

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

to Him to see what a master ought to be, and to try to be masters like that. That is precise enough, is it not? That grips tight enough, does it not? Give your servants what you expect and need to get from Christ. If we try to live that commandment for twenty-four hours, it will probably not be its vagueness of which we complain.

“Ye have a Master in heaven,” is the great principle on which all Christian duty reposes. Christ’s command is my law, His will is supreme, His authority absolute, His example all-sufficient. My soul, my life, my all are His. My will is not my own. My possessions are not my own. My life is not my own. All duty is elevated into obedience to Him, and obedience to Him, utter and absolute, is dignity and freedom. We are Christ’s slaves, for He has bought us for Himself, by giving Himself for us. Let that great sacrifice win our heart’s love and our perfect submission. “O Lord, truly I am Thy servant, Thou hast loosed my bonds.” Then all earthly relationships will be fulfilled by us, and we shall move among men breathing blessing and raying out brightness, when in all, we remember that we have a Master in heaven, and do all our work from the soul as to Him and not to men.

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

---

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF HEINRICH EWALD.

II.—HIS WEAKNESS AND HIS STRENGTH, AS A CRITIC  
AND AS A MAN.

COULD that true prophet who saw Israel’s past so much more clearly than his own life or his own time, have looked back with purged eyes on this point of his career, he might have taken up the words of a poet-prophet who went before him: “Midway the journey of our life, I found myself in a dark forest; for the straight way was lost.” Short

though sharp was his mental agony, and then, like Dante, he saw the hill close by with its shining summit, for which all his life through he had been making. And as he "took his way on the *desert* strand,"—for who was there that rightly shared his aim?—and was now at the point to climb, three cruel forms appeared from the recesses of the wood, seeking to "drive him back to where the sun was mute." That is to say, arbitrary political power, blind theological conservatism, and recklessly destructive criticism, were agreed, as Ewald thought, in fearing and in seeking to oppose the regeneration of Old Testament studies. The story of Ewald's mistakes and half-mistakes is not on the outside indeed as poetic, but quite as tragic, as that of Dante's, and no one will form a right judgment of it unless he recognises, first, that from Ewald's point of view his apprehensions were justified, and next, that, however we may blame his arrogance towards man, we must admire and reverence his constant sense of dependence on God. The one was the source of his weakness; the other, of his strength. But for his faith and his unworldliness, he could not, even with his great talents, have done as much and seen as clearly as he did. He was his own worst enemy; he would have attained, even as a scholar, more uniformly substantial results, had he worked more in concert with others. But his fidelity to the voice within was absolute, and I have no doubt that when he says that he will joyfully recant his whole system, if "a man of insight and of conscience" can prove it to be necessary, his profession is an honest one. But observe the qualification, "insight and—*conscience*." He is not only a born critic, but a born "apologist"; in one place he candidly says that, though "Apologete" is a "Tübingerischer Schimpfname," he will accept the description. Ewald cannot tolerate in Biblical matters a perfectly dry criticism. In all his work upon the Old Testament he is partly thinking of the New, which

he regards, too completely even for some orthodox critics, as the crown and climax of the Old. He cannot admit the usual division of the field of exegesis between professors of the Old and professors of the New Testament. He must himself have a hand in the development of New Testament studies, not (as has been sometimes said), in opposition to Baur and Strauss, but because to him the New Testament forms the second part of the record of Israel's revelation. This can be proved, I think, by chronology. As long ago as 1828, before Baur had begun to touch the New Testament, Ewald published a Latin commentary on the Apocalypse. This work is at any rate more solid and significant than that of his old master, Eichhorn, and contributed to bring about that sound historical interpretation now so generally current, that Prof. Harnack, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, can describe the Apocalypse as the most intelligible book in the New Testament. Writing it was Ewald's amusement amidst the serious linguistic studies which preceded his Hebrew Grammar: "unter hundert Bedrängnissen jener Jahre wie in eiligen Nebenstunden verfasst." But not all the brilliant successes of F. C. Baur as an author and as a teacher could tempt his self-centred colleague to compete with him on the field of the New Testament. In 1850 Ewald did indeed break through the appointed order of his works, and express himself on the three first Gospels; the book appeared in a second edition, which included the Acts of the Apostles, in 1871. But though its first appearance was opportune from the point of view of "apologetic" criticism, the bias of Ewald being distinctly "positive," *i.e.* inclining him to believe that we have firm ground beneath us in the Gospels in a higher degree than Baur could admit, it was neither Baur nor Strauss who forced him, almost, as he says, against his will,<sup>1</sup> to anticipate the time for speaking his mind on the

<sup>1</sup> *Die drei ersten Evangelien*, Vorrede, S. iii.

Gospels. It was his concern for those ideal goods which Germany seemed to him to be losing. What Ewald dreaded, was the spirit of the revolution, and the chief reason why he so disliked Baur and Strauss was, that he thought *their* "Tendenz" revolutionary. Not, however, till 1861 did he touch the fourth Gospel, by denying the traditional authorship of which rified, as Ewald thought, the "most attractive" product of the whole Biblical literature. Here, however, too, as in all Ewald's works, there is no directly controversial element. No one hates controversy more than this critic. *Nachempfinden* (Ewald's own word), was his motto from the first. It was the spell with which, even as a youth, he conjured the monsters of extreme criticism; and though later on he somewhat changed his mind as to friends and foes, never did he cease to insist upon a direct relation between the expositor and his author, a relation so close and sympathetic as to exclude any great care for the opinions of others. If he feared radicalism more as represented by Baur than by Vatke, it was because he thought that there was a fatal, however undesigned, connexion between the conclusions of Baur and of his too brilliant friend, David F. Strauss, and the revolutionary excesses of 1848. Vatke, by his heavy style and by the slight echo which he found in German universities, seemed sufficiently guarded against by those general warnings given by our arch-dogmatist, not only in his prefaces, but, as it seems, also in his lectures.<sup>1</sup> Once begun, there was no intermission in his New Testament work. The *Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus* appeared in 1857; the second volume of the *Johanneischen Schriften* in 1862; and ten years later we find the books of the New Testament complete in seven volumes, which, in spite of their deficiencies, will never quite lose their interest, from the peculiar cha-

<sup>1</sup> Benecke, *Wilhelm Vatke*, p. 613. In 1835, however, Ewald judged more favourably of Vatke's book. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-175.

racter of the author, and from the Hebraistic eye with which, even when writing his first Grammar, he regarded the New Testament writings.

Thus, while fully admitting that Ewald's New Testament work lost something through his antipathy to Baur, I am bound to deny that it was in any sense inspired by that too vehement feeling. So far as his researches on the Synoptic Gospels had any controversial reference, they may be said to have been his answer to the Revolution. It is true they were more than this, and in explaining my allusion, I resume the thread of my narrative. The publication of *Die drei ersten Evangelien* in 1850 was a sign that Ewald was thoroughly settled again in his old university. Much as he feared and hated the revolutionary movement, he had at least to thank what he somewhere calls the shipwreck year for bringing him back to port. Ill at ease, both on public and on private grounds, and equally unable to assimilate the Biblical mysticism and the speculative rationalism of Tübingen, he had resigned his post in the great southern theological university. The senate of the Georgia Augusta supported an application which he himself made for his recall, and in September, 1848, Ewald resumed his old position at Göttingen. His reputation as a scholar had certainly not diminished during his absence. I have spoken of his *Die Propheten*. On the completion of this work, he began one of much wider range, the greatest of all the great Göttingen histories; need I mention the *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*? On two grounds this work is fitly described as epoch-making. It is in the highest degree original; every line exhibits a fresh and independent mind, and mature and long-tested research. It is also, if you will allow the expression, in a scarcely less degree, unoriginal. It sums up the investigations and discoveries of a century, and closes provisionally that great movement which, beginning as it did with Lowth, ought to have been through-

out Anglo-continental. Twenty years hence, when the next great history of Israel will be due, may we venture to hope for a native English Ewald? Great is our need of him. The old Ewald must in England be for the most part the teacher's teacher; peculiarities of style and of exposition, not unpleasing to those who are interested in the author personally, are real hindrances to beginners. The new Ewald will be born into a world which is not so academical as that of Heinrich Ewald. He must be free at all costs from the moral drawbacks of his predecessor, and must have an English as well as a German training. A mere wish will not bring him into existence, but a strong enough wish will be the parent of action. Unless we see our goal, we shall never shake off our guilty torpor. Therefore—

Flash on us, all in armour, thou Achilles;  
Make our hearts dance to thy resounding steps.<sup>1</sup>

You will pardon this abrupt transition. The memory of Lowth, whose books fell dead in England, but kindled a flame in Germany, pursues me. The time may have come for us to take a step forward. Our Theological Honour Examination, on which Ewald would have cast a cool and questioning glance, has this merit, that it recognises, though not sufficiently, the primary importance of the historical study of the Bible. It is, I think, the duty of historical theologians to follow the bright example of persistence in urging their just claims set by their colleagues in another faculty. But now to return. I am not asking you to accept Ewald blindly. Delitzsch is my friend as well as Ewald; neither is my Pope. There was a time when Ewald was in some quarters both at home and abroad almost an unquestioned potentate, the Ranke of Hebrew history. I have no wish to revive the belief in his infallibility. Over and over again we shall have to fight with

<sup>1</sup> Browning, *Paracelsus*.

him, but let us mind that we do so in his own spirit and with his own weapons. Do you ask what *is* Ewald's spirit? "To be scientific"—he tells us himself—is to have a burning desire to push on more and more towards the high goal which science has set up, and to come from certainty to certainty.<sup>1</sup> But the goal with Ewald is the knowledge of a self-revealing God ("they go from strength to strength, and appear before God in Zion"); Delitzsch postulates this, Ewald works towards it. Do you ask, next, which are Ewald's weapons? I reply in the words of Niebuhr, "History has two means by which it supplies the deficiencies of its sources—criticism and divination." "Both are arts," he continues, "which may certainly be acquired from masters, and which a man must himself understand before he can judge of their productions."<sup>2</sup> Niebuhr, I know, is said to be superseded, and Ewald is, at least in one sense, in course of being superseded. But the man who finally supersedes him will only do so in virtue of a more penetrating criticism and a better regulated though not more intense divination. Lord Acton, in the *Historical Review* (No. 1, p. 25), has lately said, "It is the last and most original of [Ewald's] disciples . . . who has set in motion" the new Pentateuch controversy, and Julius Wellhausen himself inscribes his now famous work, "To my unforgotten teacher, Heinrich Ewald." Wellhausen as a critic may be right or wrong, but he cannot be appreciated without a true knowledge of the influences which formed him. In one sense he has no doubt broken with his master. He has identified himself with that "so-called criticism" (Ewald's phraseology) which has "given up Moses and so much that is excellent besides," and which

<sup>1</sup> *Beiträge zur Geschichte der ältesten Auslegung*, by Ewald and Dukes, p. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> "Essay on the Study of Antiquities," in Niebuhr's *Life and Letters*, ii. 219.

leads on directly to the contemptuous rejection of the Old Testament, if not also of the New (again, Ewald's phraseology). It is a proof of the moral and intellectual force of the *History of the People of Israel*, that the last extreme critical hypothesis did not become a power in Germany thirty years earlier. Strauss's *Leben Jesu* coincides in date of publication with more than one remarkable work which anticipates the ideas of Julius Wellhausen. It was a subversive influence of the first order; Vatke's *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments* was not. Vatke, it is true, had not the pointed pen of David F. Strauss; still the Carlylian denunciations of Ewald's prefaces would have been a too ineffectual breakwater by themselves. Ewald dies, and Wellhausen sets all Germany in a flame, commits treason, as Lord Acton calls it, against his old master. In another sense, however, Wellhausen is a faithful disciple of Ewald, whose principles he does but apply more audaciously and with different results. We will not indeed bow down to him, lest he should prove a Dagon, and we should lose our faith in truth and progress. We will not even criticize him—it would be a tragic waste of time—till we understand him, and if Ewald is hard for most Englishmen to appreciate, Wellhausen is harder. Two things are certain, however. The first is that Wellhausen is not a match for his predecessor on the field of exegesis—*impar congressus Achilli*. Who can point to another series of works so full of well-ordered exegetical details as that of Heinrich Ewald's? And the second is that our critic possesses in a far higher degree than his successor the quality of reverence. He loves criticism as much as Wellhausen. But in the one you can see, and in the other you cannot see, at least not distinctly see, that criticism is regarded only as a steppingstone to a higher degree of religious insight. I do think myself that Ewald would have "found the root of the matter" in his old pupil; but in

order to arrive at this charitable conclusion (which obviously does not carry with it the acceptance of the new criticism) we must stand where Ewald stood, and he who would do this, or catch the quintessence of his spirit, must resort to the most comprehensive of his works, the *History of the People of Israel*.

It is in short most earnestly to be wished that Ewald may in one sense of the word be superseded. The range of his researches was too wide; his self-confidence too strong; his deficiency in dialectic power too complete. But never will his great historical work be out of date as a monument of the union of faith and criticism. From this point of view I recommend it to all theological students. His original idea was to bring the narrative down to the time of Christ. It took nine years to complete the publication on this limited scale, the first volume being published in 1843, the fourth in 1852; in 1848 a supplementary volume was given on the *Antiquities of Israel*. The work has a most admirable introduction, worthy to be put by the side of the introduction to the Prophets. Our excellent apologists who are defending ultra-conservatism against Julius Wellhausen, would have done well to practise themselves on such a work as this. Other men have been as distinguished as Ewald in the analytic department of criticism; but no one yet has been his equal in the synthesis of critical material—he is an architect of the first order. I know that there are two great faults in that part of the Introduction which relates to the sources. One is common to Ewald with most of his contemporaries—it is the comparative neglect of the archæological side of Pentateuch-research; the other is a peculiarity of his own—it is his somewhat arbitrary treatment of the component parts of the Hexateuch, and his perplexing nomenclature. But I also know that the literary analysis to which Ewald much confined himself has produced some assured and permanent results, and that his analysis is not

really so very divergent from that of his fellow-critics; his dogmatism in this particular is less misleading than might be supposed.

I am unwilling to stir the ashes of smouldering controversies. But there is another serious fault, as I know but too well, which still attaches to Ewald in many minds. Undevout he cannot be said to be. Prof. Wilkins has rightly emphasized Ewald's piety as well as his profundity and eloquence.<sup>1</sup> Our critic never treats the Old Testament as if he were a medical student dissecting the dead. He believes that the religion of Israel was the "nascent religion" of humanity in quite another sense from that in which the philosophy of Greece was its "nascent philosophy." He reveres, nay loves, the great personalities of the Old Testament; he even almost makes the anonymous historical writers live before us. But his treatment of the miracles has shocked some religious minds. Even Erskine of Linlathen speaks of Ewald in one of his letters as giving "the history of Israel divested of miracle, and (Israel) as a nation choosing God, not chosen by God."<sup>2</sup> All that is true, however, is that Ewald has no scholastic theory of miracles, and that to him as a historian the fact is not the miracle but the narrative of a miraculous occurrence. Those who wish to know more can now refer to Ewald's own brief treatment of the subject of miracles in the second part of the third volume of his great work on Biblical Theology. There, however, he speaks predominantly as a theologian; in his *History of the People of Israel* he speaks, and ought to speak, as a historian.

Time forbids me to enter into a detailed examination of Ewald's greatest work. I spoke in my first lecture of his love of high ideas. This is one source of the attraction which he exercises; it is not however without its dangers. It tempts him to idealize certain great periods of Israel's

<sup>1</sup> *Phœnicia and Israel*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 407.

history, as for example the age of Moses, and the age of David and Solomon. I am afraid that cooler students of the Old Testament, such as Kuenen and Oort, are needed to criticize him. The latter for instance has pointed out what a *petitio principii* it is to make the volume on the Antiquities of Israel an appendix to the history of the judges and the early kings, as if the customs and institutions, as well as the beliefs of the people, underwent no change in the following centuries.<sup>1</sup> But it is not a member of the Leyden critical school, it is the coryphæus of the later orthodox theology, Dr. Dorner himself, who complains, perhaps too strongly, that "the internal and religious history of Old Testament development is not brought out by Ewald," and that "the religious matter of the Old Testament, the Messianic idea not excepted, dwindles in his writings into a few general abstract truths, devoid of life and motion," and that "he fails to perceive the progress of the history of revelation, and its internal connexion with that national feeling which prepared for it,"<sup>2</sup> in short, that Ewald has not entirely thrown off the weaknesses of the eighteenth century. Dr. Dorner speaks as it were out of the soul of this generation; it is something to have welcomed the discoveries of Darwin and to have lived in the same capital with Leopold von Ranke.<sup>3</sup>

With his fourth volume (the fifth in the English translation) Ewald arrives at the original goal of his narrative. There is no period in the earlier history of Israel in which so much still remains to be done as that which extends from the Exile to the Birth of Jesus Christ. It is no discredit to Ewald that his volume, full of interest as it is, presents

<sup>1</sup> Oort, *De tegenwoordige toestand der israelit. oudsheidskunde*. (Redevoering aan het Athenæum illustre te Amsterdam den 31 Maart, 1873.)

<sup>2</sup> *History of Protestant Theology*, ii. 437.

<sup>3</sup> "The historical spirit among the rising generation of German clergymen is chiefly due to his fostering care" (Max Müller). May we some day be enabled to use such words of an English Dorner!

considerable *lacunæ*. How imperfect for instance, in spite of its masterly grouping, is his treatment of Philo! We must henceforth look to the co-operation of Jewish and Christian scholars for the filling up of these gaps. Ewald was not as friendly as could be wished to Jewish scholars, and much work, not indeed of equal solidity, has been done in this field since Ewald's last revision of his fourth volume.

By his *Geschichte Christus*, Ewald distinctly affirmed the view, which is not indeed the only tenable one, but which is the only possible one to a Christian, that Israel's history culminates in Jesus Christ. He showed in it that he was not inclined to withhold his opinion on the great and burning questions of our time. Great are its faults; great also are its merits. Ewald as a historian reminds us here something of Maurice as a philosopher. It is an expository sermon on a grand scale that he gives us; it is not a history. Nowhere is Ewald's literary criticism so disputable as in the introduction to the Synoptic Gospels published in the second edition of *Die drei ersten Evangelien*, and presupposed in the *Geschichte Christus*. English readers, however, will perhaps not be severe upon him; indeed, he shares some of his faults (so far as they are faults) with other respected German theologians of different schools, such as Neander and Carl Hase. I say, so far as they are faults; for to me, as to Ewald, a historical biography of the Christian Messiah is a thing which cannot be written. The sources are too incomplete, and a Christian has too strong a bias to complete them by divination.

Let us take breath awhile. The *History of the People of Israel* was completed in 1859; the dream of his youth was fulfilled. Soon after this he took another holiday in England, when I believe he paid a visit to one who in some respects was very like him, and with whom he sympathised, Dr. Rowland Williams, at Broadchalke. It would have been well if Ewald could oftener have allowed himself

these distractions. I like not to criticise his personal character. But that serene atmosphere which envelops all his New Testament work did not penetrate his outward life as we could wish. Had he but enjoyed the same deep religious experience as Tholuck, for instance, or Franz Delitzsch, that most humble-minded, most Christian-minded of great critics; had he, moreover, but shared their satisfied longing after the brotherly fellowship of the Church, how differently would his inward and consequently also his outward history have shaped itself! It is all the sadder, because of the noble words on the past, present, and future of the great rival Western communions contained in the appendix to *Die poetischen Bücher* (vol. iv. 1837), which I had marked to read to you. All the sadder, because there were in Ewald, as these passages seem to me to show, the germs of better things. Lucian Müller has remarked that the life of a German philologist is, by the necessity of the case, uneventful. I wish that Ewald's life had been more uneventful. He became in his latter years more irritable than ever, and more unwise in the expression of his opinions. His Hanoverian patriotism too led him astray. He had never forgotten nor forgiven the violent conduct of Prussia towards Hanover in 1801 and 1806, and on the annexation of Hanover in 1866 he refused, on conscientious grounds, to take the oath to the king of Prussia. For a long time no notice was taken of this privileged offender; but after much provocation on Ewald's part, he was placed on the retired list, with the full amount of his salary for pension. There is a curious irony in the concatenation of events by which the very man whom a Guelph deprived, was now again dismissed from office for loyalty to the Guelphs. The truth is, however, that he was treated very leniently, but unfortunately became the tool of his party. He might have done almost as good work as ever; he might perhaps have been alive now; had not his friends ("amici quàm parum

amici," as Casaubon says) formed the desperate resolution of sending this most unpractical, because most uncompromising,<sup>1</sup> of men as the Guelphian representative of Hanover to the German Reichstag. Let us draw a veil over the melancholy issue of that ill-advised step, but respect the sense of duty which would not let him "brood over the languages of the dead," when, as he thought, "forty millions of Germans were suffering oppression."

The last short chapter in Ewald's life is at hand. But I must not open it without some inadequate lines, which I would gladly make fuller, on the most recent of his works, *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, the first volume of which has been translated into English under the title, *Revelation, its Nature and Record*. The publication began in 1871, and the printing of the last volume was only finished after Ewald's death. It is not often that a man's time is so exactly proportioned to the life-work which he has set himself to do. This book too had to be written, if the depths of truth in the Holy Scriptures were to be fully explored. You remember, perhaps, how in 1844 two young Oxford students, one of them named Stanley, called upon Ewald at Dresden. They never forgot the noble enthusiasm with which this dangerous heretic, as he was then regarded in England, grasped the small Greek Testament which he held in his hand, and said, "In this little book is contained all the wisdom of the world."<sup>2</sup> This was the spirit in which Ewald wrote his grandly conceived work on one of the subjects of the future, Biblical Theology. He wrote it, as you will have observed, at a time of much anxiety, both on public and on private grounds. The war

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Thieroch indeed, sees nothing but good in the rigid consistency of Ewald: "Dieses seltenen Mannes, der in dieser Zeit des Verfalles der Charaktere, da die Vertreter der verschiedenen Partheien wetteifern, ihren Grundsätzen untreu zu werden, fest und ungebeugt dastand, unter der Menge der haltlosen ein christlicher Cato."

<sup>2</sup> Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. iii. Preface, p. 17.

with France stirred him greatly; and much as he disliked the French, he had no confidence in the rulers of his country. Still he worked on, though the excitement of the time hindered consecutive thought and the clear expression of his ideas.

But however faulty this work may be, as compared with the great *History of Israel*, it has special claims on the notice of all who are interested in theology. First, because its design is a practical one. Strange as it may seem, Ewald writes here for the great public. He thinks, poor dreamer, that the men of this world will attend to a system based on the historical study of the Bible. Like Maurice, he is persuaded that even in the Old Testament truths are contained which the world cannot afford to neglect. He does touch, however clumsily and ineffectually, on some of the great subjects of the day. He does not bury himself in his study, like too many German divines, but seeks to bring himself into relation with the people and its wants. He began in 1863, by co-operating with others, including the great theologian, Richard Rothe, in founding the "Protestanten-Verein"; he now, with his old prophet-like confidence, offers that which he has found in the Bible as "a banner because of the truth." And next, because the book suggests to us a new criterion of the relative importance of doctrines. Do they stand in a line of direct continuity with the Old Testament? We may not altogether agree with Ewald's results, or with Ritschl's,<sup>1</sup> but they have both done good service in pointing us back to the roots of theology in the Old Testament. Lastly, however weak as a theological system—and remember that Ewald, almost alone among famous theologians, had no special philosophical training<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, author of *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, the most independent and influential of living German theologians.

<sup>2</sup> He might almost pass for English in his repugnance to modern German philosophy (see e.g. *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, ii. 45, note 1).

amici," as Casaubon says) formed the desperate resolution of sending this most unpractical, because most uncompromising,<sup>1</sup> of men as the Guelphian representative of Hanover to the German Reichstag. Let us draw a veil over the melancholy issue of that ill-advised step, but respect the sense of duty which would not let him "brood over the languages of the dead," when, as he thought, "forty millions of Germans were suffering oppression."

The last short chapter in Ewald's life is at hand. But I must not open it without some inadequate lines, which I would gladly make fuller, on the most recent of his works, *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, the first volume of which has been translated into English under the title, *Revelation, its Nature and Record*. The publication began in 1871, and the printing of the last volume was only finished after Ewald's death. It is not often that a man's time is so exactly proportioned to the life-work which he has set himself to do. This book too had to be written, if the depths of truth in the Holy Scriptures were to be fully explored. You remember, perhaps, how in 1844 two young Oxford students, one of them named Stanley, called upon Ewald at Dresden. They never forgot the noble enthusiasm with which this dangerous heretic, as he was then regarded in England, grasped the small Greek Testament which he held in his hand, and said, "In this little book is contained all the wisdom of the world."<sup>2</sup> This was the spirit in which Ewald wrote his grandly conceived work on one of the subjects of the future, Biblical Theology. He wrote it, as you will have observed, at a time of much anxiety, both on public and on private grounds. The war

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Thieroch indeed, sees nothing but good in the rigid consistency of Ewald: "Dieses seltenen Mannes, der in dieser Zeit des Verfalles der Charaktere, da die Vertreter der verschiedenen Partheien wetteifern, ihren Grundsätzen untreu zu werden, fest und ungebeugt dastand, unter der Menge der haltlosen ein christlicher Cato."

<sup>2</sup> Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. iii. Preface, p. 17.

with France stirred him greatly; and much as he disliked the French, he had no confidence in the rulers of his country. Still he worked on, though the excitement of the time hindered consecutive thought and the clear expression of his ideas.

But however faulty this work may be, as compared with the great *History of Israel*, it has special claims on the notice of all who are interested in theology. First, because its design is a practical one. Strange as it may seem, Ewald writes here for the great public. He thinks, poor dreamer, that the men of this world will attend to a system based on the historical study of the Bible. Like Maurice, he is persuaded that even in the Old Testament truths are contained which the world cannot afford to neglect. He does touch, however clumsily and ineffectually, on some of the great subjects of the day. He does not bury himself in his study, like too many German divines, but seeks to bring himself into relation with the people and its wants. He began in 1863, by co-operating with others, including the great theologian, Richard Rothe, in founding the "Protestanten-Verein"; he now, with his old prophet-like confidence, offers that which he has found in the Bible as "a banner because of the truth." And next, because the book suggests to us a new criterion of the relative importance of doctrines. Do they stand in a line of direct continuity with the Old Testament? We may not altogether agree with Ewald's results, or with Ritschl's,<sup>1</sup> but they have both done good service in pointing us back to the roots of theology in the Old Testament. Lastly, however weak as a theological system—and remember that Ewald, almost alone among famous theologians, had no special philosophical training<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, author of *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, the most independent and influential of living German theologians.

<sup>2</sup> He might almost pass for English in his repugnance to modern German philosophy (see e.g. *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, ii. 45, note 1).

—the book is full of suggestive exegetical details, combined with something of the old architectonic skill. The right hand of the veteran scholar has not forgotten its cunning; and on this and other grounds, I think that the translation of the first volume is of primary importance, not only to teachers, but to students.

To the last Ewald remained in outward bearing as he had ever been. No one who has once seen it will forget that tall, erect form, and those eyes which seemed to pierce into eternity. His loss as an academical teacher was not greatly felt. His enthusiasm had not cooled, but it ceased to attract students. A few, however, I believe, still came to his rooms for Oriental teaching; and to the last he followed with interest the course of Oriental philology. Four days before his death he sent in a paper on a Phœnician inscription, for a meeting of the Göttingen *Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*. His last sickness he took with resignation, supported, we are told, by high thoughts of eternity. His child-like faith never left him. "There he sat," says one who visited him, "in his long grey fur-trimmed gown, in the little green upper chamber. On the walls hung, not only copies of two well-known modern paintings, but the Saviour of the World by Carlo Dolce." "His words" (so my author continues) "were full of a bold assurance that took no account of earthly opposition."<sup>1</sup> He died May 4, 1875, leaving us not only his example but his spirit. (For has not Milton told us that books are the life-blood of noble spirits?) Let us take warning from his errors, but imitate him in all that is good, as he followed Truth and followed Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *Einsame Wege* (1881), an anonymous work by a leading Lutheran divine, pp. 300, 301.