

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 16—October, 1893.

I.

DR. BRIGGS' HIGHER CRITICISM OF THE HEXATEUCH EXAMINED.

IN the *Presbyterian Review* for January, 1883, Dr. Briggs published "A Critical Study of the History of the Higher Criticism with Special Reference to the Pentateuch." This is now reprinted in a volume, with a few additions and such verbal corrections as his subsequent change of attitude has rendered necessary, under the title of *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*.* In this amended form it may consequently be regarded as presenting the carefully considered views of the author corrected up to date.

There is an obvious distinction between the Higher Criticism *de jure* and the Higher Criticism *de facto*; and these may differ widely from each other. Critical investigations may be rightly conducted and lead to correct conclusions; or they may be based on wrong principles, follow wrong methods, and lead to false conclusions. Dr. Briggs tells us (*Presbyterian Review* for 1881, p. 578) that "Biblical criticism is represented by two antagonistic parties—evangelical critics and rationalistic critics." And he claims to have shown (*Presbyterian Review* for, 1883, p. 70) that "evangelical Biblical criticism was based on the formal principle of Protestantism, the divine authority of the Scriptures, over against ecclesiastical

* *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*. By Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D. 8vo, pp. 259. The Preface states that "ten years ago the author undertook to write a little book upon the Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch, and at that time he advanced some distance in its preparation. But on reflection he turned aside from it, with the opinion that the times were not yet ripe for it." Now "he presents to the public the result of his studies so far as they have gone."

as Kant and Martineau. The *teleologists* look upon morality as the product of an ideal, and start with the idea of the good; the *deontologists* find the essence of morality in the feeling of obligation, and start from the idea of duty. The author stands upon Utilitarian ground, and values character only as a source of useful action. His contention in this thesis is that where intrinsic worth is attributed to character, the quality affirmed is no other than beauty. Beauty of character he considers nothing more nor less than one of the sources of æsthetic emotion; and its attraction to be due to the pleasure it affords, the worth of which is not to be measured by a different scale from that which we apply to the other emotions. The thesis is well written and interests the reader; the principles defined in it are fundamentally different from those cherished by the present writer. By the way, the author's reading in theology might be extended with advantage. We meet at the close of the book with such a sentence as this: "Were the Supreme Being such a one as Augustine and Calvin imagined Him, we should despise the wretched slaves that licked the dust at His feet." The reader's first impulse is to say, Whew! His next is to wonder why Calvin and Augustine should be mentioned at all, when the author knows so little of them as to attribute to them the doctrine that the authority of God resides in His infinite power alone, and that the distinction between right and wrong is a product of His arbitrary "will." "Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."—*The Interpretation of Nature*. By Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, Professor of Geology in Harvard University. 12mo, pp. xi, 305. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893.) This is a second edition of the Winckley Lectures, delivered in 1891, at Andover Theological Seminary. Prof. Shaler's attitude is one of kindly though outside friendliness towards a religious interpretation of nature. This attitude seems due to the failure of the purely mechanical explanation of nature, which has borne itself in upon him as upon so many of the higher scientific minds. But his standpoint is still phenomenal and naturalistic. In his perceptions of nature, the mystery and the mysticism of nature have broken in upon the hard, old mechanical theories for which alone he once had an eye; but he is left by their tardy perception rather in expectancy, than with any true convictions as to the meaning of that "one increasing purpose" which runs through all nature. To him, still, the present estate of man is "the result of the physical and organic influences to which he has been subjected during all his course from the lowest life to the present time;" and religions are "the products of human history." It is therefore the naturalistic evolutionary conception of life and history which is kept prominent through all the discussion. And though there is a dim perception apparent of a primal endowment and impulse which the evolving process works out, yet the conception of psychic capacities inherent in matter as matter—unorganized and reduced to its mere chemical elements—suggests itself more strongly to him than that of an originating and directing Mind, whose instruments physical and psychic causes alike are. Prof. Shaler writes always in an excellent tone and spirit and is on the upward trend; may it prove with him a "continuous trend."—*Evolution and Man's Place in Nature*. By Henry Calderwood, LL.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of Edinburgh. 12mo, pp. xv, 349. (London and New York: Macmillan & Co., 1893.) It would be difficult to imagine a better corrective of Prof. Shaler's general attitude than this strong and lucid book of Prof. Calderwood's. Dr. Calderwood, too, stands frankly on the standpoint of evolution of organic life, as maintained by Mr. Darwin and Mr. Wallace. But his thought ranges more widely; and he presents with equal force the two sets of phenomena and the two spheres of knowledge which drive us to assert as to man, a

duality of life, physical and rational, harmonized in the individual; and as to nature, a divine background and cause. "Of Nature, as interpreted by Science, there is no key other than is found in recognition of an Immanent and Intelligent Cause, in the midst of all and concerned with all, that belongs to the history of Being. This is the first Cause—the eternal Personality—related to the spiritual life of rational souls, as He can be related to no other type of existence within the wide sphere of creation." We owe Dr. Calderwood a new debt of gratitude for this timely book.—*An Outline of Legal Philosophy*. By W. A. Watt, M.A., LL.B., Member of the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow. 8vo, pp. x, 184. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; New York: Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893.) A clear, well-ordered and most instructive attempt "to state shortly and simply some of the main principles which underlie the facts of law." "The standpoint is approximately Hegelian." Such an attempt to introduce the lay reader to those fundamental principles on which all law rests must be welcomed by every one who seeks to live as "a good citizen." Law itself may be a jungle to him; "chaos tempered by Digests" is how it has been described: but there is no reason why he should exonerate himself from the duty of grasping the principles that lie beneath this chaos of case-law. The complex legal life which society forces on all of us demands this of us. And such a lucid and readable book as Mr. Watt's takes away our excuses.—*Three Centuries of Scottish Literature*. By Hugh Walker, M.A., Professor of English in St. David's College, Lampeter. 12mo, 2 vols., pp. x, 219, 254. (Glasgow: James Maclellan & Sons; New York: Macmillan & Co., 1893.) Prof. Walker defines his object in this readable history of Scottish literature to be to trace the literary movement in Scotland for the three centuries between Lindsay and Scott. The earlier period of Scottish literature from its dawn to the time when the desire for religious reform began to affect literature vitally, he considers has been sufficiently dealt with by others. After Scott, he thinks the literature produced by the sons of Scotland ceases to be distinctively national. Within the period he has chosen he thinks it remained intensely national; and the distinctive characteristic of the period as a period he finds in the influence of the idea of religious reform—beginning before the Reformation in Lindsay, and culminating, in the slow response of literature to the historic impulse of the Reformation, only in Burns and Scott, "the mature fruit of the teaching of Knox and of the accession of the Stuarts to the English throne." Prof. Walker writes directly and tells his story simply and with adequate care, and we may add with sufficient fullness, when we remember that his purpose is to trace the literary movement, not to give a succinct account of the succession of writers. Despite this, however, the fault of the book is to be found in its omissions. For example, in a literary period whose characteristic is that it is a response to a religious impulse, one would think the religious writers would count for something; and Scotland has not in these three hundred years been without her theologians who wrote literature. But, after Knox, Prof. Walker passes them severely by. We are bound to admit, however, that his incidental allusions to matters of religion and theology do not lead us to regret that he has been so chary of a fuller treatment of the relevant literature. He justly defends Knox from charges of complicity in persecution, but adds that his sentiments "would have justified atrocities like the worst of Calvin's acts" (i. 119)—whence the reader might infer that Calvin was something of a Torquemada, and not (as was the truth) the most tolerant and gentle-minded of the religious leaders of his day. He girds at Knox's humble profession of inability to comprehend the ways of God (p. 110), as if that were inconsistent in, instead of the very characteristic of, the predestinarian. In the sphere of religious thought