

Bright, John, The Authority of the Old Testament (Abingdon Press:Nashville) 1967

p. 103 Classical Wellhausenism has vanished from the scene. To be sure, the documentary hypothesis - which Wellhausen adapted and perfected, ^{but} /did not originate - continues to command the acceptance of the majority of scholars, albeit in a vastly modified form; and many features of the work of that great scholar and his colleagues have stood the test of time. But almost no one today would wish to describe the history of Israel's religion in terms of an evolutionary development in the realm of ethics and of religious ideas and institutions, or would imagine that its essential nature could even remotely be grasped from that perspective.

p. 116 Before the rise of the critical study of the Bible the fundamental unity of the biblical revelation was generally taken for granted in the mainstream of Christianity. The Bible was regarded on all hands as a compendium of revealed doctrine, given by God, and therefore in all its parts consistent with itself. . . And this state of affairs prevailed, to speak in general, until relatively modern times.

But the triumph of the critical ^{Historicism} approach to the Bible brought a fundamental change. For one thing, an almost exclusively doctrinal interest in the Bible was replaced by one that was almost exclusively historical: the Bible was valued by scholars primarily as a source book of history. Most of the leading biblical scholars of the last century, especially in Germany, stood in the tradition of historicism. Their concern was to write biblical history, and the history of the biblical religion, scientifically on the basis of a critical evaluation of the sources, as it actually took place (wie es eigentlich gewesen). This approach to history writing had been developed among secular historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially by Leopold von Ranke and his followers, and was taken over by biblical scholars out of an understandable concern to make theology respectable as a historical science. The biblical documents would be subjected to critical analysis like any other historical documents, and biblical history written like any other history, as it actually occurred. The Bible was of interest to these scholars primarily for the historical information that it affords, not for its theology; the fact that the Bible consistently imposes a theological interpretation on history was regarded by not a few as regrettable and a demerit.