

**A CRITICAL
INTRODUCTION TO
THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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A critical introduction to the Old Testament by George Buchanan Gray

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BY

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PREFACE

IN spite of the fact that it is customary to bind it in a single volume, the Old Testament contains a considerable body of literature. Yet, if that literature were simply and unquestionably the product of the small number of authors recognised by 'tradition,' though there would be a place for histories of Hebrew literature, there would be little or none for what it has become customary to call critical introductions.

But 'tradition' is no longer really accepted even by 'conservative' scholars: they may, indeed, maintain, for example, that the Pentateuch is the work of Moses, but they recognise at the same time that it has received additions from later hands than his, additions, too, of considerably greater extent than the record of Moses' death, which even Jewish 'tradition' admitted, though not unanimously, to have been written by another.

The inquiries, then, with which critical introductions are concerned, are necessary, and the real difficulty is to do justice to them within the compass of a small volume. What I have attempted is to show first of all that a problem exists, that tradition is inadequate to explain the facts which are revealed by any careful study of the several books. The actual solution of the various problems can often be but very partial; and the answers to many of the questions that arise tentative, and far from certain. To many of the problems many different solutions or variations of the same solution have been given. It

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would have been impossible to give even an inadequate account of all of these, and I determined to devote my allotted space to as full a presentation of the evidence as possible, and an indication of one or two of the more probable conclusions, or at least of the direction in which such conclusions must be sought. Under the circumstances I felt it best to take upon myself in most cases the responsibility for the conclusions suggested, lest for lack of space I might do injustice to the form in which other scholars have previously presented them. For this reason, there is less allusion in the body of the work to other scholars than there would otherwise have been; and it is all the more important, therefore, to state here once for all that beyond the selection and presentation of the material, and now and again, perhaps, a fresh turn to an argument, this volume lays no claim to originality, and that the names of scholars in whose footsteps I have followed, or of whose work I have availed myself, will be found, if not in the main body of the work, in the Bibliography at the end.

I have written my book throughout with a view to being intelligible to those who are unfamiliar with Hebrew. For a just estimate of the often very important linguistic evidence a knowledge of Hebrew is, indeed, necessary: but for the most part I have confined myself to indicating the general character and significance of this evidence, and would refer the reader who wishes to consider it more fully to the larger work of Dr. Driver in which it is so admirably collected and interpreted. For the rest, though the subject can doubtless be better pursued by making a constant use of the Hebrew Bible, the arguments can, I believe, be sufficiently followed with the help of a good translation; and though, wherever possible, it will be

wise to make use of a more critical translation, such as some of the more recent commentaries and other works mentioned in the Bibliography contain, the Revised Version, which is for all critical study incomparably superior to the Authorised Version, will in general suffice, especially if careful use is made of the margins, which contain so much of the most valuable work of the Revisers.

The several books are discussed in the order in which they stand in the English Bible, with three exceptions, and these will, I trust, cause no inconvenience: I have grouped Ruth with Esther at the end of the historical books, Lamentations with the non-prophetical, poetical books, and reserved Daniel for the last chapter.

Chapter xiv. is reprinted with some slight alterations, and the omission of sections on the titles and religious characteristics of the Psalter (which would not have fallen within the scope of the present work), from the article 'Psalms' in Dr. Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible in One Volume*. I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging the courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. T. and T. Clark, who kindly gave me permission to reproduce these portions of the article.

G. BUCHANAN GRAY.

September 1912.

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