"COMME quci Napoléon n'a jamais existé." So runs the title of an amusing and happily illustrated little essay, which must have delighted many readers some thirty or forty years ago.* Napoleon is the sun, and his supposed history is borrowed point for point from the Hellenic conception of the Sun-god, his fortunes and his exploits. His very name—"the true Apollo"—is a sufficient proof of this. And besides, he was born on one of the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. His mother's name, Letitia, is an obvious modification of Leto or Latona. He had three sisters (the three Graces), four brothers (the four Seasons), and twelve marshals in active service (the twelve signs of the Zodiac); and, not to go into further details, he began his glorious career in the East, and set in one of the islands of the Western Ocean. He is therefore a myth, and accordingly we find the year 1814 (the last of the twelve years of his supposed reign) described in official documents as the nineteenth year of Louis XVIII.

Now there are doubtless many earnest-minded men, in England as elsewhere, who would regard this little treatise

* Musée Philipon. Vol. I. pp. 57—61. The idea was suggested by Archbishop Whateley's "Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte," 1819.
as something more than a successful jeu d'esprit. To them it appears to be a life-like exposure, if not of critics in general, at any rate of the critics of the Bible, some of whose assertions they consider not a whit less absurd than the mythical explanation of Napoleon's life. When they are told of scholars who declare that the prophecies ascribed to Daniel are not his, or who deny the existence of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and dispute the claims of Moses to rank as Israel's lawgiver; when they hear that there are men who can only discover four epistles of Paul in the New Testament, and who think the Gospel of St. John was written about the middle of the second century of the Christian era, they find it difficult to believe that the authors of such monstrous assertions can really be serious.

This uncomplimentary estimate of the Biblical criticism of the day is by no means confined to those whose pursuits and calling in life exempt them from any concern with historical investigations, for we find it openly proclaimed or tacitly assumed by Doctors of Divinity and professed theologians. Witness the summary and offhand style in which they meet the assertions of the critics with arguments that lie so obviously on the surface that one cannot understand how they can possibly suppose their adversaries to have overlooked them. Indeed, it would be curious to know what kind of conception of Biblical criticism has been formed by those who only know it from the answers of the Apologists. Fathomless scepticism and boundless caprice are doubtless the main ideas it suggests to them.

It is not pleasant for the Biblical critics to find themselves judged in this way. There are, or have been, amongst them zealous and clear-sighted labourers who deserve the same high honour that is accorded by common consent to the students of the exact sciences; and they have just cause of complaint when put down as mere vendors of
crude and random fancies. But however annoying, or at least discouraging, such an estimate of their labours may be, it is not very surprising. Its reasons are obvious. The most important of them all, indeed, we can but touch on here. It is the close connection between the results of Biblical research and the most widely-spread religious convictions of our day. These convictions stand, or (which comes to the same thing) are supposed to stand, in the closest possible connection with a certain definite conception of Israel's history and the rise and early development of Christianity, and consequently there are many persons in whose eyes the least departure from this conception instantly assumes the character of sacrilege and unbelief, and from that moment of course it is impossible for them to consider it impartially. As long as this impression remains, the work of the Biblical critics will continue to be misunderstood; but we may nevertheless pass over the dogmatic objection on the present occasion, inasmuch as we are at liberty to address ourselves exclusively to those who, without protesting against criticism in the name of faith, and while fully allowing its right of existence, condemn it simply for its supposed caprice and unreasonableness. Their position also is easy to understand, and is, indeed, the natural consequence of the character of the critical results themselves. These results, so far from being self-evident, appear at first glance extremely strange. The Bible is in every one's hand. The critic has no other Bible than the public. He does not profess to have any additional documents, inaccessible to the laity, nor does he profess to find anything in his Bible that the ordinary reader cannot see. It is true that here and there he improves the common translation, but this is the exception, not the rule. And yet he dares to form a conception of Israel's religious development totally different from that which, as any one may see, is set forth in the Old Testament,
and to sketch the primitive Christianity in lines which even the acutest reader cannot recognise in the New. What can this be but the merest fancy or passion for innovation?

If the critic knows the impression often produced by his labours, and is unwilling to acquiesce in the misunderstanding, it is obvious what he must do. He cannot be content with simply asserting that he goes to work in the same way as his fellow-labourers on the field of so-called profane history; for, however ready the latter may be to confirm his assertion, it is of small avail as long as historical criticism in general is an unknown land to so many. Moreover, Biblical criticism, though a branch of a great whole, is a branch with many peculiarities of its own, and though it obeys the general laws of criticism, yet it requires, for many reasons, an application of them peculiar to itself. This makes it still more incumbent on the Biblical critic to describe his method.

To describe his method! Would it not be better to display it in action? There is much to be said for this view; for it would make the study more picturesque and interesting than it can be when expounded in a set of general rules which must of necessity be more or less abstract in their character. It may be as well for once, however, to treat directly of the principles themselves, especially as this will not preclude us from giving one or more illustrative examples afterwards. But when we have described the Critical Method, must we not go on to justify it? Not at all. It will have to justify itself by its own simplicity. The only danger is that it may appear too simple, too commonplace. And this danger we must brave, for the critic is no alchemist, and he must not try to be one. Anything that has the least air of mystery is utterly out of place in his method. Auguste Comte may have been right or wrong in declaring that all philosophy is simply systematised common-sense, but, at any rate, that section of
philosophy known as Critical Method would be "condemned already" if it so much as attempted to be more.

(i.)

The very word "Method" (= way after) implies a goal. Method simply means the straight, or, at any rate, the right, way to reach some point already fixed on. What, then, is the goal of criticism?

If we were to describe it as "the knowledge of the reality," or more specially "the knowledge of the reality concerning a more or less remote past," we should hardly have any serious contradiction to fear. But perhaps it is not very clear exactly what is implied in this definition, and we may therefore throw it into another form. Criticism helps us, or is intended to help us, to true history. The critic is the ally of the historian, and furnishes him with the materials he must use in his work. Generally the critic and the historian are combined in the same individual, but for all that the former is the servant of the latter, and, although his work is twined inseparably into the other's, it yet remains subservient and logically antecedent to it throughout.

Now, anything that lays claim in our day to the name of "History" must comply with certain conditions that are not laid down in any written code, but which none can ignore with impunity. The mere chronicle, the bare enumeration of facts, however accurate and complete it may appear, sinks far below the dignity of history. It may be indispensable as supplying materials, but that is the highest claim it can urge. Nor is any one satisfied nowadays with a picture of the past in which the ruling princes, with their courtiers and generals, are the actors. We have done with "l'histoire battaille." According to the modern conception, the people is the active and passive subject of history, though of course this conception allows kings and
battles the due share of attention which falls to them in connection with everything else. One more step remains. History does not fully meet the demands now made upon it unless it reproduces life, whether it be biography, the life of the individual, or history in the ordinary sense of the word, the life of a people. Now, it is true that a part of this national life is constituted by the events, great and small, which enter into it, and often determine its direction, and also by those material conditions with their sudden or progressive modifications upon which it is wholly or partially dependent. But these and other such external matters are not everything. Spiritual life and activity constitute the real life, and a true knowledge and correct representation of this must accordingly be our main concern. True biography sketches the spiritual development of its hero and the influence which he exerted upon others. History that deserves the name is always the "history of civilisation," whatever it may call itself, and of "civilisation," moreover, in that deeper sense which excludes any merely external conception and concentrates our attention upon the rise and growth of ideas, their propagation in society, and the power they exercise on life.

But we must not forget that our subject is Criticism, and not History, though a passing glance at the lofty aim to which criticism is consecrated may not have been without its value in enlisting sympathy. We shall be led back again to our proper subject if we attempt to give some account of the relations in which history stands to the reality.

The closeness of their connection is indicated by the fact that we often use one and the same word to signify them both; for "History" is used in the objective sense of "what has taken place," as well as in the subjective sense of "this or that representation of the past." But in spite of this unity of expression there is a very essential difference between "the reality" and "history" in the subjective-
sense—the sense in which we shall henceforth exclusively use the term.

In the first place, the reality is so infinitely rich and complex that we cannot dream of completely reproducing it. Even in the little circle in which we ourselves move but a very small proportion of the phenomena of life come under our notice. By far the greater part pass by completely unobserved. How much more, if instead of this narrow private circle we consider some wider field, such as the life of the people amongst whom we live! And, moreover, the history of which we are speaking is the history of the past. It is easy to see what this means, for the very moment that the reality ceases to be present, a considerable portion of it is inevitably and irreparably lost.

These losses, however, can very well be borne up to a certain point; for we must observe, in the second place, that by no means everything which belonged to the reality at a given period deserves to find a place in its history. A great master in this craft has said with truth,* "Not every event is a historical event; and in like manner it is not all knowledge of what has taken place that is historical knowledge. Historical knowledge only exists where the thing known appears important enough, not only to be observed at the moment, but to be handed down to the enduring knowledge of posterity." The historian is in constant danger of losing sight of this distinction. He involuntarily measures the importance of his facts by the pains it has cost him to recover them, although he would at once admit in theory that the real test of whether they are worth knowing, is whether they have any bearing upon the life of the people. We must admit, however, that in deciding these points there is ample room for individual differences of conception, so that we cannot differentiate "historical facts" from "facts" in general with any great

precision. There is nothing so insignificant that it may not rise into importance under certain conditions. Sometimes a whole series of facts is put in its true light by a detail which seemed to be wholly unworthy of our notice as long as it stood alone. Such cases, however, are exceptions, and do not invalidate the rule just given.

In the third place, we must remember that history, in spite of its limitations, contains more, in some respects, than the reality to which it corresponds; or, rather, it contains more than those who lived in the midst of the reality itself could possibly, even under the most favourable circumstances, perceive. The collective agents in any affair naturally know more about it than any historian can ever find out, but its significance in the connection in which it occurred may be much clearer to the historian than to the agents themselves. And this is true to a far greater degree in considering what we may call the soul of history, viz., the life, especially the spiritual life, of the people. Hidden as it is from those who share it, or, at least, from the vast majority of them, that life lies open and revealed before the historian. Such, at least, is the ideal. Its realisation depends upon a number of internal and external conditions which will seldom be united. But in proportion as these conditions are favourable, and history approaches its ideal, it embraces more and more of what constitutes its peculiar privilege over the reality.

But however much we may emphasise these distinctions, the fact, of course, remains that history, as distinguished from fiction or romance, derives all its value from its agreement with the reality; and the purpose of these preliminary remarks has simply been to put us in a position to state wherein this agreement consists, and what are the limits which, by its very nature, it cannot overstep. Completeness, as already said, is absolutely unattainable, and must not be expected. Even such relative completeness as
we can attain would in many cases be rather hurtful than serviceable. Any history, when compared with the reality, must be a mere selection. The facts it takes up must, of course, be borrowed from the reality, and must have really happened in the way and with the mutual connections represented by the historian. But even when dealing with bare facts, the historian very seldom produces a mere copy. An event must be simple to the last degree if it can be taken up into a historical narrative just as it occurred. In almost all cases it will have to be greatly reduced and simplified. And why should it not? All we require is that the historian should preserve the character of the event, and bring that clearly out in his representation. But this shows us at once what an important part is played by the personality of the historian himself. What I have just called the character of an event is essentially the historian’s conception of it, and is dependent not only upon the data supplied to him by the reality, but at least as much upon himself, upon the experience he brings to his task, and the singleness of his eye. Lament it as we may, the fact remains that the historian, even when perfectly impartial, and only concerned to set before us the simple facts, cannot be the mere channel through which the reality flows to us. How much greater must the influence of his own personality be when he advances to the discharge of his proper task of reproducing the soul as well as the body of the reality, and recovering the life of the past? He can but give us his own personal interpretation of the image reflected in his mind; so that almost everything depends upon his own qualifications and the constitution of his own mind. If no congeniality of spirit fits him to interpret the reality he can scarcely fail to caricature it.

But enough of these preliminary considerations. The goal is now before our eyes. How does criticism conduct us to it?
(ii.)

In the rapid sketch I have just attempted, I have gone on the assumption that the historian possesses the requisite knowledge of that portion of Universal History with which he intends to deal. Every one would admit that his first step must be to acquire this knowledge, and the question we have now to discuss is, Whence and how is he to obtain it?

And first, as to the whence. We may answer in general terms, "From the documents, in the widest possible acceptation of the term, that concern the period in question." We welcome State papers, monumental or other inscriptions and remains, coins, acts, charters, chronicles, histories, but we also welcome the entire literature of the period in all its branches. Any narrower conception of the historian's task would enable him to dispense with some portion of this material; but if he means to describe the life of the people, then none of its products are wholly indifferent to him, while some of them gain quite an exceptional importance.

But these documents must at once be divided into two classes. Some of them are themselves Facts, authentic parts and fragments of the reality we are retracing. Others are, or contain, Accounts of the period we are studying.

The abstract importance and soundness of this distinction can hardly be questioned. A coin, or a treaty of peace, a charter, or any other such document, stands on a completely different footing from a narrative of events, even though it come from one who has seen and heard them; and the contrast becomes far more pronounced if the author of the narrative stands at some distance from the events he records. In deciding what use to make of a narrative we have always to consider certain questions, of which we shall speak presently, that cannot be so much as asked concerning docu-
ments of the other class. To speak of the "credibility" of a treaty would be nonsense. But it is equally clear that the two classes of documents slide insensibly into one another, so that some care and reflection are necessary in drawing the line between them.

For instance: Let us take an Assyrian inscription, say, of King Sanherib (Sennacherib). Unquestionably this is a document of the first class. It is a fact. But the fact which the inscription constitutes is simply this, that the Assyrian king in such and such a year of his reign gave such and such an account of his campaigns. There is no room for refinements here. We have simply to accept this fact. But now we come to the account itself, let us say of the monarch's third expedition—that against Hezekiah. The observation that the Assyrian kings always win more or less brilliant victories and never suffer defeat, has roused the suspicions even of those historians who are most disposed to accept the royal narratives and are most favourably inclined to the Assyrians, and has induced them to make considerable deductions from the statements of these authentic documents, and to find a place in their own conception of what occurred for details of which the "Great King" says never a word. Whether they are right or wrong, we will not now attempt to decide. That depends upon circumstances. But they have an indisputable right to use their own judgment, even when dealing with the narrative of Sanherib himself.

Let us take a second example, supplied by the historian Von Sybel.* Amongst the documents from which the history of the London Conference of 1864 must be drawn, are the telegrams and despatches which were exchanged between the ambassadors and their Governments during the sittings, and also the historical résumé by the representative of Russia, Baron von Brunnow, together with the account

* Die Gesetze des Historischen Wissens (Vorträge und Aufsätze), S. 8.
by the German representatives which followed it. Now, even the telegrams and despatches contain *accounts* of the proposals of one Power and the answers of another, and to that extent they must rank with the subsequent *accounts* of the Conference. But yet the historian will do well to keep the two distinct. The despatches are integral portions of the Conference itself, and are therefore, also, part of the *facts*. The subsequent reports of the representatives bear quite another character, and each has its own special colouring. It was because they were dissatisfied with the Russian account that the Germans hastened to set their own by its side.

With this example we may couple a remark which will find abundant illustration in connection with the Bible narratives. Baron von Brunnnow's historical résumé doubtless belongs to our second class of documents; but for all that it may, or rather must, be regarded in its turn as also a fact, for it shows us quite unmistakably how the ambassador, and consequently his Government, regarded the London Conference and its results, and wished them to be regarded by the public; and this is itself a factor in the history, broadly conceived, of this important Conference—a factor which can be recovered from the document in question quite apart from the correctness or incorrectness of its statements. Hence we see what are the conditions under which a *narrative* becomes itself one of the *facts* to be considered. It does so when, and when only, the author is himself a part of the reality which we are investigating. The "Muses" of Herodotus, for instance, constitute a fact of the history of Greece in the fifth century B.C.—the age of Herodotus himself; but what they tell us about Egypt and the Egyptian kings is far from standing on the same footing to the student of the history of ancient Egypt. If, indeed, it could be shown that the Father of History had literally reproduced in his Second Book what the priests
had told him during his visit to Egypt, the historian of Egypt would then be in possession of this fact: that about the middle of the fifth century the guardians of the Egyptian temples gave an inquiring stranger such and such accounts of the exploits of their kings and the origin of their monuments. This fact would then remain, quite independently of the value or worthlessness of those accounts themselves.

Now, it is obvious that the Bible narratives completely answer to these conditions. They are all of them, without exception, factors—and very important ones—of the reality which the historian of Israel and of early Christianity desires to recover. Let us suppose, for example, that the Books of Chronicles were written at Jerusalem about the year 250 B.C. Some persons put them two centuries earlier, but we will assume for the present that this important question has been decided in favour of the later date. In that case we have the following fact: that a priest, or some other subordinate minister of the second Temple, cherished those conceptions of Israel’s pre-exilic history which are set forth in the Chronicles, and endeavoured to recommend them to others—holding, for instance, the low opinion of the Ten Tribes and their worship, which is implied in his omitting their history and in certain special texts (2 Chron. xi. 13—16; xiii. 4—19; xxx. 6, 7). Now, this fact would, of course, gain importance if we could show that the Chronicler’s idea of Israel’s past differed notably from that which had been current in earlier times, or, again, that he might fairly be regarded as the representative of the class to which he belonged. But in any case, the fact itself remains, and the historian of the third century B.C. must find room for it in his account of this period. And so with all the other historical books. Quite independently of their value as witnesses to the times with which they deal, they must be considered as products of the times in which they were
composed, and for the history of which they contribute more or less valuable materials.

Enough has now been said in illustration and qualification of the distinction I have drawn between documents which are Accounts, and documents which are Facts. The two classes of documents resemble each other in this: that they must not be blindly accepted and followed, but must be carefully weighed and estimated. It would be an insult to the reader to demonstrate the necessity of this; for who could be so innocent as to question it? There are spurious and interpolated documents enough in the world, and inaccurate, prejudiced, and fabulous narratives without number. To know this is enough to make us test every document that comes into our hands with the utmost care before we make any use of it. Here, then, the task of criticism begins, and no sooner has it begun than it confirms the soundness of the distinction we have drawn above, for we do not ask the same questions with respect to all our documents alike. In general terms the difference may be thus stated: Concerning all documents whatsoever we make investigations as to authenticity, or at least as to the time and place in which they were produced; and concerning all narratives or accounts we go on to investigate the further question of their credibility. In other and shorter words, all documents without distinction are subjected to literary criticism, while narratives or accounts are further subjected to historical criticism in the proper or narrower sense.

It now remains to describe this critical procedure itself. But as we approach the task a serious difficulty confronts us at the very threshold. Different cases are so unlike that it is impossible to lay down one and the same rule for them all. Sometimes the historian rejoices in such a wealth of original documents,—acts and agreements on the one hand and narratives composed by eye-witnesses on the other,—that he
bathes as it were in the flood, and the only danger is that he should be overwhelmed. But sometimes he must be content with comparatively scanty remains from the period he is studying, and soon discovers that some of these are open to grave suspicion. It is true that the same questions have to be asked in either case, and however widely the positions of the two historians may be separated, there is no impassable gulf between them; but it is obvious that their procedure cannot be altogether identical. Now, there is not the smallest doubt in which place the lines of the Biblical critic have fallen. In comparison with the student of mediaeval, and still more of any section of modern, history, he is poor in documents to the last degree. The sources are more abundant for one year of England's history than for the century and a half of the rise of Christianity, or even for the whole fifteen centuries of Israel's national existence. Shall we, then, mindful of the limits we have traced for ourselves in this paper, proceed at once to the description of that critic who would gladly welcome more abundant materials than he can command? It would, perhaps, appear to be the simplest plan. But yet it will be better for us to begin by considering the procedure of that student who can have documents to his heart's content merely for the asking, since his position is not only more fortunate than that of the other, but to a certain extent more normal also. And in order to be quite safe, we will take our ideas of his method from one who has himself had to deal with this abundance of documentary material.* We may then return to the consideration of our own special task, with no envy or jealousy in our hearts, let us hope, but with enlightened eyes.

The historian, then, who understands his duty must begin with literary criticism, to which he submits all his docu-

* Von Sybel, Die Gesetze des Historischen Wissens (Vorträge und Aufsätze), S. i. seq.
ments without distinction. If they themselves claim to be the work of any special author, he examines their genuineness or authenticity, and if he cannot allow it he sets them down as spurious or forged, and goes on to inquire when, by whom, and with what purpose they were drawn up—questions which he must likewise endeavour to clear up in the case of all anonymous documents. I need hardly remind my readers that all these inquiries must be conducted with due regard to the composite character of many of the documents. Thus a historical work can seldom be treated as a single whole, but must be separated into its several portions while the various narratives it contains are traced back to their respective authors or to the sources from which they were derived; and then the very same questions must be asked concerning these earlier witnesses or narratives, which have already been asked concerning the books in which they are now incorporated. Throughout his inquiries the critic will of course avail himself of all the accessible means for arriving at a decision, and will therefore consult any traditions or statements he can discover as to the antiquity or the authorship of his documents, and the older and more unanimous these traditions and statements turn out to be the greater the value he will attach to them. In most cases, however, he will be unable to rest implicitly on any such testimonies, and will be compelled to check them by the form and substance of the documents themselves to which they refer; but if he finds nothing there to contradict them, still more if he finds any striking confirmation of them, he will very properly regard the examination into the origin of his documents as closed, and will not reopen it unless some fresh witness should appear, or some previously unnoticed feature in the document itself should demand a fresh investigation. On the other hand, wherever the external testimonies come into conflict with the substance and form of the document, judgment must be given for the latter and
against the former. The tradition may rest upon a misconception or even upon intentional deceit, but the document itself that lies before us cannot deceive us, and we must therefore go by what it tells us. This conflict between the external and internal indications as to the origin of a document presents itself in the most varied forms, each of which must be judged on its own merits, but the general rule we have just laid down remains unshaken. We shall return to this point presently.

The literary criticism is now complete, and it remains, in the case of the narratives, to apply what may be called the historical criticism in the narrower sense—that is to say, to investigate their credibility, or, in more general terms, their relation to the reality. And here, again, two cases present themselves. The author of the narrative is either known or unknown to the critic. We have thrown the contrast into the absolute form in which "known" and "unknown" stand opposed as "yes" and "no," although in reality there must, of course, be innumerable intermediate degrees, so that the line between the two is often almost impossible to find. We do not altogether know even ourselves; how much less can we know a man we have never seen, and who is perhaps parted from us by hundreds of years! Nor, on the other hand, can the author of any historical narrative which we carefully study remain completely unknown to us, though we may not be able to recover his name or to say where and when he lived. The distinction is therefore relative, but still it exists and is not without its influence on the critic’s method.

Let us suppose, then, that we know the author of a narrative, the measure of his intellectual acquirements, his character, and his relation to the political or ecclesiastical parties that meet us in his narrative. All this together forms, "as it were, the medium through which the light shed by the facts reaches the eyes of the student, a medium which
in no case transmits the rays wholly undisturbed and unbroken. Our task is to make exact allowance for the disturbances and interruptions. . . .” And the task is not an impossible one, for we know, by observing ourselves and those around us, what the disturbing action of such mediums is, and we have only to apply our knowledge to the case in hand, which, in spite of all its special conditions, is still generically identical with other cases that we have come across in our own experience or in the course of our previous studies. In a word, what Von Sybel calls “testing the historians by our knowledge of their character and personality,” however difficult, is not impossible, and is the only way to reach the reality as to which they bear witness.

Now let us take the case in which the historian is completely unknown to us, or, at least, so imperfectly known that we cannot tell what allowance to make for his personality in retracing the actual course of events. Are we in this case altogether helpless, and must we simply leave his narrative as we find it? Again we answer, with Von Sybel, in the negative, inasmuch as we are acquainted with the contiguous facts. With these we compare the narrative that lies before us, and accept it as trustworthy if, and in so far as, it fits into its surroundings. Thus criticism calculates uncertain details from the basis of what has already been determined, and does so in the faith that any error which may have been made will sooner or later be brought to light. For, “inasmuch as the continuity of things is unbroken, any incorrect conception of one fact must at once come into collision with the true view of another, and the first mistake must draw other mistakes after it, or else a breach of connection must become obvious which indicates the source from which the mistake itself has sprung.”

We see at once that in either case the critic’s method rests on one and the same assumption, an assumption which may be expressed once more in the words of Von Sybel:
"The assumption with which all certainty of knowledge stands or falls is that the development of all earthly things follows absolute laws, and that they constitute together one connected whole. For, if this unity not exist, or were it subject to any infringement, we could place no reliance upon any conclusion drawn from the connection of events, and every calculation of human motives would be relegated to chance. Thus both the sources of historical knowledge would be destroyed. The existence of the historical, as of all other sciences, extends just so far as the recognition of the reign of law."

We are now acquainted with what we may call the normal procedure of the critic. No one will ask for any proof of its soundness and efficiency, for it carries this proof with it, and is further recommended by its systematic regularity. This is felt especially by those who are in the habit of applying it—that is to say, by students who have chosen a department of universal history in which they can follow this normal procedure in its entirety, and without departing from it to the right hand or to the left. I have known some of these privileged individuals who have been so spoilt by the abundance of material amidst which they move, that they cannot see how one can get along at all when the supply of documents begins to be less copious. There is no history worthy of the name, they declare, except what is drawn from the pure and abundant springs of contemporary archives and narratives of eye-witnesses. Where these cannot be had, imagination has to supply their place; but it can never recover the lost reality. Such a line of argument is quite intelligible, but what is it, after all, but the rich man's wonder how on earth his poor neighbour contrives to live? The fact is, there is no choice. Human curiosity will acknowledge no limits, and may even take more interest in periods from which but few documents have survived, than in others in which we are almost over-
whelmed by their abundance. We must, therefore, boldly face our problem, and must not let our hearts fail even though we should have to "eat our bread in the sweat of our face." "A good workman," says the Dutch proverb, "can saw with the gimlet and bore with the saw." Without losing sight of the ideal method, or departing further than is absolutely necessary from the orderly and regular procedure, the critic manages to adapt himself to circumstances. We are all the more free to make this demand on him because we can show that, even when the documents flow in upon him from every quarter, he is often enough obliged to reverse the natural order of proceeding or strike into a by-path, unless he is content never to reach his destination at all. Let us see!

The questions of authenticity, antiquity, and so on, which belong to literary criticism, and ought therefore to be considered first, are often incapable of solution in the first instance. It sounds very simple to say, If you are going to write the life and history of Charles I., begin by satisfying yourself as to the origin of the Eikon Basilike. But how am I to satisfy myself on this point before I have made myself thoroughly acquainted with Charles I. and his times? And the necessity of departing from the theoretical order is often still more obvious in the case of a historical narrative; for while the value of such a narrative must be largely dependent upon the source from which the later historian drew it, yet, at the same time, the relation in which we believe it to stand to the realities of history must, in its turn, exercise a marked influence on our opinion as to the source from which it was probably drawn. It is only in exceptional cases that the literary criticism of the authorities can be completed without the help of the historical criticism in the narrower sense, which, nevertheless, ought theoretically to rest on its decisions.

Again, in theory the most perfect harmony exists between
the two branches of historical criticism, each of which supplements the other, while both of them lead us to one result. But is it so in practice? On the contrary, it often happens that our investigation into the character and qualifications of the witnesses would compel us to accept a fact for which they vouch, and yet the historical connection forbids us to admit it. Accordingly, we go into the whole question again, and perhaps discover a mistake on one side or the other; but it is also possible, and, indeed, far from improbable, that we may be left, after all, face to face with the unreconciled contradiction. No less frequent are the cases in which the connection of events already known gives no answer to the questions we put to it. The gap has to be filled, no doubt, and there can be but one right way of filling it; but our knowledge of the surrounding territory must be complete indeed if it enable us to indicate with certainty what this one way should be. Very often the cautious critic must end by admitting several possible solutions and declining to pronounce any judgment at all for fear of deserting the true path.

Any one who has studied the subject knows that the difficulties I have touched upon all appear in combination when we are dealing with the Bible, and are, therefore, all the harder to meet. The “Introductions,” as they are called, to the Books of the Old and New Testament are constantly growing in bulk and becoming more comprehensive in matter. Is it that the scholars of this generation are so much more prolix than their predecessors? Not so. But we now see that literary criticism, the proper field of the Introductions, was formerly discharged in a far too off-hand manner. It was then thought enough to support the tradition as to the origin of the Books of the Bible with certain arguments, or to give the reasons for rejecting it; but now we take just exception at the outset to this way of stating the question, as if it were the traditions rather than
the Books themselves with which we have in the main to deal, and we further and more seriously protest against the isolation of literary criticism; for the fact is that its results are either trifling or altogether uncertain as long as it is not brought into connection with historical research in its entirety, so as to receive back in its turn the light it sheds upon other branches of the inquiry. The questions of literary criticism, in the Old and the New Testament alike, are often the most involved of all, and, therefore, the very last to find their solution. Take the Book of Daniel, for instance. It contains (chaps. ii.—vi.) accounts of Nebuchadrezzar, of the fall of the Chaldean monarchy, and of Darius the Mede, which must certainly be taken into account by the historian of the sixth century B.C., if they are true. Historical criticism, therefore, demands of literary criticism whether Daniel was really the author of the Book that bears his name, and if not, who was. But the moment one begins seriously to attend to these questions, one perceives that the answer must depend in no small degree upon the estimate formed of the very narratives in question. The same phenomenon recurs when we consider the component parts of the historical Books of the Old Testament, or examine the writings of the New Testament. Take, for instance, the question which at this moment divides such men as Professor Holsten and Professor Schmidt, in spite of their general sympathy and agreement—the question of the authorship of the Epistle to the Philippians. How miserably unsatisfactory we now think the treatment of this question with which people were once content! No one who does not summon the whole history of the apostolic and post-apostolic period to his aid can give anything which even looks like a solution.

And if, when we are dealing with the Bible, literary criticism must, to a great extent, be taken out of its ideal order, the same is too often the case with historical
criticism likewise. "Testing the historians by our knowledge of their character and personality, and testing the events by their connections in time, space, and the chain of causes," is Von Sybel's formula, and it sounds equally reasonable and simple. But how slender our knowledge of this "personality" often is! The majority of the historians are not so much as known to us by name, and all the information we have concerning them is what we can pick up from their works themselves. And how wide again are the gaps in our knowledge of the chain of events! There are sometimes whole periods as to which we have nothing but a few uncertain traditions, or perhaps not even that. There are certainly other periods as to which we are more fortunate. Our prospects would be melancholy indeed if it were not so. But when all is said and done, the choice between the conflicting possibilities is often extremely hard to make.

But what is the use, it may be asked, of all these lamentations? It assuredly is not my intention to bring Biblical criticism into discredit, or to discourage those who are disposed to devote their powers to it. My only purpose is to show the necessity of modifying what we have recognised as the normal method of criticism, to suit the special circumstances. Nor can there be any doubt as to the general nature of the modifications required. If the several sections of the critic's task can not be successively and separately dealt with, then they must all be taken in hand at once and made to converge upon the common goal. The difficulties which refuse to yield to any one alone may, perhaps, surrender to a combined attack of the whole force at our disposal. "Unity is strength," is a cry which has so often justified itself in practice, that the application of the principle it involves to our special task may well recommend itself à priori to our serious consideration.

But before attempting to sketch this procedure, I must give an answer to a certain preliminary question; for
in default of a satisfactory attitude towards it, it will appear to many that our labours cannot but be fruitless. There is one question, they say, which must be answered before all others, and answered without the smallest ambiguity. It cannot be left waiting, for all further investigation hangs upon it. It refers to the miracles. Do you admit the possibility, or rather the reality, of miracles? That is the question. As long as we differ on that point it is impossible for us to agree on the method of Biblical criticism. Tell us, therefore, what you think on this cardinal point, and then we will hear you further.

I can give a very simple answer. Every one knows that this question of miracles is by no means confined to the Bible. In the criticism of Herodotus, for instance, or of Mahomet’s biographers, it asserts itself as definitely, and is as important, as in the Bible. And yet there is not one of us who regards it on this wider field as really a question at all. All of us, without distinction, reject miracles wherever we find them—except in the history of Israel and of the establishment of Christianity. The assertion that this exception in favour of the Biblical miracles is justified by the greater weight of evidence in their favour, is so notoriously contrary to the facts as to deserve no serious refutation. The truth is that these special miracles are admitted as facts, because they are, in one way or another, intertwined with people’s religious belief, whether they are supposed to furnish its foundations, or in their turn are supported by their harmony with it. Hence it is that the controversy as to the miracles will never be decided on the field of historical investigation. The real ground of their recognition as facts lies not there! Does it, then, follow that historical criticism, when appealed to on this point, must abdicate its authority, and refer the decision to faith? Can those who accept the miracles learn nothing from those who reject them, and can they, in their
turn, teach them nothing? Or is there a neutral ground on which they can meet each other, and attempt to come to an understanding? Men who are seriously in search of truth must surely desire to find such a territory, and they need not seek it in vain. Indeed, I think I can point out where it lies. Without for a moment concealing my own conviction that there is not one single miracle on record which we can accept as a fact, I would, nevertheless, place in the forefront of historical criticism the principle that miracles are possible. To this principle I have never been consciously untrue while pursuing the very path which has led me to the conviction I have just avowed. I shall not, therefore, reject miracles à priori without discussion and without distinction, but shall enter in perfect good faith, and not simply as a matter of form, upon the investigation of the credibility of even a miraculous story. With regard to every such story, we have to face this question when we have completed the preliminary investigation: "Which is more probable, that a veritable miracle lies at the basis of the miraculous story, or that it has grown up under the action of this or that well-known cause without any foundation in miraculous fact?" The staunchest believer in miracles, if he admits discussion at all and seeks to be reasonable in his faith, can hardly object to the question when put in this form. He, too, must accept the more probable of two alternatives in this, as in all other cases. Here, then, we have found the common ground we sought.

I may now return to the subject properly in hand—that is, the description of the way in which the Biblical critic has to apply the universal principles of his craft.

His method cannot be better presented than in the form of an allegory. Criticism means "the art of judging." Let us, then, picture to ourselves the functionary who derives his name from the exercise of this same art—the judge.
He is called upon to give his decision in accordance with the law; but we will leave this part of his duty out of view for the present, and confine ourselves to his preliminary duty, that of ascertaining the facts upon which the decision must afterwards rest. Let us suppose the case to be one of extreme perplexity, involving many disputed facts, and the judge, conspicuous for his impartiality, to be exerting all his powers to arrive at the truth. He has satisfied himself, by adequate investigation, about the material surroundings and conditions of the disputed events. All the witnesses, without exception, who can throw any light on the matter have been summoned. The trial begins. The witnesses are examined and cross-examined. The judge lets nothing escape him. Long experience has prepared him for the task he has in hand, and in consequence he observes and turns to account minute details in the bearing of the witnesses and in the substance and mutual relations of their evidence which escape the untrained observer. Before long there rises in his mind a suspicion as to the real course of events. He does not at once reject this suspicion, but neither does he attach any great importance to it. Experience has taught him that these first impressions are often confirmed by continued investigation, but are as often reversed by it. Meanwhile, however, the suspicion remains in his mind, and he cannot fail to bring the further information that is elicited into connection with it, and thereby test its value. The examination continues, and as the judge begins to survey the whole field of inquiry, he gradually forms a hypothesis which may or may not agree with his first impression. He has now made a great step. There is scarcely room for him to doubt that the facts were such and such. This, then, is his hypothesis. Does it rest on the fact that all the witnesses have given the same account of the affair? That does not follow. Indeed, it is highly improbable. The judge's hypothesis may contradict the statements of some
of the witnesses, and may not completely agree with those of any one of them. But it explains all these statements. If the event happened in the way supposed, then it is quite natural that this witness should give this and the other that account of it, considering who they are and how they are placed. But the trial is not yet over. The last and least important depositions have still to be dealt with, and it is possible, and the judge recognises the possibility, that they may after all change his opinion. But we will suppose they do not. One duty still remains. It is to go through all the evidence once again, and consider it carefully, giving due weight to all that has been urged by or on behalf of the parties concerned. If this does not overturn or shake the judge’s hypothesis, then, with all the materials before him, he is satisfied that his construction of the facts gives a true and complete account of the form and substance of the whole evidence. His hypothesis has therefore been verified, and he gives judgment in accordance with it.

I need hardly vary the allegory. I have obviously taken the most favourable case possible. It may be that the best hypothesis which presents itself does not explain all the evidence, and that one statement or more remains which is not, indeed, inconsistent with it, but still in no way confirms it. In this case, too, the conclusion is justified, though it cannot claim the same degree of probability as in the other. But it is also possible that the contradictions of the evidence are such that every hypothesis which suggests itself leaves some of the statements an unsolved enigma. In such a case the judge is perhaps officially bound to give a decision, though he would gladly suspend it, in the absence of any moral conviction. But enough. The differences are so great that we should throw no more light on our subject by working out the metaphor any further. This judge is the critic. He always may follow the method here described, but whenever he finds it impossible to despatch
the several portions of his task one by one in regular order, then he must follow it. And this necessity presents itself elsewhere indeed, but very specially in the Bible. There, if nowhere else, everything which we can accept as history is a hypothesis which has been found adequate to account for the documents.

I trust that I may assume, without presumption, that the reader will readily grant that the case has been made out for the abstract validity of this method. But I must not shrink from the attempt to illustrate it by a few concrete examples. A second and concluding article on "Critical Method" will be devoted to this attempt.

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A. KUENEN.
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CRITICAL METHOD.—II.

(iii.)

The historian, as we have seen, submits all his documents, in the first instance, to literary criticism, and thus endeavours to satisfy himself as to their authorship, their antiquity, and their character. Should they contain accounts of past events, he next proceeds to investigate their trustworthiness, or, in more general terms, their relation to the reality. But it often happens, especially in Biblical criticism, that these two operations cannot be conducted to a satisfactory conclusion each by itself in its natural order. In this case the critic modifies his method, and adapts himself to the special exigencies of the case. He combines the literary with the more properly historical aspects of his critical investigation, allows the one to throw light upon and guide the other, and by this combined application of the two arrives at an adequate conception of the fact or the series of facts which he is engaged in examining. The hypothesis concerning the past, which has been found adequate to account for the documents, is what he finally accepts and delivers as history.

Such was the result of our previous investigations. And accordingly we may define historical criticism as the
attempt to find an hypothesis that accounts for the documents, and, if several such hypotheses present themselves, the selection of the one which appears on comparison to have the greatest probability in its favour.

It is hardly necessary to lay down any express conditions with which the critical hypothesis must comply, or to establish any standard of comparison by which the conflicting possibilities must be tried; for it stands to reason that no hypothesis can be entertained unless, in the first place, it answers its original purpose of accounting for the form and substance of the document in question, and unless it is also admissible in itself, which implies, of course, that it does not conflict with any well-established fact. It is obvious, too, that the more support it finds in the historical connection into which it must enter, the more confidence it deserves. And, finally, no one will deny that an hypothesis confirmed by analogy deserves the preference over one which violates or at least finds no support in it. Should there be anything in this brief summary which does not at once explain itself, we may fairly expect it to be cleared up by the examples of the working of the Critical Method, which I promised to append to the description of its nature.

Now, there is no better means of bringing out the special characteristics of any procedure than to compare or contrast it with some parallel procedure in the same field; for the very comparison forces us to notice the particular points which might otherwise easily escape us. And in the case in point we all know that there is a certain method which claims to be critical, but which, as a matter of fact, is the direct negation of criticism. I mean, of course, the apologetic method, which sets itself to defend a foregone conclusion by all the means it can command. Whatever the grounds may be upon which the foregone conclusion rests, the apologetic method itself is always and everywhere essentially the same. In the case of historical investiga-
tions it may be applied either by itself or in that special form technically described as "harmonistic-apologetics," or more briefly "harmonistics." Here, then, we have the twofold contrast, in the light of which we are now to examine the working of the critical method.

The Book of Daniel, to which I have already referred, is for several reasons specially well suited to furnish us anew with illustrations. The problem it presents is comparatively simple, inasmuch as we are not encumbered with parallel accounts in the Old Testament with which those in the Book of Daniel have to be harmonised; but, in spite of this, it is still difficult, and, at the same time, of the highest interest. The historian of Israel and of Israel's religion has to assign a place to this book and its author, and to decide whether or not to incorporate its first six chapters in his account of the Babylonian captivity, which will of course assume a very different complexion according to his decision. A secondary reason for selecting this book is that the apologetic method, as applied to it in our own day, is illustrated by a document as good as contemporary, and clothed with the highest official authority.

Let us see, then, how the apologist approaches the Book of Daniel. His firm conviction that it contains pure history is obvious at once, for before he has proved or even examined its trustworthiness, he sketches "The Life and Times of Daniel," and discusses the purposes of Providence in raising up such a man as Daniel, and ordering his lot in such a way. Nor is it long before we are told the grounds upon which this conviction rests; namely, "the reception of the Book of Daniel" first by the Jews and then by the Christians. Now, the fact is beyond dispute that the Jews really did include this book amongst their sacred writings, and that they have always attached a high value to it; but

* P. 489.
† The Holy Bible, &c. (Speaker's Commentary), Vol. VI. pp. 210, seq. The Book of Daniel, by the late H. J. Rose, B.D., and J. M. Fuller, M.A.
as an argument for its antiquity, or more specifically for its origin during the Babylonian captivity, this circumstance is worthless. The history of the Old Testament Canon leaves the amplest possible room for the hypothesis of a later origin. The apologist, therefore, has to force such a significance upon the canonicity of the book as will make it preclude the possibility of its composition in the Maccabæan period; and in order to do so he puts aside everything which points to the lateness of the date at which it was received into the Canon—such as its exclusion from a place amongst the Prophets and its inclusion in the "Hagiographa" or third division of the Old Testament, or the silence of Jesus son of Sirach concerning Daniel and his fortunes. On the other hand, great weight is attached to any scrap of evidence which appears to imply that the book was already in existence in the Persian period, however trivial or even absurd it may be. To this latter category belong the Talmudic statement that "the men of the Great Assembly (Neh. viii.—x.) wrote Ezekiel, the twelve minor prophets, Daniel and Esther," and the story in Flavius Josephus that the Book of Daniel was shown to Alexander in the Temple at Jerusalem, his attention being specially called to the prophecies of his victories over the Persians—presumably without the announcement of his own fall and the breaking up of his kingdom "to the four winds of heaven" (ch. viii. 8; xi. 4)! Finally, "the New Testament and the Church" are summoned, though not, as we might have supposed, simply to vouch for the canonicity the book from about the beginning of our era onwards. This is all that any historian could ask them to prove if he were really in earnest with his investigation, but, on the contrary, the apologist makes the words of Christ (Matt. xxiv. 15) "invest with dignity and inspiration the author He is quoting," so that Christ "forbids us to believe the author of the book a Maccabæan scribe or an Egyptian
enthusiast." But, we ask, if this is a fact, if it is really true that "the Lord of Daniel hath borne testimony to the words of His Prophet by the mouth of His Holy Son," what was the use of entering upon a scholarly investigation at all, as if there really were anything to investigate, or as if any considerations of scholarship on either side could have the smallest weight!

The apologist has now prepared his reader to hear how things really stand with regard to the Book of Daniel. Had he been told at once what is now to be communicated to him, he might perhaps have been disturbed. But after this preparation, his peace of mind will not be endangered by the information that there are some "difficulties connected with the book." These difficulties refer in part to the prophecies, in part to the miracles, and in part to some of the historical statements contained in the Book of Daniel; and, seeing that they have been set forth again and again, one would think that the apologist would find it an easy task to reproduce them fairly; but, as a matter of fact, he does not succeed in doing so, and no one who contests the authenticity of the book could accept his statement as an impartial account of the position of the controversy. And is not this quite natural? The apologist does not see the difficulties as they really are. From his point of view, they are simply so many attacks upon a conviction he cherishes, or upon an authority which he reverences as supreme. How is it possible that he should appreciate their significance? His answers accordingly are often quite beside the mark, especially in reference to the prophecies and the miracles. As regards the contested historical statements, some of them are supposed to be justified, whilst in the case of others we are given the choice between two or more solutions of the difficulty, and the residue are to wait for future discoveries—of cuneiform inscriptions for instance—which will undoubtedly clear up
everything that still appears strange or obscure. We are therefore assured that nothing forbids us to accept the Book of Daniel as a product of the period of which it treats. That the prophet himself wrote it all, from beginning to end, is, indeed, incapable of proof; but how does this affect its value, inasmuch as in any case it is substantially authentic and trustworthy?

We need not stop to prove that this is not the way to go to work. This is not criticism, though it presents itself as such, but its direct negation. Imagine a judge conducting an inquiry on such principles! We will content ourselves with simply placing the true method by the side of this pretence of criticism. Space forbids our going into detail;* but the main outlines are really all we require to enable us to form a judgment. We need not act as though the subject had never been investigated before. The researches of the last hundred years have finally disposed of certain hypotheses which might be considered possible in the abstract. We are justified in assuming that the Book of Daniel is not a mere collection of fragments, but a single whole. It lies before us substantially in the form in which it was composed by its author, and bears no trace of interpolations. As to its origin, we have to face this simple alternative: It was written either by the man whose name it bears, soon after the end of the Captivity, or else during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, soon after the beginning of the Maccabæan revolt. There is no third possibility.

Now it is evident at once that the external testimonies about the Book of Daniel leave the choice between these two hypotheses perfectly open. Its reception into the Old Testament Canon decides nothing essential as to its antiquity; for it is just the question when this reception was effected. The most ancient witness to the canonicity

* See the author's "Historisch-Critisch Onderzoek enz." Vol. II., pp. 416—472.
of the book is the author of the first of Maccabees (chap. ii. 59, 60), who puts a reference to the third and sixth chapters of Daniel into the mouth of the dying Mattathias. But this author wrote after the death of John Hyrcanus, in 106 B.C. (chap. xvi. 24), more than sixty years after the beginning of the revolt, when there had been plenty of time to take up Daniel into the Canon, even if it was not written till the year 185 B.C. And as for Mattathias himself, it will hardly be maintained that the evidence of a man who lived two generations later proves that he actually used those very words as he was dying. Again, the Greek translator of the Proverbs of Jesus son of Sirach (later than 132 B.C.) knows of a collection of sacred writings divided into three parts; but there is no evidence that the Book of Daniel had a place in it. There is room, therefore, for either of the two hypotheses mentioned above. But we may go beyond this, and assert that there are certain facts which give the greater probability to the hypothesis of the Maccabean origin. Jesus son of Sirach (about 200 B.C.) makes no mention either of Daniel or of his three friends, although a place might have been given them with such perfect appropriateness in his "Song of praise of the Fathers" (chap. xliv., seq.). What can be the reason be, except that he did not know the book of Daniel? And, again, in the Jewish Bible, why does not Daniel stand amongst the Prophets? It is there that every one would look for it, and there accordingly, it was transferred as early as in the Alexandrine translation. But in the Hebrew it stands in the third division, which contains the Hagiographa and amongst them the very latest of the books of the Old Testament. There is no natural and really satisfactory explanation of this fact, except the supposition that when the Book of Daniel became known, and was thought worthy of a place among the sacred writings, the collection of the Prophets was already closed. But I will not insist on this;
for I fully admit that external evidence alone cannot decide the question.

Then how about the book itself? Does it not claim to be the work of Daniel? The facts are these:—In chapters vii.—xii. Daniel always speaks in the first person, whereas in chapters i.—vi. he is uniformly spoken of in the third person, and sometimes in a strain of admiration which a man does not usually adopt when writing of himself (chaps. i. 17, 19, 20; v. 11, 12; vi. 4). Now it is true that this change of person may be explained by supposing that the real author of chapters vii.—xii. had reasons which appeared to him satisfactory for speaking of himself and his friends in such language as we find employed in chapters i.—vi.; but it is equally well explained by the contrary hypothesis that the author of chapters i.—vi.—to be distinguished from Daniel—introduces the latter as speaking in the first person in chapters vii.—xii.

The detailed study of the two sections themselves must teach us which of the two hypotheses deserves the preference. Now the answer which this study gives us is so clear and emphatic that no sensible man could hesitate for a moment in his choice, were he not prevented by other considerations from seeing the facts as they really are. The panorama of the future unrolled in chapters vii.—xii. is not only incomplete, but incorrect, as far as regards the Persian period. With respect to Alexander the Great and his successors, it agrees with the facts. The measures taken by Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jewish religion are described down to the minutest details, and the beginning at least of the Maccabæan revolt is mentioned. But the author's knowledge does not extend beyond this point. The period at which the religious rites prescribed by the law were to be restored in the Temple of Jerusalem is more than once indicated, but in no instance correctly. The fall of Antiochus is looked for in a place and in a manner which
history has not confirmed, and the author had formed a
dazzling conception of the subsequent events, which the
reality contradicted in every point. So much for the pro-
phecies. As to the historical statements of chapters i.—vi.,
wherever we are able to compare them with the well-
established facts, we find them hopelessly at variance with
them. The deportation of citizens from Jerusalem in the
third year of Jehoiakim; Babylon at the time of its fall ruled
by King Balshazzar, the son of Nebuchadrezzar; the
Babylonian monarchy succeeded by that of the Medes, and
Balshazzar by "Darius the Mede,"—every one of these
supposed facts is contradicted by the best evidence.
What follows? To suppose that it is Daniel who tells us
all this, and that such a picture of the future had been
revealed to him in a wholly miraculous and mechanical
manner, is nothing short of absurd; whereas it is perfectly
natural that a man who lived during the persecution of
Epiphanes should have had both the knowledge and the
want of knowledge displayed by the writer of Daniel.

But however decisively our choice may be made already,
we have not yet completed our task. We have done scanty
justice to the Book of Daniel, when we have simply
examined its prophecies in the light of their relation to the
historical facts, and asked whether its narratives agree
with established history. But when we go on to take a
general survey, as we are bound to do, of the prophecies
and the narratives together, considered as a single whole,
it only becomes all the clearer that the hypothesis of the
Maccabean origin fully accounts for the facts. Under the
pressure of fierce persecution a faithful Israelite, bending
over the writings of the prophets (chap. ix. 2), might well
conceive the hope that "the time of the end" had now
come, that the redemption would soon arise, and the Mes-
sianic age begin. Firmly convinced that the faithful ser-
vant of Yahweh would never be deserted by his Lord, and
that the arrogance of the heathen who attacked the god of Israel would be put to shame by the result, might he not, must he not, encourage his companions in suffering and strengthen them to endure to the uttermost by setting before them, in the fate of Daniel and his friends on the one hand and Nebuchadrezzar and Belshazzar on the other, the end which awaited them and the end which awaited their tyrants? But why adopt this special form? His expectations are such as the victims of persecution would cherish, the lessons of his narratives such as they needed; but what induced him to throw them into such a form? Why did he make Daniel the mouthpiece of a message which he might just as well have delivered as the word of Yahweh to himself? Why did he take the fortunes of these ancient heroes as the vehicles of the teaching he might so easily have expressed in some other way? A moment’s reflection serves to banish these last doubts. No prophet had arisen in Israel for nearly three centuries. The time when “the Lord God would do nothing without revealing his secrets to his servants, the prophets,”* seemed to be gone for ever. Moreover, our author was distinctly conscious that his own conviction rested on a study of the prophetic writings and the earnest reflections to which it had given rise, and in obedience to this feeling he put the truths which he himself owed to the Ancients into the mouth of an ancient seer. And why should he not select Daniel, that pattern of devoutness and of heavenly wisdom, to whom even Ezekiel had pointed his contemporaries (chap. xiv. 14, 20; xxviii. 8)? If we are unable to throw any further light on this special point, it is simply because we do not know what traditions concerning Daniel were current at the time, and to what extent our author himself could adopt them and work them out. But this want of detailed information does not alter the fact that the general form of the book is in perfect harmony

* Amos iii. 7.
with the character of the beginning of the Maccabean period.

Our hypothesis, then, is supported on every side, and there is not a single phenomenon under discussion for which it fails to account. Not one? But does it not compel us to deny all value to the Book of Daniel, and to brand it as an impudent forgery? Such appears to be the necessary consequence of the Maccabean hypothesis, to those who are occupied in attacking it. But amongst those who defend it, there is not one who would accept this supposed consequence. The scholars in question may have an open eye for all that distinguishes the Book of Daniel to its disadvantage from the writings of the Prophets, and to the dark side of the influence exercised by the book; but this does not prevent them from doing full justice to the author, and giving him, unknown as he is by name, a place amongst the pious and heroic sons of Israel. It is altogether unreasonable to look down with contempt upon “a Maccabean scribe or an Egyptian enthusiast.” “The wind bloweth where it listeth,” and religious faith even when it speaks in strange, nay, in offensive, forms, ought to be treated with respect.

The Book of Daniel itself may suggest an introduction to the second portion of our task—the illustration of the Critical as opposed to the Harmonistic Method. We have already seen that this book gives its own version of the fall of the Babylonian or Chaldean monarchy. It represents the last Babylonian king as succeeded by Darius the Mede, who is already advanced in years (ch. v. 31), and who is followed in his turn by Cyrus the Persian (compare chap. ix. 1 with x. 1 and i. 21). And in accordance with these ideas the Chaldean monarchy is made to give place to the Median, and that again to the Persian, in Nebuchadrezzar’s dream (chap. ii.), and in the vision of the four beasts and
the Son of man (chap. vii). It is true that the Median and Persian monarchies are considered as mutually connected, so that in another vision (chap. viii.) they are united under the symbol of a goat with two unequal horns; but they are nevertheless distinguished one from the other, and in order of time the one follows the other in the rule of Babylon. Now it is well known that numerous accounts of these very interesting events, especially the establishment of the Persian monarchy, have come down to us from antiquity, and that they neither agree with each other nor with the Book of Daniel. With the graphic and detailed narrative of Herodotus, and the account given by Xenophon in the Cyropædia we have been familiar since our childhood; and versions of the same events have come down to us from Deinon, from Nicolaus Damascenus, and from Moses Chorenensis, versions which differ from both the above, and also from each other.* Now what is the attitude adopted by modern historians in the face of all these divergent accounts? Some of the narratives are recommended by their antiquity, or by some other consideration. Amongst these are the accounts of Herodotus and that of Xenophon, who had visited Persia himself. Do modern scholars, then, consider themselves bound to reconcile all these accounts, or at any rate the oldest and best avouched of them, and then maintain the principal features of them as history? Not one of them thinks of doing anything of the kind. Historians who know what they are about, from Bähr † to M. Duncker and Canon Rawlinson,‡ have contented themselves with framing an hypothesis which recommends itself by its intrinsic probability, and accounts for the rise and subsequent embellishment of the divergent

† Ctesias Cnidii Operum Reliquiae (Frankf. 1824), pp. 85, seg.
narratives. They decline to believe, for instance, that Astyages gave his only child in marriage to a Persian, and thus, by his own act, transferred the supremacy from the ruling to the subject people. Cyrus, they tell us, was the son of the governor of Persia, or of the tributary prince of that country. But, then, what are we to say to the narratives, which tell us the other story with an unusual approach to unanimity? By carefully noting their origin and their tendency, and by looking at them in the light of all that we know from other quarters of the ideas entertained by their authors, we succeed in explaining how they were produced, and thus accounting for them quite satisfactorily. Though greatly tempted to show this in detail, I must content myself with a reference to the masterly treatment of the subject by M. Duncker. He takes no notice of Darius the Mede. But history does not suffer by the omission, and it only remains for the Biblical critic to give a plausible explanation of the very divergent representation of events in Daniel—a task which he will have no great difficulty in accomplishing.

Now it is a curious proof of the power of tradition that the ordinary reader of the Old Testament does not perceive that it contains a conflict of evidence similar to the one we have now referred to, and that, too, as regards one of the most popular figures in the history of Israel—namely, David. Leaving the minor shades of difference out of view for the present, we may say that the Old Testament presents us with three types or versions of the character of David. We find one type in chaps. xi.—xxix. of the First Book of Chronicles, where David appears as the founder of the Jerusalem ritual; another in the superscriptions of the seventy-three psalms that bear his name, where David is the religious poet, the royal harp-player; a third in 1 Samuel xvi.—1 Kings ii., where David is the valiant

warrior, the freebooter, the prosperous monarch, the weak father. It need hardly be said that these types are connected with each other. The Chronicler, it is true, omits many circumstances with which he was well acquainted, such as David's adventures under Saul and Ishbosheth, and (which is more significant) the stories of his domestic life (2 Sam. ix.—xx.) and the contested succession (1 Kings i.); but he takes up into his narrative other statements of the Book of Samuel (chaps. v.—viii., xxiv., &c.). And again, the psalm of consecration for the worship at Zion given in 1 Chronicles xvi. 8—36, is taken from our collection of Psalms, though it is not one of those which are there ascribed to David. In the same way there are points of contact between what we have called the second and the third types. For instance, in the appendix to the Second Book of Samuel (chaps. xxi.—xxiv.) the eighteenth Psalm is given as a poem composed by David (chap. xxiii.) and what appears there as his swan-song (chap. xxiii. 1—7) is not unlike some of the Psalms. Moreover, in the body of the continuous narrative itself, David appears as a poet (2 Samuel i. 18—27, iii. 33, seq.) and as a skilful player on the harp (1 Samuel xvi., xviii.). This makes it all the more natural that we should begin by regarding these three types as the different aspects of a single character, and endeavouring to unite them all in our conception of the historical David. In other words, we imagine—without of course formulating the idea distinctly in our own minds—that the three authors divided the work amongst them, and supplemented each other's omissions. This is the unconscious harmonistic of the layman which is afterwards deliberately worked out by ecclesiastical scholarship, and is still employed, in its entirety or with some qualification, by the apologist. Why should we shrink from saying that the task becomes more hopeless every day? The three types cannot be welded into real unity. They refuse to the last to blend together. In the earliest account
of David's last days (1 Kings i. 1—ii. 11) there is no room for the great assembly which is described in 1 Chronicles xxviii., seq., and the Chronicler's version is certainly not meant to supplement the older narrative, but to supersede it by something more edifying—or less scandalous. Indeed, the same might be said of everything which the Chronicler adds to his predecessors. His David, who does not think himself pure enough to build a temple to the Lord because of the blood he has spilt in war (chap. xxii. 8, xxviii. 3), differs widely indeed from the warrior of the Books of Samuel. And so again does the poet of the Psalms. Between the ideas as to the forgiveness of sins that lie at the foundation of Psalm xxxii., and the sacrifice of Saul's descendants in expiation of their father's guilt (2 Samuel xxi. 1—14), the chasm is wide. The pure monotheism of the Psalms was hardly professed in the home where the teraphim lay ready to hand on an emergency (1 Samuel xix. 11—17). The pious sentiments expressed by David from time to time in the older history (1 Samuel xxvi. 19; 2 Samuel xvi. 25, seq.; xvii. 10, seq.) are essentially different in tone and character from those embodied in the majority of the Psalms that bear his name. Expressions such as that in Psalm xviii. 21—27 would be strange enough in the mouth of a man whose public and private life were disfigured by so many blots. But enough! We were bound to test the hypothesis of the unity of the three types, but in order to maintain it we should have to accept a psychological absurdity, or, if we could not reconcile ourselves to that, we should have to distort the facts. We must, therefore, make our choice, and that choice, which can only be in favour of the Books of Samuel, must be decisive. We cannot be content, as some have been, with giving up the Chronicler, or some, or even most, of the superscriptions of the Psalms. Such half measures may remove the most glaring contradictions, but they leave
others untouched. It is only when we strictly confine ourselves to the Books of Samuel, and especially to the oldest narratives embodied in them, that there rises before us a true historical figure which towers above its surroundings no doubt, but nevertheless belongs to them, and moreover is in its place between the ruggedness of Israel’s heroic age just closed, and the succeeding days when Solomon built a temple to Yahweh, but also raised the sanctuaries of Astarte, Molech, and Chemosh (1 Kings xi. 5—7).

But whence come the other types, and whence, we may add, the traits in the Books of Samuel themselves, which are barely or not at all consistent with the really historical conception of which we have just spoken? Before answering this question, let me just remark that the preceding sketch of the application of the critical method would place it in a very false light if it were regarded as complete. As a matter of fact, of course, the investigation has been carried down to the details, or rather has started from them. The result, as far as the Chronicler goes, is to show that his representations are not only impossible to accept in the mass, but are also severally and individually either contradicted by older accounts or in themselves highly improbable. And so, too, the authority of the superscriptions of the Psalms has long been undermined. The great majority of them are glaringly incorrect. Moreover, it has been shown, on internal and external evidence alike, that all these superscriptions are of late origin, not older than the time of the second temple, and, therefore, separated by centuries from the age of David. Accordingly it is far from capricious or violent to yield to the demonstrated necessity, and surrender these two later, types in favour of the older conception founded on the Books of Samuel. But the question still remains, how these later types arose, and our hypothesis as to the historical David cannot be regarded as established until it has given a satis-
factory answer. As a matter of fact, however, it complies with this requirement perfectly. David was not forgotten by his people. Political circumstances naturally led to an ever-increasing appreciation of his person and his work as the unifier of Israel. In the eyes of posterity he became more and more completely the model of an Israelitish king, and the natural consequence was that he was idealised. The hope of the regeneration of his dynasty, and at a later period of its restoration to the throne—the Messianic expectation, in a word—must have worked powerfully in the same direction. And meanwhile the religious convictions of the highest minds in Israel were undergoing a marked change. The conceptions of Yahweh, and of the religion which was acceptable to him, were constantly being elevated and purified. This could not but have an influence on the current ideas concerning David. He, too, must be remodelled as the conceptions of God were changed, if he was still to remain what his own contemporaries had thought him—"the man after Yahweh's heart." The poetical and musical powers which he really possessed according to the most ancient traditions could only be thought of as exercised in glorifying the god of Israel. And thus it happened, probably at a comparatively early date, that religious poems were ascribed to him and to his contemporaries. And when, after the Babylonian Captivity, the poetry and music of the Temple had pushed forward from their old basis with a new and vigorous development, nothing was more natural than to regard David as their founder. This again paved the way to the related but far from identical conception of his person and work which is given us by the Chronicler. After the reform of Ezra and Nehemiah (440 B.C.), religion became more and more closely identified in many minds with the ritual. The arrangement of the Temple and the regulation of its worship must now be assigned to no less a man than
David, or if possible even to Yahweh himself (1 Chronicles xxviii. 19). Unquestionably, it was Solomon and not David who had actually built a house for the Lord, but David had not failed to make preparations for the great work (compare 2 Samuel viii. 10, seq.). Why then should he have concerned himself with nothing but the Temple choirs? Why should he not also have arranged and classified the priests, the Levites, and the porters? To ascribe to him all the measures which the Chronicler enumerates seemed nothing more than the necessary filling out of the meagreness of the ancient tradition. In the opinion of one to whom "a day in God's courts was better than a thousand," the "man after Yahweh's heart" could not have done less than is here set down.

Now the factors into which these types of the "man after Yahweh's heart" have been resolved in this rapid sketch are no mere imaginary quantities. Each one of them is taken directly from the reality. Had I been able to work out the problem more elaborately, and include, for instance, the history of the Mosaic legislation, all this would have appeared more clearly yet. But even as it is, we have seen enough to justify us in declaring that, given the veritable form of David as we have restored it, its transformation, and just such a transformation as we have traced, was an historical necessity. Thus it appears that our hypothesis, which was at first recommended solely by its own internal probability, completely accounts for the whole material which the historian finds to his hand.

Our review of the three types of David is something more than one out of many examples of the application of the critical as opposed to the harmonistic method. It throws light upon the origin and growth of the historical narratives of the Bible in general and explains the influences that have been at work upon them. Now we
may sum up these influences under the name of "the religious factor" in the composition of history, and may go on to declare that the recognition of this factor, and the application of our knowledge of it to historical researches, is what distinguishes the criticism of to-day from that of past times. Were we to ask the opponents of modern criticism what they conceive to be the special mark of its method, they would answer "the 'tendenz' theory," and in so answering they would also give the reason why they must decline to follow the predominant school of criticism, though they are very far from wishing to be thought uncritical in consequence. Their account of the state of things is much as follows: The advocate of "the 'tendenz' theory," when considering a Biblical narrative, does not inquire into its historical foundation in fact, but simply into the writer's purpose in composing it. He assumes it as certain à priori that the author must have had some special design, that it was not his intention, or at least not his only intention, to relate what had really happened, but that he wished to produce a certain impression, to give emphasis to some special exhortation, or to enforce his own religious ideas. Now, of course, there is no harm in these motives in themselves, but, nevertheless, if we know that a man is swayed by them, we at once suspect, if we do not absolutely reject, his testimony as to the facts of history. The advocate of "the 'tendenz' theory," accordingly, destroys the whole value of historical evidence by his unfounded suspicions. . . . So far our opponents! Now we can but partially adopt their conception of the critical method. Their one-sidedness is indicated by their predilection for the expression "tendenz theory," since it does not describe the modern method completely, nor, therefore, fairly. It is true that we recognise a definite "tendenz" (or tendency to make the narrative subserve some religious idea of the writer's own) in many of the Biblical narratives,
but we are far from supposing that this tendency was simply arbitrary. The historian, of course, displays his facts in a special light in order that others may take a special view of them; but he does so first and foremost, because he sees them in that light himself. This latter fact, which is the really important one, is entirely obscured by the nickname "tendenz criticism." The Biblical writers really saw the people and facts in the light in which they show them to us. But in that case how is it that they so often represent them as different from what they really were, and even from what previous historians had declared them to be? It is because each of them had his own point of view, which differed from that of his predecessors. At first it requires a considerable effort to understand this fully. We are accustomed to try, at any rate, to prevent our personal opinions and sympathies from influencing our conception of the past. And, what is more, if we made no such effort we should be acting wrongly. But why is it in our power, and consequently a part of our duty, to act thus? Because our personal convictions are, at least relatively, independent of the past, and it is therefore no necessity, or at any rate no vital necessity to us, to change our conception of the past with our own changing convictions. In former ages, this was not so. "Historical fact" and "truth" were identical. Just because the truth was supposed to have come straight from God, without any intermediate agency, it must also be supposed to have been perfectly revealed from the very first; and therefore the insight into God's nature and will which had really been gained at a later time was unintentionally antedated and ascribed to a high antiquity.* The idea of historical development was still to be born. As yet men did not and could not know how the nascent truth

shakes itself loose with many a strain and struggle from the error with which at first it is entangled, how it unfolds itself freely for a time, and then once more enters into fresh combinations, from which it must again disentangle itself hereafter. The theism of those days held truth to be as unalterable as He from whom it flows, and was even inconsistent with the modern theory of "a progressive revelation," which is really nothing but a compromise between the genuine supernaturalism and the theory of development. The consequence is obvious, and hardly needs restating. In ancient times, and specifically in Israel, the sense of historical continuity could only be preserved by the constant compliance on the part of the past with the requirements of the present—that is to say, its constant renovation and transformation. This may be called the law of religious historiography. At any rate, it dominates the historical writings alike of the Israelites and of the early Christians. To the three stages of the development of religion in Israel, the prophetic, the Deuteronomic, and the priestly, answers a three-fold conception of Israel's history.* Again, in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic age, the Judæo-Christian, the Pauline, and the Alexandrine conceptions of Christianity followed each other, and not unfrequently came into collision; and accordingly we find in the Gospels a Judæo-Christian picture of the Christ, a modification of it in a Pauline sense by Luke, and then, as the result of the application of the Logos-idea to the traditional materials, a complete transformation and glorification of the teacher of Nazareth in the fourth Gospel. So it is, and so it must be. Inasmuch as the Christians who followed the lines laid down by Paul, and the disciples of the Christian-Alexandrine gnosis after them, could not possibly separate themselves from the Christ, to whom they were conscious of owing all their privileges, it became an his-

* Compare the author's "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel," pp. 406, seq.
torical necessity for the conception of the work of Jesus in the midst of his own people to pass through the same phases which the Christian idea itself had passed through. Allowing for the difference of the subject, we see the very same process at work in Judaism. The more detailed precepts and regulations with which the later Scribes supplemented the Mosaic Law, were really the work of these Scribes themselves, and consequently grew more numerous and more minute with every century. But in the opinion of the believing Jew, they were just as holy and divine as the Law itself,—and consequently just as old. They must, therefore, have come from Moses himself, though they were not written down by him, but uttered by word of mouth and so preserved from generation to generation. In the same way, doubtless, many a “scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven” was firmly convinced that the “new things” he was bringing out of his treasure-house were as old as Christianity itself.

We may seem to have wandered far away from our more special subject; but we have not really done so. The same necessity which forces itself upon the historian when dealing with the accounts of David meets him again at every point in his Biblical investigations. The attempt to harmonise, the hypothesis that the conflicting statements merely represent different aspects of the same thing, comes into collision with the facts not now and then, but constantly. There must be a reason for this, and it was worth while tracing it out and explaining it. We have now found that it is inseparable from the very nature of the documents upon which the Biblical critic has to work. Until this was understood, he had to content himself with unnatural, or even impossible, hypotheses. He could not venture to adopt any other course than that which he actually took; for he felt bound to assume that every story rested upon an actual fact, so that the only way of
doing justice to them all was to reconcile them with each other. This necessity is now removed. The contradiction in some instances was so palpable that it was simply impossible not to recognise it. The recognition was naturally followed, after a time, by the explanation; and the explanation, as our readers may now perceive, is of such a nature as to leave the characters of the writers wholly unarrayed, while it rather raises than lowers the value of the materials at command for the history of the spiritual development of Israel or of the Christian community. Even if it were otherwise, we should have to reconcile ourselves to it; but as it is, we have certainly no cause to complain. Criticism rides us of many a supposed fact for which, in spite of our belief in it, we could really find no place; and, at the same time, it takes us into the work-place of the religious spirit, and surely the more closely we have examined the workings of this spirit, the better we shall understand it.

(iv.)

I said at the first that it would not be necessary to justify the critical method—that it would be enough simply to describe it. Nor do I wish to withdraw from that position. But this does not preclude me from devoting a few pages, in conclusion, to the consideration of the complaints which are often urged against criticism. They are generally founded upon an imperfect knowledge of its real method, and are silenced at once by a true comprehension of it.

What sense is there, for example, in the assertion that the new Biblical criticism substitutes "theories" for "facts"? The meaning may perhaps be that it often leads to the rejection of what is represented in the Biblical documents as "fact." But in that case its accusers should speak of "narratives" or "traditions," which they have
surely no right to treat as the same thing as "facts." The critic has the utmost possible reverence for real facts; for he starts from the documents, keeps to the documents, and ends with the documents. These are his "facts," and he never lets them go for an instant. "Theories," which are not borrowed from the documents, and cannot be justified by them, he systematically rejects. Can the opponents of the modern criticism say as much with equal right?

There is just as little ground for the complaint that criticism is destructive. I am almost ashamed to repeat the simple and obvious statement that criticism cannot destroy anything in the world; and even if it could, it would take great care not to do so. It values its facts far too highly to be willing to lose any one of them, and only wishes it could increase their number. But it does not rob these facts of the character which they really bear, or represent them as being other than they are. Whatever its conclusions may be, for instance, concerning the historical bearings and the religious value of certain books of the Old and New Testaments, it does not deny that these books were received by the Jewish Synagogue or the Christian Church into their Canon; and it allows to this fact its full weight of significance. It is only destructive of those "theories" which have gathered round the fact in the course of ages, and are still maintained in certain quarters. For instance, there is the theory that the framers of the Canon never made mistakes as to the authors or as to the historical value of the books which they deemed worthy of a place in their collection. Thus it is probably true, though we cannot be certain of it, that the Scribes attributed Ecclesiastes to Solomon, and regarded the Book of Esther as pure history. This opinion—once more assuming that it really was the opinion of the unknown Scribes in question—we are quite ready to consider; but as for treating it with implicit reverence and blind assent, we cannot and must
not do anything of the kind. If the rejection or modification of such judgments as these is destructive, then, indeed, criticism often deserves the epithet in the highest degree. But how can this be considered a reproach by Protestants, who do not believe in an infallible church, and still less, we may presume, in an infallible synagogue!

Allied to the charge we have examined, and equally unreasonable, is the assertion that the new criticism is negative. This implies a contrast with positive criticism. But the two epithets are equally inappropriate. True criticism is always both negative and positive at once, and negative only in order to be positive. If the reality can only be reached by the rejection of a part of the tradition concerning it, surely no one would ask the critic to hold back. But possibly the meaning is that the hypotheses of criticism concerning the men and the facts of the past are far less beautiful and attractive than the traditional accounts of them, and that this justifies the ascription of a negative character to criticism. To this objection my answer is twofold. In the first place, no one destroys the ancient narratives. If they are really beautiful and attractive, they are so still, and nothing prevents our enjoying their beauty. It is true that we can no longer regard them as an exact impress of the reality, but does that deprive them of their aesthetic or religious value? We do not despise beautiful parables or touching legends in other cases. And in the second place, we cannot allow for a moment that the pictures of the past sketched out by criticism invariably yield in beauty or religious value to the traditional representations. If it were so, we should have to reconcile ourselves to it, and, for the reason just mentioned, we should be able to do so. But, as a matter of fact, this is not the case; indeed it is far from unusual for the criticism of the Old and New Testaments to rehabilitate their heroes; and this is all the more significant because as long as the
critic is true to his principles, he is not in the least affected by any desire to place their actions in a more favourable light. Is it not highly noteworthy that so many of the reproaches, apparently well founded, which have been cast in ancient and modern times against the saints of Israel, fall away at once as soon as the narratives concerning them are cast into the crucible of criticism? To show this with reference to the patriarchs would compel me to transgress the limits laid down; and, besides, it might reasonably be asked whether modern criticism can really be said to rehabilitate them, however many scandals it removes, inasmuch as it regards them as personifications rather than persons. But take such a case as that of Samuel. If I am compelled to accept as history all that is told—no doubt with the idea of doing him honour—about his attitude with reference to the choice of a king (1 Sam. viii., x. 17—26, xii.), if I must believe the two accounts of the rejection of Saul (1 Sam. xiii. 8—14; xv.), and the story of the anointing of David (xvi. 1—18), then I can see no chance of rescuing Samuel, and I must throw upon him the responsibility of the disappointed hopes that followed Saul’s elevation. It is criticism—unprejudiced criticism observe—which enables us still to reverence him as one of Israel’s heroes. In a modified form the same phenomenon reappears in the case of David. Many of my readers are probably aware how unfavourably he is judged by no less an historian than Prof. Max Duncker.* Now I am quite willing to undertake his defence even against so great an authority, but it must be upon one condition—viz., that I may exercise criticism, and exercise it as freely as was indicated above. If I were compelled to accept the tradition as it stands, I should indeed be at a loss for an answer to more than one of the charges urged.

by Duncker. It is only when the image of David has been freed from all that later generations have thrown around it by way of embellishment, that David himself remains "a hero," and, even when he does not act heroically, "a man and a brother." And does not the same hold good of the New Testament characters? Paul certainly has gained rather than lost by the application of a severe criticism to the narratives concerning him. It is only by rejecting the well-meant apologetical statements of the Book of Acts (xviii. 18, xxi. 20) that we can acquit him of an "accommodation" of very questionable character.

There is a greater appearance of truth in the reproach that the results of criticism are utterly uncertain, and are sufficiently refuted by their mutual contradictions, and even in some cases by the wavering conceptions of one and the same critic. But we are not without an answer even here. Indeed, no great weight can be attached to the argument in any case, for difference of view concerning the truth is infinitely better than agreement in error. Criticism is no more refuted by a reference to its gropings after the truth than Protestantism was by "l'histoire de ses variations." The critics, indeed, have often followed a false track, and no doubt they are still going astray with regard to many details, for "es irrt der Mensch, so lang' er strebt;" but is that any reason why he should give up "striving"? We need not, however, confine ourselves to these general considerations. Our study of the critical method has furnished us with a complete answer to the objection we are now considering. In the first place, we have gained a clear conception of the enormous difficulties with which the historian of Israel and of early Christianity has to contend. The scarcity of the documents on the one hand, and their special character on the other, are constantly perplexing him. Though we could not accept the advice of those who urged us on this very ground to drop the whole investigation, yet we certainly must grant that nothing short of an additional
supply of documents could remove the uncertainty that
now unquestionably exists. It is almost impossible, under
these circumstances, that hypotheses should not be put
forward which it is equally impossible to establish or to confute
from the documents, and concerning which, therefore, no real
decision can be reached. It is almost necessary that
theses should be defended at the same time and with regard
to the same subject which exclude each other, but are none
of them excluded by the facts. And in the next place, our
review of the Critical Method has emphatically directed our
attention to the influence—always present, but often neg-
lected—of the subjective factor in the composition of his-
tory. I described the task of the historian as the framing
and verifying of hypotheses, because his work seemed to be
most correctly and completely represented by this formula;
and we now see that it had the additional advantage of
bringing into prominence the enormous influence of the
historian's personality, of his penetration, his gift of com-
bining—in a word, what we may call his special genius.
Ernest Naville has recently reminded us, with admirable
skill, of the important part which is played by these sub-
jective gifts even on the field of the natural sciences, in
spite of their claim to objectivity; * and from the nature
of the case their significance in the search for truth on the
literary and historical fields is greater still. It would not
be very surprising if a man were to shrink from the piles
of historical works on the Old and New Testaments,
determining to pass all this chaos of speculation on one
side, and confine his attention to the sources themselves.
But this would be extremely foolish, for he would be robbing
himself, perhaps, of a good half of his material. Or is that
too much to say? In such a case one can but speak for
himself; but the author of the present article has no hesita-
tion in declaring that he would be just as sorry to be deprived

* La Logique de l'Hypothèse (Bibliothèque de Philosophie Contempo-
of all that others have seen in the documents and the hypotheses they have framed, as to be deprived of the documents themselves. His experience has taught him that the facts do indeed speak, but that the ears often need to be opened before their voice can be heard. A knowledge of the critical method teaches us to understand all this, and so to appreciate the work of our predecessors; and it teaches us, at the same time, how unreasonable it is to complain of the constant change of critical results, or to make that change a reproach to criticism itself. Where subjectivity plays so important a part, the natural consequences of its action cannot possibly fail to appear.

This leads us to our concluding remark. Even with reference to the mental qualifications I have been speaking of, each one of us is the child of his times. Each successive generation has more positive knowledge than the one that went before it, and on the strength of its advancing culture it turns fresh eyes and a clearer glance upon the past. Hence it follows that the representation of any portion of the past reality made by one generation will not completely satisfy the next. History has to be constantly rewritten, even when the documents remain the same. But a conquest which has once been made is never lost. History is a progressive science, or, at least, it is so whenever the historian understands that he must not ignore the work of his predecessors, but must take it up into his own mind. How gladly ought we to reconcile ourselves to the "variations of history"! If the line is never wantonly broken, then these variations are ever closer approximations to the truth. We need not fear to let "our little systems cease to be" as soon as they have had "their day," for they were but "broken lights," and were not meant to be permanent. They have done their work if they have shown us some little more of that truth which "is more than they."

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