

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 23—July, 1895.

I.

PHILLIPS BROOKS AS A THEOLOGIAN.

EVERY great preacher is of necessity a theologian. The converse of this proposition is of course not true; for exclusive devotion to the formal systematization of truth may hinder freedom and power of speech, so that the power of the pulpit may have no direct proportion to the thoroughness of the preacher's conceptions of truth. A few great ideas ardently believed may be uttered by some master of assemblies with such burning earnestness and illumined with imagery so splendid, that they become at once motive powers to all who have ears to hear; while a far more perfect mastery of divine truth may fail of the expression worthy of its greater depth and scope. Nevertheless, it is what a man believes concerning God and the things of God that chiefly gives him power to preach: and still further is it true that the highest attainments in the pulpit are possible to him only who has not merely attained the rudiments of the Gospel, but who has sounded its depths; who has not only gathered the fragments, but can rightly divide the whole Word of Life. The greatest preachers have ever been great theologians. It is therefore with peculiar interest that we open the six volumes of sermons of the late Bishop Phillips Brooks, his Bohlen Lectures on *The Influence of Jesus*, Yale Lectures on *Preaching*, *Two Lectures on Tolerance*, a volume of *Addresses*, and last, *Essays and Addresses*, 1894, besides some less considerable publications, and find the guiding axiom of his ministry clearly affirmed. In his *Lectures on Preaching* (p. 129) he says: "No preaching ever had any strong power that was not the preaching of doctrine." And again (*Sermons*, Fourth Series, p. 49): "The decrying of dogma in

of a rapid and telling review of the teaching of the several Faculties of Theology as to the trustworthiness of the Old Testament Scriptures, with a view to justifying this contention. It closes with these stirring sentences: "There are at work unnumbered forces for the general ruin of all order and righteousness: the most dangerous are those which destroy the authority of the Bible. . . . With faith in God's Word, Germany could be a rock of the truth; instead of this its barren sea casts up mire and dirt. But the chief blame must be borne by the Universities."—*The Higher Criticism*. An Outline of Modern Bible Study. By Rev. C. W. Rishell, A.M., Ph.D. With an Introduction by Prof. Henry M. Harman, D.D., LL.D. 12mo, pp. 214. (Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis; New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1893.) The value of this useful sketch of the Higher Criticism is somewhat marred by a lack of clearness. It would have been useful to treat of the method of study called the Higher Criticism from a purely formal point of view, and to outline its aims, methods and principles. It would also have been useful to present a *précis* of the conclusions which the prevalent school of criticism seeks to commend to the scholarly world. But those two undertakings are so diverse that they need to be kept, not indeed apart, but certainly unconfused. The author, however, in his sketch first of the one and then of the other does not appear to us to have kept them from invading each the sphere of the other; and the consequence is that the conclusions of a single school are in danger of being conceived by the unwary reader as the findings of "criticism." What we need is a clear outline of the principles of criticism, with an equally clear recognition of the fact that the prevalent school of critics is only one school, and that its conclusions are only the dogmas of a single and that an extreme party. That there are critics and critics, the author of course duly notes; and that these so-called "traditionalists" are also critics he also mentions: but the tone and contents of his book are such as to render the uninstructed reader very liable to confuse "criticism" with the work of the disintegrating school of critics. His own position we should judge to be what he would class as "conservative criticism," i. e., conservative disintegrating criticism. The name is of course objectionable when so applied. The so-called "conservative critics" belong to the same party with the so-called "radical critics"—it is only a question of degree between them; and both should be included in Dr. Harman's term "skeptical critics," i. e., they are critics who have come to question more or less the generally received conclusions. Dr. Harman's own term—"evangelical critics"—is no more acceptable. It brings in a religio-theological point of view, not germane to the subject. Critics, professing alike to use purely critical methods but reaching opposite conclusions, can only be discriminated among themselves by the character of their conclusions. It is entirely misleading to attempt to distinguish them on the wholly extraneous ground of whether they are pious, devout, evangelical, or the like, in their religious views. Such an attempt is sure to introduce that dualism in thought which shows itself in the uncertainty of touch characteristic of this otherwise meritorious volume.—*Radical Criticism*. An Exposition and Examination of the Radical Critical Theory Concerning the Literature and Religious System of the Old Testament Scriptures. By Francis R. Beattie, Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics in the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Author of *An Examination of Utilitarianism* and *The Methods of Theism*. With an Introduction by W. W. Moore, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Old Testament Literature in Union Theological Seminary, Virginia. 12mo, pp. 325. (New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895.) The faults we have just adverted to in Dr. Rishell's book have been avoided by Dr. Beattie in this singularly calm and