

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 12—October, 1892.

## I.

### ON THE ESCHATOLOGY OF OUR SYMBOLS.

ONE cannot well appreciate at its full value the Eschatology of the Confession and Catechisms of Westminster, unless he is familiar in some degree with the teaching of the Protestant creeds in general, and also with the prevalent theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in this department. It is clear that the Westminster divines inherited a definite scheme of doctrine on the topics embraced in this department, to some extent from the Church antecedent to the Reformation, but still more decisively from the professed faith of the various Churches which bore the Protestant name. The Augsburg Confession, for example, teaches (Art. xvii) that in the consummation of the world (*am jüngsten Tag*) Christ shall appear to judge, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give unto the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys; but ungodly men and the devils shall He condemn unto endless torments (*sine fine crucientur*). It also enters a solemn protest against those who imagine that there shall be an end of such torments, and formally condemns those who scatter abroad Jewish notions (*Judaicas opiniones*) to the effect that before the resurrection of the dead, the godly or the saints shall, for a time, occupy the kingdom of this world—shall set up and enjoy an earthly kingdom—the wicked being everywhere suppressed or exterminated (*alle Gottlosen vertilgen werden*). With these comprehensive declarations it may safely be said that all of the subsequent creeds of the sixteenth century, British as well as Continental, so far as they contained eschatological matter, were in substantial agreement.

## V.

### THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM.

**T**HE Old Testament is just at present, for various reasons and in many ways and in an unusual degree, concentrating upon itself the attention and interest of the Church. The historical nature and the historical value and the ultimate meaning of that in the Old Testament which appears to be historical, is being subjected to the severest tests that philological and historical science know how to employ. The legitimacy of the processes that are resorted to, and the validity of the results which are in some quarters so confidently announced, challenge the most careful scrutiny. Many of the results that are brought before us as incontrovertible are nothing less than revolutionary, not only as respects the faith of many centuries in regard to the Old Testament books and the Old Testament history, but in regard to the nature and scope of the Old Testament dispensation. And radical change here carries with it grave modifications of our ideas as to the New Testament dispensation. It is difficult to overstate the reach of these new views of the old books and the old history. The questions are before us, whether we must accept and adjust ourselves as we may be able to these conclusions of the critical school, or if not, then why it is so; whether these results are due altogether or largely to the misuse of methods in themselves legitimate, or whether the methods are to be sweepingly condemned with the results. If we take the former of these last two positions, then we too must be critics, but wiser and more prudent critics, reaching by critical methods (in part) conclusions more intelligent and better established than those in which we have heretofore rested. If we are brought to the latter conclusion we cannot dispense with criticism, but we must reverently and resolutely refrain, and establish our right and duty to abstain, from *such* criticism, as illegitimate.

Our first careful inquiry must be, What is criticism as applied to literature like this, that criticism which is helpful and essential to the discovery, vindication and defense of the truth, a handmaid to truth and piety and the service of God? There is undoubtedly widely prevalent an unintelligent and intense prejudice against criticism as an alien to and an intruder upon the field of

Biblical science, a bitter and irreconcilable foe to faith and godliness. But while this prejudice is not unaccountable, or altogether surprising in the presence of what has been done in the name of criticism, we hold it to be unreasonable and disastrous if allowed to pass without challenge. No one will suspect Dr. Thomas Chalmers of undue bias in favor of lax methods in theology. He found it necessary in his day to define and defend "Scripture Criticism," as he calls it, in the chapter in his *Inst. of Theol.* (the longest chapter in the work with one exception) which he devotes to this subject. He writes:\* "The two main objects of Scripture Criticism are the integrity of the text and the interpretation of it. The first question is, What did the authors of the Scriptures really write? The second, What is the sense or meaning of it?" "It is only with what is purely and primitively Scripture that He (the Spirit) effectually works, and the office of Scripture criticism is to present this Scripture in all its pure and primitive integrity to the eyes of the understanding."† As to method he says: "We hold as a sure and irresistible position that it (Scripture criticism) must just be conducted on the same principles and by the same methods with the criticism of all other ancient authorship."‡ He says further: § "We quite agree with all the actual scholars in this department of literature, that in the treatment of Scripture we should follow the very same method which the interpreters not only of the sacred book, but also of the classical authors, have reckoned to be the certain, legitimate and only true method worthy of a man of erudition, even that which is called the grammatical. . . . || The doctrine of the Spirit rightly understood, so far from superceding criticism, gives an impulse to its labors." As to the importance of this criticism, he says: ¶ "Without it there could have been no interpretation at all of the sacred writings, and so no access to the mind and will of God as expressed by revelation from heaven. . . . While a perverse, though highly elaborate and erudite Scripture criticism has given birth or countenance to neology, and by the weight of authority has made it formidable, yet it is Scripture criticism after all, and on the strength of a principle which when once announced is exceedingly obvious, that is the proper, the rightful, and withal the most effectual instrument for the overthrow of its pretensions and its power."\*\* "Others may take both the words of the Bible and their meaning upon trust, but it is for you, the future instructors of a lettered and intellectual Church, to lift yourselves above this dependence—the dependence of the blind upon their leaders. . . . It is a wretched thing for the teachers of Christianity to depend on

\* *Inst. Theol.*, i, 304.† *Ibid.*, i, 308.‡ *Ibid.*, i, 312.§ *Ibid.*, i, 313.|| *Ibid.*, i, 314.¶ *Ibid.*, 332.\*\* *Ibid.*, 347.

the judgment of others, either for a right reading or a right rendering of Scripture." \* The principles which Dr. Chalmers here applies to the text and its interpretation are obviously true principles with reference to the outlying questions with which a more extended criticism must deal.

The reasons, then, why we insist on the propriety and necessity of employing the methods of a thorough and reverent criticism to the Bible are not far to seek.

What is criticism? and in the field with which we are dealing, what are its aims, its general methods, its chief processes?

Our answer begins with things that are very elementary. Criticism is primarily the act of judging, or the art of judging of the qualities or merits of a thing.† It implies, first, discernment of these qualities, and of some of them (more or fewer) as merits. The capacity for such judgment is given to us, and may be carried to high development. The necessity for such judgment is constant and urgent. Things differ in themselves and in their relations and adaptations, and we must discriminate and treat and use them according to their qualities and merits. The repetition of this act of judging lays the foundation for the art of judging. We may be or may become experts in this art, without a formulated theory. But in every matter of frequent recurrence or serious importance, we develop more or less clearly and consciously our rules for judging.

Now, while we practice criticism in this general sense with reference to all classes of objects and in all departments of life, the more technical use of the term restricts it chiefly to literature and art. And here our criticism may be of several kinds. It may be *practical*, in which case we have in mind common or special uses of the objects which are before us for judgment. It may be *æsthetic*,‡ in which case we bring the work under examination into comparison with the standards of beauty or taste established and accepted for the entire field, or for some particular department of it. It surely is not illegitimate to judge of the Bible in these ways, that we may appreciate its beauty and sublimity,§ and its adaptation as a whole to its uses as a whole, or the adaptation of its several parts to the ends which they were to serve at the time when they were produced and for all time. But, in a narrower sense of the term, criticism inquires into the origin, history, genuineness and authenticity of literary documents, rather than their literary characteristics or their

\* *Inst. Theol.*, 335.

† *Century Dict.*, *sub verbo*.

‡ Cf. e. g. Matthew Arnold or Saint Beuve.

§ Cf. e. g. Dr. James Hamilton on *The Literary Attractions of the Bible*.

uses. This criticism, of course, finds application to all writing, documentary, memorial or monumental, and not merely to what is commonly suggested to us by the word literature. As we shall see, it has a somewhat peculiar work and range in the historical field, because there so much depends on the answers to the questions which criticism raises. Historical knowledge depends on testimony, as the thought or sentiment of a poem or the truth of a philosophical speculation or a mathematical demonstration does not.

There was a great deal of literature before there was anything worthy of the name of criticism. The slabs and cylinders of Assyria, and the walls of the temples and the tombs of Egypt, had been covered with their records; and the productive period of Greek literature had virtually come to an end; before there was anything that deserved to be called criticism in the technical and scientific sense. It began with the scholars and schools of Alexandria, when they began to gather up and sift the great and rich productions of the classical period, and found with what uncertain and divergent texts and questionable claims of authorship and otherwise unsatisfactory material they had to deal. It became a matter of interest and moment to identify and verify the works, especially of the great authors; to set aside the spurious, to determine compass and form and establish their text. They excelled especially in the sifting process.\*

Modern criticism began after the invention of the art of printing, when, with a view to the correction of works to be printed, manuscripts were diligently gathered, carefully compared, soberly estimated, and so the claims of books ascribed to ancient authors were established or set aside, their true form and contents determined, and their texts settled with closer and closer approximation to correctness. Thus the work of the critics has gone on, not in the department of classical literature alone, with which it began, but wherever a book, a document, a historical memorial or monument was to be estimated according to its true nature, intent, meaning and worth. Names like those of the Aldi at Venice, Erasmus, Henry and Robert Stephen, Casaubon and Scaliger, Heinsius and the Gronovs, Bentley and Porson, Hemsterhuis and Wyttenbach, Heyne and Wolf, suggest the kind of work done and the immense amount of talent and learning developed and exercised in many lands through centuries, in this field of criticism. The literature produced in the line of Shakespeare criticism alone would fill a small library.

The true spirit of criticism will appear as we go on—being often brought out in instructive contrast with the spirit that sometimes prevails. Of course, criticism must be suspicious rather than indo-

\* Böckh's *Encycl. und Meth. der phil. Wissensch.*, p. 232.

lently credulous. It tests all traditions. It is in part negative in its first aim and its earliest working. It clears away what is unwarranted to establish that which can pass proper tests. It has too often been content to rest in its negative and destructive results, and nowhere more so than in the field of Biblical criticism. There is a measure of truth in what Renan says with a frankness and force that are almost brutal: "Criticism knows no reverence; it judges gods and men. For it, there is neither prestige nor mystery; it breaks all charms; it tears aside all veils. This irreverent power, turning upon everything a firm and scrutinizing look, is by its very essence guilty of treason towards God and man." There is, nevertheless, a principle and a sentiment on the other side that many critics, and especially Biblical critics, should observe more scrupulously than they do. It is thus set forth by August Böckh, the greatest of the classical philologists of modern Germany: "We should be in the negative criticism more circumspect than the ancients. We must always start with the tradition, and try whether the unsuspected positive testimonies for the origin of a written work do not admit of being confirmed and completed by 'combinatory' criticism. Where the judgment is in any degree uncertain, the principle holds: *Quivis præsumitur liber genuinus, donec demonstretur contrarium.*"\*

The terms that are used in criticism are not always employed in the same sense and with the same precision. The different departments of philological and historical work, among which, for our purpose, criticism finds its sphere, are not put in one uniform order and relation to each other. Taking the broadest and highest conception of philology, Böckh sets aside as erroneous or inadequate these six definitions of its scope: The study of antiquity, the study of language, the study of general history, the view which makes it substantially the equivalent of criticism, the study of literary history and the study of humanity. He treats it as aiming at the knowledge of what has been produced by the human spirit, the knowledge of the ideas and conceptions of men, in their entire scope. It studies all the signs and symbols which men have employed, and, of course, chiefly language as the main vehicle and the most common vehicle for conveying to us the knowledge of men. Of course, criticism is one of its main agencies and instrumentalities. Criticism is also one of the main conditions of historical knowledge. In regard to the great processes, scholars are in general well agreed (the processes through which others must go for us, or we for ourselves), whether our object be the clearest possible understanding of what is contained in a given work that we are consulting or investigating, or whether beyond this we are reaching towards a larger

\* *Encycl. und Meth. der phil. Wissensch.*, p. 239.

knowledge. Let us take as a means of illustration, for the purpose of acquainting ourselves with the main processes and the terms that are in current use in connection with them, a historical work belonging to a somewhat remote past, an inscription on stone, metal or plaster, a roll of papyrus or parchment, or something equivalent. We may have before us only a modern reproduction, or it may be an original, or something intermediate between the autograph and the *facsimile* or substantial copy.

The first thing to be settled is the text itself as a means of ascertaining either the immediate or the remote meaning of what is written. Here *textual criticism* finds its field. Passing minor points, and even some important ones which we cannot notice just here without confusion, our process is something like this. The separate signs must be examined and settled, and the mode of their combination and grouping. Here we rely in the first instance on direct inspection, controlled by our knowledge of what belonged to the region, the people, the period from which (or from whom) the writing appears or purports to come. And from this, after a time, we pass on to the investigation of the originality, purity and integrity of the text. Possible trivial errors and defects, as well as more serious errors and defects, must be searched out and eliminated, if possible. Their existence may have been obvious from the first in some cases; in others, we are later led to suspect and look for and deal with them. There are such mistakes possible even in an autograph;\* innocent mistakes or more intentional changes may appear in the work of amanuenses, or copyists, or editors. We started with a mass of signs. Behind the mere signs we looked first for words. A mere jumble of words could not content us and we looked for a succession that could exist grammatically and logically. We sought for sense, and then for a sense which would give unity and consistency to the parts, or to the whole. We expect a sense harmonizing with what we know of the author (if we know him), and with the conditions of the time (if we know it exactly or even approximately), and with the declared or apparent purpose of the writing. It purports to be—something. We are helped if we know the personality of the author, his nationality, the conditions of his time, his whole environment. If the writing is anonymous we do the best we can without this knowledge. After the first and most formal stages of this process are behind us, we see that hermeneutics has come in, and must come in, to aid our textual criticism, and through all its later stages hermeneutics and criticism go hand in hand. And there is here good warrant for the system of Böckh,

\* Cf. Warfield, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*.

who treats both hermeneutics and criticism under the same rubrics, as grammatical, individual, historical and generic. We go through this process substantially if only a single copy of the writing is in existence, or is known and acceptable to us. When other copies are accessible (as is the case, *e.g.*, with many classical works, and with the books of the Bible), we compare, and weigh, and combine, and qualify one testimony by another. New labor is imposed, but more assured results and higher confidence should be the ample reward of our toil.\*

In this process of textual criticism, it will have been observed that two modes of working are resorted to, one of which depends mainly on external observation, while the other is more intellectual. Here we encounter one of the uses of the terms "lower" and "higher" criticism, the first being by some writers employed of the method which deals with the externals, while the other is used of that which resorts to and relies upon internal considerations.† In connection with the first of these lines and modes of operation we sometimes meet two technical terms, "palæographic" and "diplomatic" criticism. Palæography (πάλαι, -ός; γράφειν, -ή) has for the object of its study "ancient writing," and deals with the materials on which men wrote, the instruments and materials with which they wrote, the characters of which they made use and the mode of their employment, the ways in which they protected or transmitted what was written, what they did not only for the intelligibility, security or perseverance of the writing, but for the gratification of taste, or again to facilitate its use. All this is helpful, not only to the settlement of the text itself, but as an auxiliary in determining the quarter and the period from which it came. "Diplomatic"‡ criticism finds its sphere in connection with the process of gathering and employing a "critical apparatus," duplicate or varying manuscript copies, editions, citations, excerpts, paraphrases, comments of scholiasts and translations. These are in different degrees important helps to the settlement of texts.§ These are the two main branches of the external or "lower" textual criticism.|| The results reached by this method may be, and sometimes urgently need to be, supplemented by the other method, which makes use of internal considerations, confirming, qualifying, overthrowing what was provisionally established. Whether the text was entire or fragmentary, intact or impaired by

\* Cf., in general, Warfield, as above.

† See Bernhardy, *Grundr. d. Encycl. der Philol.*, s. 123.

‡ διπλός, -όω, -ωμα.

§ We should all know something of the vast and immensely important work done in this line towards the settlement of the text of the New Testament. Cf. Warfield's *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*.

|| See Freund, *Wie studirt man Philologie* ("nicht ganz passend"), p. 54.



carelessness, misfortune or design, we cannot without violence refrain from exercising our judgment upon the probabilities of the case, the inner congruities of the text,\* its adaptations to its avowed or apparent object, and many other like things. The evidence that first arrests attention as we study the text, reached provisionally by external witness, may be of a negative sort, forbidding our acceptance of it as it stands. We then go on to study what the writer more probably said. We conjecture, but may do it as a necessity imposed upon us, and may reach very confident conclusions. We have been guided by internal evidences rather than external testimonies. This, which, as we have seen, is sometimes called the "higher" textual criticism, is also sometimes called "conjectural" criticism, or "subjective" criticism.† Here the wide field of possibilities is opened before the critic, in which some move cautiously, and circumspectly, and reverently, while others are fanciful and adventurous, "to nothing fixed but love of change." The problem of this criticism, says Bernhardt (u. s., p. 123), is "not so much to establish irrevocably each text given in the manuscripts, as by witnesses, judgment and acute insight to complete this to a relative fixedness and purity."

All this criticism that is verbal and textual has for the object of its investigation and its aim the integrity and purity of the text, which is then to be interpreted. As we have seen, however, these processes somewhat overlap each other; for a measure of interpretation is needful to the most satisfactory judgment about the text. Criticism in other forms goes on as we pursue our exegesis, and deals in various ways and for various purposes with its results. It deals with broader relations of the work under examination than those with which simple hermeneutics is concerned. Böckh, treating in the first instance of classical literature, but making frequent incidental reference to the books of the New Testament, or the Bible generally, regards *hermeneutics* as concerned for and with the understanding of objects in themselves—in their own nature—while *criticism* has to do with them in their relations to their environment, or to the individuality of their author.‡ The one aims at an "absolute," the other at a "relative" understanding. So Schleiermacher reminds us that "criticism," etymologically, is in part a judgment, in part a comparison.§ And all reputable writers on Biblical interpretation and criticism make it a prominent object of

\* Both in original writings and in copies we find mistakes in single characters or words, omissions, transpositions, interpolations, etc., etc., destroying or changing the sense. Cf. Warfield's *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*.

† Bernhardt, u. s., p. 147 sq.; Freund, also *divinatorische Kritik*, u. s., 54.

‡ U. s., pp. 54, 55, etc.

§ *Herm. u. Krit.*, s. 265.

criticism to investigate the authorship, genuineness and authenticity, and the like of the matter which we are studying (book, document, or whatever it may be).\* As has been said, Böckh treats both hermeneutics and criticism under these four heads: Grammatical, individual, historical and generic.

In this connection again we encounter those unfortunate terms "lower" and "higher" criticism. It was an old definition, that the "lower" criticism has reference to the genuineness or spuriousness of individual letters or words; the "higher" to entire writings or sections of writings. Schleiermacher objected many years ago† that, according to this conception, the question in the text of John i. 1 (between  $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\theta\epsilon\omicron\omega\ \eta\nu\ \delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ ), with all its import, belonged to the "lower" criticism, while the question as to the story of the adulterous woman, at the beginning of John viii, a question of no such moment, belonged to the "higher" criticism. Yet the *Century Dictionary* (largest, most recent, most pretentious in its department) perpetuates this discrimination.‡ We constantly encounter these unfortunate terms. We must observe carefully what men mean by them. If we must use them there is a much more valuable distinction with reference to which they might be employed—the distinction between the criticism which relies mainly or wholly on external helps to a decision, and that which relies on internal means. And yet even here the terms are unfortunate, because for some purposes the external means are higher in pertinence and value than the internal; they are less influenced by our tastes and fancies, less swayed by our prejudices and interests.

When we pass from the hermeneutical and critical endeavor to understand the meaning of our text to the questions which have to do with the authorship, genuineness, authenticity or credibility, and completeness or sufficiency for its purpose of the literary production which we are studying, a new group of problems confronts us. Putting out of our field of view other departments of literature and concentrating attention upon the historical, let us see what our principal critical inquiries must be, and in what order they naturally present themselves. Our object is to ascertain historic fact and truth. Many of our principles may find quite as much application elsewhere. We have seen that in connection with textual criticism, and that criticism which associates itself with hermeneutics, our knowledge in regard to the authorship, the time and place, the circumstances and the aim of a production, are not without influence upon our results.

\* Hagenbach's *Theol. Encycl.*, etc., etc.

† U. s., pp. 267, 277. Cf. Hagenbach *Encycl.* (11th ed.), p. 177.

‡ "The higher criticism concerns writings as a whole; the lower, the integrity or other characteristics of particular parts and passages."

But the time comes when these matters must be brought into the foreground. In our endeavor to perfect our hermeneutics, and ascertain the meaning of our text, we have turned to account what we knew, or supposed we knew, of the authorship and all the circumstantialia of our text. But when we come to weigh the solid value and estimate the full result of what this interpretation yields, and to put it into connection with our other knowledge, new reasons arise for reëxamining these points. We are no longer directing our effort towards a merely literary result, the fullest discovery of the meaning of a text, but towards the attainment of historical and other substantial knowledge; we have new motives for diligence and breadth and thoroughness in our investigation.

There is a considerable class of writers who use the terms "lower" and "higher" criticism, not of the methods employed, but of the objects upon which they are used. According to their usage, it is the "higher" criticism that deals with these questions of authorship, authenticity and the like, while the "lower" criticism deals with the text. The limitation is arbitrary and technical, and is repudiated by many.\* It is necessary, however, to recognize the restriction as one that is now very common. This is what is meant by "higher" criticism by Catholic scholars like Welte and Kaulen in the great Catholic *Kirchen-Lexicon*, and by many Protestants. This is the constant usage, *e.g.*, of Dr. Briggs and the school that he represents.† Whether this use of terms seems to us happy, or

\* "Individual criticism (the question whether the individual character of a writing corresponds with the individual character of the assumed author, etc.) has also been called 'higher' criticism, in which case we understand by the 'lower' criticism the grammatical and diplomatic—a distinction which has no scientific value."—Böckh, u. s., p. 210.

† See his *Biblical Study*, pp. 21, 24, etc., etc. : questions "as to the origin, authorship, time of composition, character, design and direction of the individual writings that claim, or are claimed to belong to the sacred Scriptures." "With reference to each writing, or it may be part of a writing, we have to determine the historical origin and authorship, the original readers, the design and character of the composition, and its relation to other writings of its group. These questions must be settled partly by *external historical* evidence, but chiefly by internal evidence, such as the language, style of composition, archæological and historical traces, the conceptions of the author respecting the various subjects of human thoughts, and the like." So McClintock's little *Cyclopædia and Methodology*; while the larger work of Drs. Crooks and Hurst objects to these terms *in toto*. Weidner speaks of this usage as commonly accepted. Rübiger recognizes the term "higher" criticism as often used of the inquiry with reference to the author and his time, but speaks of this distinction between "higher" criticism and "lower" criticism *as made without reason*. Rothe simply recognizes the usage without comment. The later editions of Hagenbach criticise the usage. Rosenkrantz (2d ed., 1845) found these terms used of "conjectural" and "mechanical" criticism, and objects to them as relative and unstable. Sabatier (*Encycl. des Sc. rel.*) objects.

as even defensible, we must understand that this is in many quarters the current usage.

And now to avoid coming back again to the definition of these troublesome terms, let me say here that some specialists in historical science make still another distinction when they employ the expressions at all. Bernheim (professor at Greifswald, *Lehrb. d. historischen Methode*, p. 203) says: "We historians, departing from philological usage, designate as the 'lower' or *external* criticism the judgment whether the accounts are in general admissible as testimonies; and we designate as 'higher' or *internal* criticism and judgment how the testimonies stand related to the facts, *i. e.*, whether the testimonies are reliable, probable, possible, or to be rejected."

Sometimes in historical research our object is to collect the largest and most complete apparatus possible, and so reach the largest result; at other times, the object is to reach the most solid and reliable results, guided by the most thorough study of some single historical document. In a large historical investigation the steps are four: The collecting of the sources; criticism of them; comprehension of the significance and the connection of the facts; and the representation of them in expression conformed to these results. In its dealing with individual works historical criticism attempts to reach a judgment on this point—*whether or to what extent a book, document, memorial, monument, or affirmation purporting to be historical, really and reliably gives us historical truth.* "Historical criticism," says Bernheim (u. s., p. 152), "occupies itself with sifting the material, and the establishing of the actual," and (u. s., p. 202) "the problem of historical criticism is to establish in our judgment the actuality of the data announced in and transmitted by our sources, and relatively to decide to what degree of probability these are to be held as actual fact." The provinces of philological and historical criticism to a certain extent overlap each other. That which has been described as "the most difficult and at the same time the noblest problem"\* of philological criticism, and which in the full treatment of it is ordinarily last in order, must be among the first and is always one of the most important problems of historical criticism—*the inquiry into the age and authorship of the historical material under examination.* If we would know the value as history of that which purports to be history, it is often of prime importance that we know from what point and from what person our testimony comes. Evidence may be abundant and decisive without the identification of individual witnesses, but often it is not. And when it is an individual testimony that is before us, the first duty may be to identify and pass judgment upon the witness, his time, place and

\* Bernhardt, *Encycl. der phil. Wissench.*, 159.

relations. Philological criticism passes the testimony over to us in form for the investigations and decisions of historical criticism.\* It becomes important for us, therefore, to acquaint ourselves with the ruling principles and accredited methods of historical criticism.

In these inquiries as to the time and place of composition, the individual authorship and its environment, we seldom start without reasonable presuppositions. And here let me recall the principle laid down by Böckh† in regard to classical literature and literature generally—that where no prejudgment coming down from antiquity points to the rejection of a writing, we must start with the tradition and see whether it cannot be confirmed and completed. When the judgment hesitates *quivis præsumitur genuinus liber, donec demonstretur contrarium*. Bernhardt says: ‡ “Nur in unwillkürlicher Ahnung, der Eindruck von zerstreuten Spuren und Widersprüchen, kann der Verdacht gegen einen Autor entstehen, und d. Zeit mag dieses dunkle Gefühl zur Reife bringen.” All the great classical authors, Greek and Latin, have been and are tested in this way by wise and eminent philologists.§ As we enter upon our investigation, four principal lines of inquiry open before us, inquiring into the *general evidences of the genuineness* or spuriousness of the work under examination, its *authorship*, its *form*, and its *substance*.

On the first point, which is discussed at length in some of our works on historical science and elsewhere,|| we need not dwell, except to take note of the recognized principle, that a work which may not be the genuine product of the hand from which it purports to come, or that from which we have supposed it to come, may be a genuine work from another hand possibly of equal authority. And our unfavorable judgment may sometimes take the form of a conviction of the real or partial spuriousness of the work under examination, while in other cases it may be only the persuasion that our suppositions had been erroneous.

In regard to the other three points as related to historical material, we must keep in remembrance these considerations:

1. As to *authorship*. That an anonymous testimony may be

\* “Die Kritik als Wissenschaft hat d. Grundsätze u. Regeln aufzustellen, nach denen zu verfahren ist, um d. Quellen in ihrer Ursprünglichkeit nach Verfasser, Zeit und Text zu erkennen. Sie ist als sogenannte philol. Kritik d. nothwendige Voraussetzung für d. histor. Kritik. Während diese d. Aufgabe hat, aus ihren Quellen d. Thatsachen ihrer geschichtl. Wahrheit gemäss zu ermitteln, soll d. philol. Kritik d. Historiker d. Quellen für seine wissenschaftl. Zwecke brauchbar machen.”—Räbiger, *Theologik*, p. 241.

† U. s., p. 239.

‡ *Grundlin. zur Encycl. der Philol.*, p. 161.

§ Bentley’s “immortal dissertation” on the *Epistles of Phalaris*, proving them spurious by evidence drawn from dialects, times, place and historical relations, is a model composition of its kind.

|| *E. g.*, Bernheim’s *Lehrb. d. histor. Methode*.

such in itself, and so corroborated, as to inspire very great confidence that we are dealing with a reliable record of facts. In general, however, in historical literature more than elsewhere, our desire is very natural and very strong, to identify the witness on whose testimony we are asked to believe, and after the identification to satisfy ourselves as to his opportunity, competence, and character. The *testimonium* takes its character and value to us very much from the *testis*. In common life we are not superior to this necessity. We do not affect so much confidence in intuition and insight as to be indifferent or contemptuous in regard to our witnesses.

2. As to the *form* of work before us. Whether the author is identified and approved or not, it is manifestly important to determine whether this written testimony is in the form in which it was originally given, or whether it has been changed by design, or has suffered injury or loss by the chances of time. Accidental mutilation would not inspire distrust, but would only impair the symmetry, the completeness, and perhaps the intelligibility of the testimony. Designed alteration weakens confidence, except as the extent and the motive of the change become evident, are measured and controlled. The change may itself become in its turn a source of knowledge in regard to other matters than those to which the original bears witness.

3. As to the *substance* of the material before us. Whatever our conclusion may be as to authorship and form, the subject matter for itself challenges investigation as to its reliableness, and its sufficiency for the purpose for which we are asked to accept it.

Before we pass from these general principles to the particular rules that are laid down for us by the masters of historical science,\* we must carefully observe the prevailing, sometimes the divergent, usage in the employment of some of the terms of constant recurrence, especially the term *authenticity*, which is sometimes used of genuineness, sometimes of credibility and reliableness. The word "genuine" is used in a broader and in a stricter sense. As our best lexicons define it (on the basis of prevailing usage) it is used of a work or document that "can be traced back ultimately to the author or authors from whom it professes to emanate."† Beyond this it sometimes carries the further idea "that the works have come down to us uncorrupt from their original sources."‡ In its broader sense it affirms that a work is "not spurious, false or adul-

\* *E. g.*, by Droysen, Von Sybel, Bernheim, etc. These German writers are characteristically more careful and precise in their scientific terms and methods than most of our English writers on these subjects.

† Webster's *Unabridged*, *sub verbo* "Authenticity."

‡ Webster's *Unabridged* (of its use by writers on the Evidences).

terated,"\* with emphasis sometimes laid on the last point, so that it implies not simply that the work as a whole is not spurious, etc., but that we have it as it left its author's hand. For this last characteristic a more exact term is sometimes used—"integrity." Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary* says of *authentic* and *authenticity*: "We call a document 'authentic' (in the primary sense of the term) when on the ground of its being thus traced back (*i.e.*, to its author or authors) it may be relied on as true and authoritative. . . . But in general literature it (the term) has obtained a wider signification. We can often rely on statements as true without knowing the name of the person with whom they originated. Their claim to be believed may rest upon collateral evidences of the most unquestionable nature, and such statements are accordingly spoken of as 'authentic.'" † In the one case, you observe, this reliance rests upon the accrediting of the authors; in the other case it is wholly independent of any such identification and accrediting. It is a misfortune, but it is a fact, that the term, as employed in our theological literature, is ambiguous, being sometimes an equivalent to and substitute for "genuine," while in other cases it is used of a quality which may be dependent on genuineness, or may not be established by genuineness, or may exist where genuineness is not established, or is even disproved. ‡

It is surely no conclusive proof of superior wisdom to disown or neglect the methods and approved results of the immense zeal and diligence that have been exhibited, especially within the present century, in the field of historical research, the processes that have proved most productive, the tests that have commended themselves, the precautions that must be taken, and the like. We are seeking for knowledge, or the nearest approximation to it. As its conditions we find these lines of inquiry emphasized, § and reasonably so: inquiry into the *genuineness* (authenticity), the *integrity*, the *correctness and reliableness*, and the *adequacy and completeness* of the means

\* *Century Dictionary*: "Not of a deceptive or affected character."

† ἀὐθῆντης = ἀποθέτης (Soph.) √ ἀποθεῖν (lost as a simple, but seen in συθέτης = συσεργός, "one who does anything with his own hand; the real author of an act"). ἀθετητικός, warranted, vouched for (Eccles.). Adverb used twice in *Cic. ad Att.* ix, 14, x, 9, in the sense of "authoritatively."

‡ Murray defines authenticity: (1) Being authoritative, or duly authenticated; (2) Being in accordance with fact, true in substance; (3) Being what it professes in origin or authorship. "By some writers, especially on Christian evidences, *authenticity* has been confined to sense '2,' and genuineness used in sense '3.'" The *Century Dictionary* defines thus: (1) Having authority; (2) Real, of genuine origin; being what it purports to be; (3) Entitled to acceptance or belief, reliable, trustworthy, of established credit, credibility or authority.

§ *E. g.*, by Von Sybel, Droysen, etc.

of knowledge lying before us in the work (or the collection of works) with which we are dealing.

Following substantially Droysen's *Grundriss der Historik*, we have this scheme: (a) The first inquiry is, *whether the work before us* (the historical material of whatever sort) *is what it has been supposed, or claims to be*. Observe here the two different lines of inquiry opening before us, and the different results that will be reached by a favorable or an unfavorable conclusion. In one case, the claim is made in and by the work itself, and its credit for genuineness is involved in our inquiry and decision. In the other it is our supposition and that of others in regard to it—a persuasion, definite or vague, strong or weak, but hitherto current. In the one case our decision establishes, leaves in doubt, or overthrows an important part of the credit of the work itself. In the other case no claim of the work is at issue, but only a belief of our own and of others, and the sufficiency of the reasons for that belief. They and we may be proved to have been in error, and the work not suffer; it may be the gainer if a better supposition takes the place of that abandoned as erroneous. This question of genuineness (in its primary and in its broader sense) includes but goes beyond definitely asserted authorship, for it deals as well with the vast mass of historical material, in regard to which there is no name known to us that can be associated with its production.

Where authorship is asserted within the work itself, we must consider to what extent the assertion is so imbedded that we must regard it as original, and not as a possible interpolation. Where the ascription is in a title or other appendage, we must ask: Is this original? Whose belief or assertion does it represent? and what is the measure of its authority and value, judged by what we know of such affixes in general, and particularly in the land and time and class of works represented by the one before us? If the ascription comes to us by tradition, written or oral, positive assertion or popular belief, we must test this in itself and its corroborations, and also in all that suggests reasonable doubt.

Where our document is absolutely anonymous, investigation may still inquire after the "source" in a broader sense, the period, the region, the class of agents or influences from which the work appears to have come. One thing supplements or checks another so that our conclusion may still have important value. And in a still less solid sense our inquiry may ask what the work purports to be, for what purpose it appears or purports to have been produced, and how far the *prima facie* appearance, or profession, or claim made by it or made anywhere for it, seems to be substantiated. It has at least this individuality. The investigation in all the alter-



native forms that suggest themselves is very comprehensive and often very complicated and delicate, and within its limits every variety of conclusion may be reached, between the satisfactory establishment on the one hand, and the complete overthrow on the other, of every claim or tradition, or current assumption, in regard to the work under scrutiny. The limits are the genuine, proved to moral certainty, and the utterly spurious. We are neither to conclude that to be historically worthless the genuineness of which cannot be maintained, or may even be conclusively disproved; nor are we to treat the disproof of genuineness as always a trivial thing. Internal claims, titles, traditions, corroborative evidences, must all be weighed with judicial fairness—and surely most of all in the field of sacred literature. Credit invalidated in this one point has for its first and perhaps for its lasting fruit distrust in other particulars; and all the other rights thus imperiled must be guarded with the utmost nicety of discrimination and sobriety of judgment and the strictest justice.

(b) The next question is *whether the material is in unchanged form what it was, and what the author designed that it should continue to be*; or, if not unchanged, what alterations can be detected and eliminated. This is often in technical phrase described as criticism of the *integrity* of the text. It is in large measure an application to parts of the text of principles and methods which our inquiry into genuineness applies to the whole. Of course, conditions are in some respects altered. Changes of text *may* have been made by the author's own hand. They *may* be accidental, and do no harm except negatively. If made in a hostile sense, or to serve some other sinister or independent interest they *may* be easily detected, measured and eliminated. Portions not genuine *may* supposedly be of equal value, but can very rarely be traced to their source.

These two lines of investigation carry us towards, but do not bring us to, our ultimate object. Hence (c), our third inquiry, upon which the others converge, is *whether the document, etc., under examination, when it was produced, could and did give that which it claims to establish, or is supposed to establish as historical fact and truth*; or whether from the start it could be correct only partially and relatively. This point is fairly covered by the term *credibility*.\* Four subordinate inquiries are here involved, two of which relate to the subject matter of the historical affirmations which we are testing, and two to the witnesses.

(1) Is the thing affirmed possible in itself, possible under average conditions, possible under any circumstances whatever? Then (2), is it possible under the given conditions and circumstances? (These may

\* For this some use "authenticity."

not be average, or only average.) Common human experience supplies our ordinary standard; exceptional human experience our occasional standard. Of course, these inquiries acquire special interest, and become inquiries of peculiar moment when we approach the extraordinary, and most of all when we are confronting what seems and purports to be supernatural, miraculous. That may be within the limits of the possible which we must, without hesitation, declare impossible under the quite ordinary conditions which our narrative indicates. Or at other times we reverse the order of our reasoning and say: What is quite impossible under the common, average historical conditions, becomes altogether credible under the unusual or unique conditions which are authenticated to us by ample evidence in the case before us. Faith and unbelief will come to very different conclusions in the presence of the same recital.

The other two of our subordinate inquiries have reference to the witnesses (using the word in part of the observers, and in part of the narrators of the alleged facts). The difficulty in the case, if there is one, may be at one or at both of these points. We are therefore really and seriously concerned with the capacity and opportunity of observer and narrator, and with the dispositions, purposes and circumstances of one or both. Our further inquiries are therefore:

(3) Whether in the motives, the aims, the various personal relations of the narrator, there is anything discernible that warps conception and presentation of facts.

(4) Whether incorrectness is unavoidable in consequence of the inadequacy of the means and opportunities for the apprehension of the facts.

No two observations, no two narrations of any event exactly coincide, or can exactly coincide (unless our narrative is a dead copy of another, in which case we have not two but one). And yet these inevitable diversities do not even imperil or threaten credibility; they may support it. We probably never get an absolutely colorless testimony. Every observer and witness has and is influenced by his personality and his history. It is only certain kinds and degrees of bias that are absolutely fatal to confidence. There are those who emphasize the bias of the Biblical histories as one of the most serious obstacles to faith in themselves.\* In judging, therefore, of our right to accept, or our obligation to accept, as historic fact and truth what is so presented to us by the testimony of the source (or sources), we must look not only at the facts in *them-*

\* "Die tieferen Untersuchungen d. Neuzeit haben alle gezeigt, dass in keinem einzigen histor. Buch d. N. T. sich d. histor. Thatsachen d. evang. u. apost. Geschichte in rechter Unmittelbarkeit abdrücken, sondern dass in allen d. Thatsachen vom Verfasser jedes einzelnen Buches schon unter bestimmte Gesichtspunkte gestellt haben."—Overbeck, *Antrittsvorlesung*, p. 25.

*selves*, and their possible occurrence in the conditions which surround them as facts, but also at the witnesses and their testimony. For, what we might receive—what it would be unreasonable to reject—on one testimony, we should receive with much hesitation, or with much qualification, if we could receive it at all, on another testimony. Here there comes in the opportunity, competence, character and *animus*, first of the original observers, and then of those who are our witnesses. We go beyond these men themselves to the habit and temper of the time and place from which the witnesses speak, to see how these may have affected the carefulness and impartiality of their observations and affirmations. And it may not be amiss if we are equally scrupulous and vigilant in watching ourselves, and the temper of our time and our environment, to see whether we are fair judges of a fair and adequate testimony. We may be as little prepared to “judge righteous judgment” as our witnesses to give worthy and adequate testimony. The modern scientific attitude towards the supernatural and the miraculous; the Protestant attitude towards the alleged mediæval and Catholic miracles; our attitude in common things towards all that touches our partisan prepossessions and interests; will show that charity is not the only thing that should “begin at home.” Vigilant fairness is another thing that may well be cherished in the same place.

(*d*) A fourth inquiry is, whether the material before us contains all the elements of which our investigation is seeking to gain knowledge, or, if not, at what points and in what degree it is incomplete. The critical arrangement of our material which has been sifted and tested will supply our answers. It is well that Droysen should remind us that “all historical information is fragmentary, and acuteness in detecting what is wanting is the measure (one measure) of assurance in the investigation.”

We now have our materials prepared, and are ready for the constructive process that should follow and crown all this critical work. We seek, and are bound to form, as positive a picture as we may of the condition of things brought before us by all this collection and scrutiny and sifting of the sources. A criticism that has saved us from building upon the unreliable is worth something. But a knowledge consisting only of negations would not satisfy us long. Unless these are pure works of fiction under the guise of history, or excessively meagre and shadowy, there is something real and substantial lying behind our sources. This we seek to reproduce to ourselves, and to put into its due connections with what we know beside of the period and region and subjects to which our documents relate.

We have perhaps now sufficiently identified the general objects,

the more specific aims and the characteristic methods of historico-critical investigation. These processes, or others equivalent to them, are manifestly indispensable if we are to have any true apprehension of the nature, meaning and value of any literary product with which we are seriously dealing. And in the field of history, thorough and careful work like this must be done by us, or for us, if we are to reach anything worthy to be called knowledge of the men, the institutions, the events, whether of the nearer or the remoter past.

With the nature of historico-philological criticism clearly in mind, we come back to the question with which we started—whether these methods are to be thoroughly, honestly employed in our study and use of the Scripture. Criticism has at times been irreverent and brutal towards books still called “sacred;” it has been prejudiced, on one side and on the other; it has been timid, shallow and superficial. May not the sweeping denial of the need and right to study the Bible “critically” be an error quite as serious as either of these?

Hesitation can hardly justify itself for a moment with reference to any period or any point lying this side of the origin of these writings; can inquiry be arrested just there? We *must*, as nearly as possible, recover the original form and the pure text, and follow in detail the fortunes and treatment of these books since they have been in the hands of men. But, as we have seen, we cannot take many steps in exegesis without finding that, before we were aware of it, we were grappling with some of the most complex and representative problems of historical criticism—and of the (so-called) “higher criticism:” who said this, when, where, why? For the who, when, where, why, seriously affect our interpretation of that which is surely something more than a mere colorless formula of words.

Many parts of the Bible assert of themselves, or of other parts, a human authorship, and bring before us the conditions of that authorship, or at least point to these as significant. The incidental evidences of a true human participation in their production are abundant, as various as possible, and perfectly decisive. If it is also true that this is only a partial description of these books, and a description of them on the lower and human side—if it is true that they are more unique in having a really divine authorship, part of the evidence comes to us through the results of “criticism.” Apart from “the witness of the Holy Spirit” in and for the Scripture, and the other proofs that hinge more or less upon this, the testimony to and the proof of the inspiration of these writings reaches us through human channels. Is the testimony pure and reliable? In chap. iv, sec. 7, of Dr. A. A. Hodge’s *Outlines*, the second sentence is: “We

come to this question" (that of the inspiration of the Scripture), "already believing in their credibility as histories, and in that of their writers as witnesses of facts, and in the truth of Christianity, and in the divinity of Christ." The first two parts of this antecedent belief, with which we approach the problem of inspiration, plainly depend on the results reached more or less adequately and conclusively by the historic-critical investigations of somebody. And the other two points are considerably implicated with the results of the same examination. We do not believe in the truth of Christianity and its divinity without some indebtedness to the testimony of these writings, which must to this end also be identified, and accredited, and established for us. It should seem, hence, that it ought not to be questioned that criticism is legitimate and necessary in its most thorough and fearless application to the claims of the Bible and of its several parts; and that this is a condition of their yielding to us the profit for which we are invited and bidden to come to them. Neither can we in any other way meet the competing claims of other sacred books, or expose the error and sin of stolid or frivolous indifference, or of unbelief.

But while the rights of criticism are thus amply vindicated, and should be not only heartily conceded but also vigorously maintained, this is not the end of the matter. The unique quality of these writings, appearing so early, disclosing itself at so many points, in so many ways, and by signs so convincing, should temper the spirit of our dealing even with those problems that are most undeniably within the province of criticism. Moreover, the credit gained and the influence exerted by these writings, collectively and individually, in part for reasons palpable to us, and partly on the ground of much that has wholly and forever vanished from our field of knowledge, should command respectful treatment not simply of their own most positive claims, but of much beside which has won and held the general faith of the Church. It is no justification of summary and contemptuous dealing even with "traditional" claims respecting these sacred writings, that critical science was not developed twenty-five hundred years ago, and that the instruments of precision which we handle so confidently have been patented in recent years. We may not assume that no reasons existed for these faiths which established themselves so early and have maintained themselves so long. The incalculable importance of these Old Testament writings to the Jewish people makes it incredible that they would believe without inquiry or discrimination, and that ingenious and skillful pretenders would enjoy real advantages over genuine authors—that the great names of the nation's past were so vague as to identify nobody in particular, or were held so cheap that any one might use them.

There are no other historical documents known to men, in ancient or in modern times, on whose reliableness so much was dependent or so much has been built up. Therefore, even though we were to leave out of view those aspects of the case which are sometimes ruled out as theological and not scientific, we cannot put and keep these writings on the same plane with any others that criticism handles. Let critical inquiry in skilled and reverent hands push its investigations to the limits of necessary and proper research, avoiding needless and baseless surmises and conceited fancies, and the dictatorial tone of the critical "dogmaticians" who hold that a "may be" which has just occurred to some acute and restless mind is better founded than what the Church has held for twenty or thirty centuries.\* It *may be* that, after all, the Church of the ages is right on many points concerning which recent hypotheses and conjectures of criticism are propounded as equally sure with the axioms or demonstrations of Euclid. Neither unbelief nor the proudest and strictest science is more concerned to expose any unfounded claim that may have been made in or by the Church in regard to these Scriptures, than the Church is to know precisely what it possesses in and with its sacred books.

These successive processes of historical criticism we should employ with special thoroughness and carefulness:

(a) Because Christianity is so conspicuously a historical religion, in its foundations and in its essence;

(b) Because Christianity stakes so much upon the nature and reliableness of its Scriptures; and

(c) Because unbelief so frequently begins in and with the rejection of the historical foundations and elements of Christianity, so often veils its wide and disastrous sweep under attacks, specious and plausible, upon one part or another of the Biblical history or literature, and so often constructs either its own defenses or its offensive weapons out of perplexities and difficulties connected with the historical parts or aspects of the Bible.

We have occasion to remind ourselves when we are undertaking a study of the Old Testament history, that while it is not abso-

\* Dr. Wright (*Int. Old Testament*, p. 71) says: "Even if it could be proved that the details of the Israelitish ritual set forth in the Pentateuch do not altogether harmonize with the references thereto in the other books of the Old Testament, it is indisputable that the facts of history set forth in the Pentateuch are everywhere accepted in the other books of the Jewish Scripture, whether historical, prophetic, or poetical."

It on the one hand *it may be* that this broad and substantial agreement is the result of late constructions and adjustments, *it may be* on the other hand that the facts are as represented both in regard to their occurrence and the record of it.

lutely peculiar to Christianity to contain elements of real or alleged history, the proportion and importance of these elements is altogether exceptional. "The essence of Christianity," says Schelling, "is precisely its historical part. . . . That would be a poor interpretation, one ignoring what is characteristic in it, which would distinguish the doctrinal and the historical, and treat only the former as essential, as the true substance, but the latter as mere form or drapery. The historical is not something accidental to the doctrine, but the doctrine itself. The doctrinal, that which might perchance remain after separating the historical, *e.g.*, the general doctrine of a personal God, as known also to rational theology, or the ethics of Christianity, would be nothing remarkable, nothing distinctive of it; the distinguishing element, that which demands explanation, is rather precisely the historical." "The facts of Christianity," says Prof. Lee (*Miracles*), "are represented by some as forming no part of its essential doctrines; they rank, it is argued, no higher than its external accessories. It is impossible to maintain this distinction. In the Christian revelation, the fact of the resurrection is the fundamental doctrine, and the doctrine of the incarnation is the fundamental fact." In order to determine with what faith has to deal, to justify faith so far as it can be justified in taking the Scriptures and their historical contents for that for which it has regarded them, to remove the difficulties of honest doubt and take away the weapons of that which is malignant, we are concerned with the credibility of the Scriptures and that which goes to establish it.

PRINCETON.

CHARLES A. AIKEN.