

of the Bible as well. It was characterized by at least three important and interrelated developments:¹⁰

(1) There was a strong reaction against any form of supernaturalism. The idea was that reason not revelation was the source of all truth. This destroyed the authority of the Bible as divine revelation. Moral norms were not sought in God's law but in human reason and conscience.

(2) There was the development of a new hermeneutic -- namely the historical-critical method. Those who utilized this method viewed history as a closed continuum, an unbroken series of causes and effects in which there is no room for supernatural interventions. As G. Hasel summarizes the approach, all "historical events must be capable of being explained by antecedent historical causes and understood in terms of analogy to other historical experiences."¹¹ When these criteria are not met then according to this hermeneutic one can be certain that the event or phenomena being considered did not happen in the way it is depicted as having occurred.

(3) There was the development of radical literary criticism of the Bible. J. Astruc (1654-1766) a French physician, published a work in 1753 in which he proposed that the book of Genesis was to a great extent a composite of "J" and "E" sources that gave alternate versions of the same stories. He also found numerous other sources in Genesis of less significance. He did not deny Mosaic authorship to Genesis in the sense that he considered Moses to be the one who combined the sources. But his theory of distinguishing sources on the basis of different names for God provided a foundation on which later Pentateuchal criticism would build, and the now long and complex history of the development of critical theories of the composition of biblical books was begun.

Under the influence of these ideas the descriptions of God speaking and *acting* in human history in the way described in the Biblical narratives came to be regarded as something that did not actually happen. The orthodox view of the Bible was thus gradually weakened and ultimately abandoned by many. Rejection of biblical supernaturalism and objective divine revelation by word and act left the practitioners of biblical studies who utilized these methods with serious and insoluble problems. The nature of some of these problems can be seen by means of a brief survey of trends in Old Testament studies over the past century.

I will attempt to sketch some of these trends by means of a very brief survey of the views of the three men who in my opinion have been the most influential scholars in the area of Old Testament criticism in the past century. These three men are Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932) and Gerhard von Rad (1901-1971).

J. Wellhausen (1844-1918)

J. Wellhausen wedded a documentary source theory of the origin of the Pentateuch to an evolutionary idea of the development of Israel's religious beliefs. Wellhausen believed all religions developed in an evolutionary pattern from polytheism to henotheism, to monotheism, or, to use another scheme, from natural religion (JE) to prophetic religion (D), to priestly religion (P). He then used the JEDP sources which he had isolated in the