14.5-5
See quote p. 2

Theology Today, July, 1946   "Interpreting The Old Testament" by G. Ernest Wright
pp. 176-91

p. 179   According to the person who is living in this stream of nineteenth century
                                                    p. 180
thought the significance of the Old Testament, therefore, is/seen to lie in the

development from simple, primitive ideas to the advanced and enlightened concep-

tions of Second Isaia, particularly as they are exemplified in the teaching of

Jesus. This hypothesis raises far more problems than it solves, . . . it is well

to bear in mind certain presuppositions upon which it is based.

In the first place, it assumes that the real nature of early Israelite re-

ligion is to be discovered by the methodology of "comparative religion." . . .

There are at least three things wrong with this procedure when it is applied

to the Old Testament. First, the only convincing and explanatory parallels to an

Israelite conception or practice should come from the environment contemporary

with and contiguous to Israel in which traceable connections can be established.

. . . Secondly, the religious thinking of any one culture and period has a certain

wholeness or organic nature . . . It is, of course, quite possible to pull out an

item here and another there and compare them with certain items abstracted from

their living context in another environment. Yet such comparison of stray items

is not likely to be significant when the whole from which they are derived is left
                  p.181
unexamined. . . / Thirdly, the method of comparative religion, while capable of

producing excellent results if properly used, has been too largely confined to

comparison of superficial similarities while obscuring the differences. With a

curious myopia many scholars have thus been able to see no difference between the

religion of early Israel and that of Canaan. Comparative religion ought to be more

objective and as concerned with the distinctive as with the similar!

The second major presupposition of critical scholarship has been the Hegelian

assumption that history is a steady movement from the lower to the higher, from

the simple to the complex.