Ezra to our own." Yes, this is their explanation of the comments and references and conclusions of the Bible as to this place of God's dwelling. It postulates Solomon's temple, and follows Ezekiel, and all this history woven into the wilderness journey is a projection into the past, as Ezekiel's work looks into the future. Thus they would account for this as an allegory, and that the later Jews were deceived in their apprehension of it as real.
True, the Temple of Solomon is not sublimated as well, and the comparison of the two structures shows the similarity in their ground plan and in the distribution of the area, so that Ferguson has said: "The Temple of Solomon was a copy of the tabernacle." The new structure, the Temple, stood to the era of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, whose monuments exist to-day. But the tabernacle, of which it is said (Hebrews 9:2), "There was a tabernacle made," stands in the way of the attributed lateness of the Priestly Code, of which it is said (Nehemiah 9:2), "These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai." The endeavor for the so-called Evangelicals is then, to preserve a place for faith in a book as to certain portions of it, when no faith is given to its own statements, given in connection with these parts. Not so, however, for Wellhausen, for he has no reverence for the sacred writings, while Keener says of the principal religions of the world, in his Religion of Israel (vol. 1, page 5, English translation): "For us the Israelites is said to be a fraud, new, as steps by misrepresentation. Yet these men would fain make the new to be a more impressive form than the old, when faith in the honesty of the book is broken. How can regulations introduced by deception by those leaders be represented as steps of progress of the people? How can men hope to preserve a reverence for a book with they thus deal?

IV. This view discredits miracle and prophecy as given in the Old Testament. How large a place they fill in the various books, especially if we smile with miracle and prophecy the appearances of God to his servants. These all in former days were made much of, in the study of Evidences. Of late years they have been neglected, and the internal evidence has been given the exclusive place, thus preparing the way for diapossessing the Old Testament of its authority. If a book contains a prophecy, then in
the new view is used as a proof of a later date for the book; the prophetic element is thus voided. Some who yield on these questions hardly see the path they are treading. Even such an unbeliever as J. S. Mill admitted that if there be a God the difficulty about miracles sinks into insignificance." (Minton).

The evolutionary view of the Religion of Israel is thus in face of all the signs of the supernatural in the books of the Old Testament. The contest is between the materialist and the spiritualist, and the issue is not uncertain. The new view is but temporary, for it marshals against itself, not only the metaphysician, but also every man's conscience, when it testifies to him of the Judge of all, whose verdict it anticipates. These men cannot command faith for their views. The moral sentiment of the Bible-reading Christian world, a sentiment created by this Bible under the power of the Divine Spirit, will yet assert itself.

Bishop Minto demurs to some expressions of Sir Robert Anderson in reference to the destructive critics, where the latter characterize them as infidels in some of his comments. It is difficult to dismiss calmly objections that are brought forward by good men, when they owe their origin to men who, as Wellhausen, make no profession of faith in the Scriptures.

V. This view contradicts the representation of the Old Testament given us in the New. There were at first laborious examinations of the various New Testament declarations as to the Old Testament, in an endeavor to show that they did not commit the New Testament writers and speakers to what these advocates of the view under discussion call the traditional view. But the laborious explanations did not make much impression, even on the critics themselves; and now it is acknowledged that the so-called traditional view was the view of the Jews after the exile; in the New Testament view, that not only the Jews of Christ's day, but also the apostles, held the early religion of Israel as a revelation, that God did indeed give his testimony to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, that he is truth, and communion with Moses, and that Moses instituted by his command the elaborate service of the tabernacle, elements commended in the Temple. For example, the apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans, declares his love to his people, "to whom pertains, with the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," and all his arguments, from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, as in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of the Epistles, deal with the books as we have them, and in the light we have already been taught to regard them. Some of the Epistles to the Hebrews, in all his exhortation to his people, direct our thoughts in Genesis and other portions of the Pentateuch, and the Prophets and the Psalms, in the same light, while the Revelations chapter, naming the Heroes of Faith, uses the Old Testament history as orderly and veritable. So James, Peter, and Jude deal with the Old Testament. For all of these, it is the record of the revelation of God, of the extraordinary call of their latter Abraham, of the institution of a Divine economy, and the foretelling of a coming era, the time of Christ.

To all this, these scholars have only to say, that the Apostles were not beyond their time in matters of Biblical Oracles, and had condemned their age on these questions that modern scholarship has solved. We, however, regard the Apostles, with their credentials of signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit, as far more credible witnesses as to the Old Testament than these modern scholars, with all their laborious rationalistic writings have passed through many a crucible, yet they have never been shown to weary out mere gold. Their declarations will abide the present fire.

VII. The last consideration I present, adverse to the view I am discussing, is that our Saviour be-
served and taught otherwise. How long these men hold back from opposing him! Now the new Haus-
pin Dictionary says in the article on the Old 
Testament: "Both Christ and the Apostles, or writ-
ers of the New Testament, held the current Jewish 
notions respecting the Divine authority and reve-
lation of the Old Testament."

Yes, here are some of his words:

Matthew 22:29-32. "Ye do err, not knowing the 
Scriptures, or the power of God; for in the resur-
rection they could not prove the law to be false; 
but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as 
touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not 
read, 'He is not the God of the dead, but of the 
living.' These men do also err, yet they claim peculiarly to know the Scrip-
tures. Jesus declares that God spoke, as we have 
read in Exodus, third chapter. They hesi-
taxe not to speak of the "torah," which is the "law," 
and that God spoke through it, without 
colloquial comparison, as he said: "It is writ-
ten in the book which we have the 
Modern Criticism, pp. vii, viii.

Again, in the sixth chapter of John, we have the 
conversation of Jesus with the Jews as to the manna 
in the desert. He said to them: "I am he who 
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not half, though prophecy must be cast aside, and miracle for one Testament, yes, for both. Their viewpoint is necessarily radically changed. The supernatural must go. They may possibly console themselves with the thoughts of Henry Drummond, once so much extolled in his fancied identification of the natural and spiritual worlds, when he says in his later book, The Ascent of Man: “No man can run up the natural lines of evolution without coming to Christianity at the top.” “The facts and processes which have revealed the name of Christ are the culmination of the scientific order.” But the common-sense philosophy will assert itself. Matter and spirit are not one. Man is both matter and spirit. He is capable of knowing and of communing with God. God who made him can communicate with him, and his time is. The religious man has evolved into humanity. The religion of Israel, of Israel’s Messiah, is of God, and the record of it will abide. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” To the study of this we address ourselves.

The present wave of unbelief will pass away. With all their scholarship, these men are blind leaders of the blind. The Pietist Revival in Germany, when the Bible came again to be revered and loved, will be repeated in English-speaking hands. There is such an increase in Bible Helps. In the homes of the people you will find Teachers’ Bibles with notes, references, concordance. “The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.” If God give his Spirit to the many who are now engaged in Bible study, in the home, in the church, the academy, the college, the university, they will turn to faith to him and to our Lord who bade the people: “Search the Scriptures…… they are they that testify of Me.”

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