

p. 71 A German, the whole has by now learned in blood and tears, is unhappy unless he has everything and everyone accounted for, labeled, regimented, whether it be the chickens in the year, the children in the home, the citizens in the land, or the angels in heaven. "A German," writes an American correspondent, "cannot leave a fact alone. He has to organize and systematize it, as he organizes and systematizes everything else; he must have a theory into which it can be fitted." And it may be added that once he proposes a theory he will smash the head of any fact that will not submit to it. With such a constitutional bent, the critics have come to the Hebrew Bible, and what wreck and ruin have they wrought there. Each one cut its text to his own pattern and slashed and hacked words, phrases, verses, and whole sections that proved ungovernable; each one approached it as a schoolmaster "teaching the prophets how Hebrew should be formed and Hebrew words spelled." It is no exaggeration to state that there is hardly a word in the Bible which some German critic did not emend or alter or erase as being a marginal gloss or editor's intrusion. An obscure passage or rare word was his golden opportunity for unloading of conjectures and speculations without end. . . . Wellhausen, in order to destroy a thousand years of Jewish history, converted women into territories, marriage into settlements, and divorce into migration. p. 72 Stade, for the sake of his thesis, changed a tamarish to an asherah and the Everlasting God to a local deity. Meyer, to give the Jews a sinister character and prove that they were bereft of a sense of humor, declared that the name "Isaac," which was conceived in laughter and overflows with playfulness, was a euphemism for der grimmen Blick, the wrathful look. . . . As this critical nightmare continued, Biblical exegesis "degenerated into a mass of farfetched hypotheses and haphazard theories . . . taking the whole Pentateuch as it [was] made to appear, the impression [was] left of a patchwork stuck together by stupid authors and ignorant scribes." The Germans had their triumph. The acceptance of a regnant hypothesis or the devising of a new one had become the only criterion for Biblical scholarship. Unfortunately, not all the critics have as yet rid themselves of this baneful superstition and its ruinous consequences.