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I. DR. BRIGGS' HIGHER CRITICISM OF THE HEXATEUCH.¹

THIS is in some respects a notable book. The recent, though possibly passing, notoriety of its author, and the importance of the event which was the more immediate occasion of its publication, would, of themselves, be sufficient to give it some claim to this distinction. We must confess, however, that in calling it a notable book, we had reference to claims grounded in other circumstances, which, if not less adventitious, are certainly of even greater moment and graver significance. We refer to the fact that Dr. Briggs' book is one of the latest, and, in our judgment, one of the ablest, attempts to bring the results of radical criticism before the popular mind, and commend them to popular acceptance. Few, comparatively, seem to be aware of the extent, the vigor, and the persistency of the efforts now being put forth for the attainment of this end. Those, however, who have occasion to notice such matters know the tireless energy and ceaseless activity of the representatives of the neo-criticism. Journals like the "*Biblical World*," series of books like "*The International Theological Library*," dictionaries like that now being put forth under the editorship of Drs. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, series of commentaries like the one soon to be issued from the press of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, are exerting a

¹ *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch.* By Charles Augustus Briggs, D. D., Edward Robinson Professor of Biblical Theology in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. Pp. xii., 259. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1893.

constant and powerful pressure upon an ever-widening circle of students and ministers. Not only so, but these agencies have been deliberately devised for the very purpose of propagating the radical criticism. They are the expression of a zeal, which, inexplicable and ill-directed as it may appear to many of us, is none the less real, none the less active, and which is likely to be none the less fruitful of results.

But the zeal of the radical critics is not content with the slow process of indoctrinating so conservative a body as the clergy. It feels that it has a mission directly to the people. Hence we find a distinguished canon of the English Church pressed in conscience first to preach and then to publish two series of sermons, the purpose of which was, in a word, to prove, first, that we need not go to the Old Testament expecting to find there the truth of history; and second, "that good as the truth of pure history may be, the truth of poetry, of that poetry which is idealized history, may, for purposes of edification, be even better." The second of these series, by a most felicitous infelicity, he entitled, "Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism," thus indicating not obscurely the name of the idol at whose shrine he himself is in the habit of burning incense. Later, a distinguished scholar of our own country has delivered before large audiences twelve exceedingly able and interesting lectures, the object of which seems to have been to convince the laity, first: That, looking at considerable sections of the Old Testament as history, they could not do better than consign it to the waste-basket; and second, That, after having made this disposition of it as history, they would be guilty of an inexcusable mistake not to see in it the inspired word of God, the best and safest of guides in the affairs of the soul.

This book from the pen of Dr. Briggs falls into the same category. It is an appeal to the people. In his preface the author says: "The book has been written for the general public rather than for Hebrew students." (P. viii.) "It is evident that these questions of the Higher Criticism can no longer be confined to theological schools and professional circles. The people desire to know them and consider the answer to them." (P. viii.)

Further, it is written in the interest of religion. It aims, as

we are distinctly informed in the preface, "to contribute . . . to a better understanding and higher appreciation of the most ancient documents of our holy religion." (P. viii.)

We mention and even emphasize this point for two reasons: First, because, while we will feel compelled to call in question the methods which Dr. Briggs has seen fit to employ for the attainment of his very worthy end, we do not wish to be understood as for one moment calling in question his motives. Where a man of his high character affirms explicitly that he is aiming at such and such results, then, no matter how obvious it may be to others that his methods are suited to bring about results just the reverse of those aimed at, still we maintain that we are bound to believe his explicit affirmation. In miscarriages of this kind, of which history records not a few, it is proper to remember that motives are a matter of the heart, while the adaptation of means to ends is wholly a matter of the understanding. The fact that Paul made havoc of the church of God does not warrant us in denying that he designed to do God service. Nor does the fact that Dr. Briggs' book is likely to make havoc of the word of God warrant us in questioning the statement that "It is the earnest desire of the author to contribute . . . to a better understanding and higher appreciation of the most ancient documents of our holy religion." Our second reason for emphasizing this point is, that some careless reader might fail to scan the preface, and then he would be in danger, not only of failing to perceive the real aim of the book, but even of supposing that its aim was anything but "to contribute to a higher appreciation of the most ancient documents of our holy religion."

This, then, is the first, and one of the most significant and important, points to be noted in regard to Dr. Briggs' book. It is an effort to secure the popular ear for, and popular acquiescence in, the positions, methods, and results of the radical criticism. It is conceived and executed in the spirit and style of Rabshakeh's address to the men upon the wall. The great gap between the anticipations of the Assyrian and the actual historical event cause us of to-day to smile softly as we read his utterances. His address, however, was none the less a masterpiece. It aimed to

produce a profound impression. It did produce a profound impression. And just as a matter of fact, it was suited to produce such an impression. If the event did not correspond with the expectations of Rabshakeh, the fault cannot be laid to the door of his speech. The tone of confidence which pervades it was well calculated to carry conviction to the popular mind. The extravagance of its claims was only too well sustained by facts which were not one whit less unpalatable for being wholly unimpeachable. It held out alluring hopes to compliance, and both mocked at resistance and threatened it with certain and speedy humiliation and punishment. And even the unpleasant savor of arrogance and insolence which characterized it throughout, hard as it may have been to bear, only served to remind those to whom it was addressed that, while they themselves were like birds in a cage, Rabshakeh stood before them as the representative of a great conqueror flushed with uninterrupted triumphs. And—audacious and amusing as it may appear in the light of after events—most amazing and alarming of all to the men upon the wall must have appeared the assertion that the demands of the Assyrian had the sanction of heaven. Now, it would be excessive praise to ascribe to Dr. Briggs' brief for the radical criticism a merit in all respects equal to that of Rabshakeh's address. But, considering the differences between the two situations, it is within bounds to say that it is on the whole a meritorious imitation. To elaborate in every detail the comparison here suggested would be tedious. It must suffice to say that Dr. Briggs' book, like Rabshakeh's address, is a peremptory demand for immediate and unconditional surrender, backed up by considerations which need not utterly dismay us, but which none the less are worthy of, and demand, our serious attention.

The limits of this article make anything like a detailed examination of this book an impossibility. We must content ourselves with laying before the reader an outline of the scheme or argument of the book, and following this up with some comments and criticisms of a general character.

Dr. Briggs very properly begins by stating "The Problem" (Chap. I.) with which the Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch has

to do. It is substantially the same as that presented in dealing with any other ancient book. It involves the determination of the questions of its integrity, its authenticity, its literary form, and of its credibility. In this connection he gives a useful, though scarcely a complete, summary of the "several lines of evidence upon which" the Higher Criticism "relies for its conclusions." They are as follows (p. 4), viz.:

"(1), The writing must be in accordance with its supposed historical position as to time and place and circumstances.

"(2), Differences of style imply differences of experience and age of the same author, or, when sufficiently great, differences of author and of period of composition.

"(3), Differences of opinion and conception imply differences of author when these are sufficiently great, and also differences of period of composition.

"(4), Citations show the dependence of the author upon the author or authors cited.

"(5), Positive testimony as to the writing in other writings of acknowledged authority is the strongest evidence.

"(6), The argument from silence is often of great value. If the matter in question was beyond the scope of the author's argument, it either had certain characteristics which excluded it, or it had no manner of relation to the argument.

"If the matter in question was fairly within the scope of the author's argument, he either omitted it for good and sufficient reasons, or else was unconscious or ignorant of it, or else it had not come into existence."

The discussion proper is introduced by an examination of "The Testimony of the Holy Scripture." The author would have done well to state precisely the point upon which he designed this testimony from Holy Scripture to bear. Apparently it is designed to bear exclusively upon what Dr. Briggs calls, though with questionable propriety, the question of "authenticity," that is, the question as to whether Moses is or is not the author of the books usually attributed to him. This testimony he examines under five heads, viz., "The Testimony of the Hexateuch." Here he passes in review about eight passages from the Pentateuch, and three from the Book of Joshua. Those from the Pentateuch all speak of Moses as writing, or as being specially commanded to reduce to writing, certain specific covenants, documents, or the like. The conclusion reached is, "All that the Pentateuch says as to Mosaic authorship we may accept as valid and true; but we cannot be asked to accept such a comprehensive inference as that

Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch from the simple statements of the Pentateuch that he wrote out the few things distinctly specified." (P. 11.) From the passages in Joshua he concludes, "Therefore, the Book of Joshua could not have been compiled in its present form before the dedication of the temple. If, now, the Book of Joshua is inseparable from the Pentateuch, and makes with it a Hexateuch, and if the four documents from the Pentateuch run right on through the Book of Joshua, then it is evident that the Pentateuch could not have been compiled by Moses, but must have been compiled subsequent to the dedication of the temple of Solomon. But this connection of Joshua with the Pentateuch can be established by indubitable evidence from the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua; therefore, it is the evidence of the Hexateuch itself that Moses did not write the Pentateuch." (P. 13.) "The Testimony of the Prophets," which comes up for consideration next, is reduced to a single passage. Dr. Briggs says here: "We are surprised by the lack of reference to the Mosaic law in the prophets of Israel. The most important passage in the discussion is Hosea viii. 12." (P. 13.) It is admitted that, if the translation of the American revisers is correct, this passage "would imply a very extensive body of law or doctrine written in or before the time of Hosea, and here referred to by him." (P. 14.) But he will not hear to the translation of the American revisers, insisting that the hypothetical rendering of the imperfect, אִכְתָּב, "is best suited to the Hebrew tense and the context of the passage." (P. 14.) To further safeguard his own interpretation he feels it necessary to maintain that "in the usage of the Old Testament" the word "Thorah . . . refers to any divine instruction, any teaching from God" (p. 14), rather than to a well-known and clearly-defined body of truth given through Moses. He even goes so far as to say that "Jeremiah viii. 8 refers to a law of Yahweh as coming through false prophets." (P. 14.) This passage the reader might profitably examine for himself, with a view to forming his own opinion as to how safe an exegete Dr. Briggs is when he has a position to defend. The next head of "The Testimony of the Holy Scripture" brought before us is the so-called "Law Book of Josiah." The ground is taken that "the most

important passages in the Old Testament in evidence for the composition of the Pentateuch are 2 Kings xxii. 8, 11; xxiii. 2, 21, 25, and their parallels, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, 15, 19, 30; xxxv. 3, 6." (P. 15.) We are told that "critical scholars," which, by the way, is a constant euphemism with Dr. Briggs for radical critics, "are agreed that this law-book is the Deuteronomic code." (P. 16.) And, in the words of Prof. H. E. Ryle, of Cambridge, England, we are further informed that for this position "the evidence is twofold: (1), The description which is given of the book found in the temple shows that in its characteristic features it approximated more closely to portions of Deuteronomy than to any other section of the Pentateuch. (2), The historian from whom we obtain the account appears, when he speaks of 'the law,' to have in view the Deuteronomic section, and scarcely to be acquainted with any other." It would be interesting to follow the elaboration of these two positions by Professor Ryle, but a lack of space forbids. We may say, however, that they give us in a nutshell the strength, or the weakness, of this central position of radical criticism. We are next introduced to "The Testimony of the Exilic and Post-exilic Literature." (P. 17.) It is with some surprise that one learns that "in the psalter the only sacred writing referred to is the roll of the book concerning the king, Psa. xl. 8." (P. 20.) As clearing the way for a consideration of the evidence of the chronicler the statement is made: "We have thus far found no recognition of a Mosaic Pentateuch in any writing prior to the restoration from the exile. We have found nothing more than the Pentateuch itself gives us in the passages cited, a Mosaic law-book of limited dimensions, a covenant code and the code of Deuteronomy." (P. 21.) It is admitted that in the time of the chronicler, who is assigned to the Greek period, "the Pentateuch existed in its present form." The question is raised whether the use by the chronicler of such expressions as the "Law of Moses," "Written in the law of Moses," "Written in the Book of Moses," "Written in the law in the Book of Moses," implies the "Mosaic authorship of the book and all its contents." (P. 23.) Dr. Briggs insists that it does not, and raises the counter question, "Why may we not conclude that the chronicler, who wrote after these

three compilations had been made of the minor psalter of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, and the laws of Moses, used these three names in exactly the same way; and that he knew that no one of the three implied authorship, but only that Moses was the father of the law, as David was the father of psalmody, and Solomon was the father of the wisdom?" (P. 24.) He concludes this part of his discussion by a solemn and tender warning to those who "may not be able to explain these things, as" he does to "beware lest they risk the canonicity of the writings of the chronicler by bringing him in conflict with the mass of evidence that may be presented from the Pentateuch itself to show that if the chronicler held their opinion he was altogether mistaken." (P. 25.) We may pass by the discussion of "The Testimony of the New Testament." It contains nothing specially new or significant. It will be only fair, however, to relieve the mind of the reader by informing him that Dr. Briggs kindly refrains from shaking his rod over the head of Christ as he shook it over that of the chronicler, for which forbearance "the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day." "The conclusion of the whole matter" from his point of view is summed up in two brief statements: We may either hold that Jesus did not know who wrote the Pentateuch, and then "Those who understand the doctrine of the humiliation of Christ and the incarnation of Christ find no more difficulty in supposing that Jesus did not know the author of the Pentateuch than that he did not know the day of his own advent" (p. 28); or we may suppose that Jesus knew as much about the composition of the Pentateuch as, let us say, Dr. Briggs; and then we must remember that "Jesus was not obliged to correct all the errors of his contemporaries." (P. 29.) The results of his examination of "The Testimony of the Holy Scripture" are summed up by Dr. Briggs in the following statements, viz.: "We have gone over the evidence from Holy Scripture, and have found no direct testimony sufficiently explicit to prove the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But we have found indirect evidence to show that much of the Pentateuch is of a date considerably later than Moses."

The next section of the book, embracing chapters III.-VI., is

mainly historical. Chapter III. deals with "The Traditional Theories" as to the authorship of the Pentateuch. Its purpose, apparently, is to show that from the beginning the traditions upon this subject have been divergent, and even conflicting. Thus, having given the statements of the Mishna and the Gemara, he adds: "The Talmud elsewhere contains other conflicting statements." (P. 32.) And, apparently in order to impress his readers with the untrustworthiness, not to say the grotesqueness, of Jewish traditions upon this subject, he declares that "The ordinary Jewish view is, that Moses also wrote the last eight verses [of Deuteronomy, containing the account of his own death] by divine dictation." (P. 32.) It is further said that "It would be difficult to define a consensus of the fathers in regard to the authorship of the historical books of the Old Testament," and that "on these literary questions the symbols of the Reformation take no position"; which last remark calls to our mind another fact, which, singularly enough, Dr. Briggs seems to have overlooked, namely, that neither do these venerable symbols take any position upon the question, "Who was the father of Zebedee's children?"

Chapter IV. treats of "The Rise of Criticism." It covers the period between the times of Carlstadt (1521) and those of Astruc (1753). The following statement is of interest, as bearing upon the origin of a movement which is now receiving the endorsement of many who still bear the name, and receive the emoluments, of evangelicals, namely: "The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was first questioned in modern times by Carlstadt, who left the author undetermined. The Roman Catholic Masius and the British philosopher Hobbes distinguished between Mosaic originals and our present Pentateuch; but the Roman Catholic priest Peyrierius, and especially Spinoza, first arranged the objections to the Mosaic authorship in formidable array, the latter reviving the doubts of Aben Ezra." (P. 36.) The interest attaching to this statement grows in part out of the fact that Dr. Briggs himself frankly tells us that "Spinoza and Hobbes were animated by a spirit more or less hostile to the evangelical faith" (p. 41); and that "Carlstadt and Clericus were heterodox in other matters." (P. 41.) It would certainly be a hasty and unwarranted procedure

to conclude that these facts as to the origin of the radical criticism prove that it is itself false and pernicious. It would be equally hasty and unwarranted, however, to conclude that these facts may be dismissed as having no bearing in this connection. Facts are, doubtless, facts, from whatever source they may come to us. But, in a question like this, which involves not only facts, but, more than all, and above all, an interpretation of facts, we do well to inform ourselves as to the mental and moral bias of the interpreter. Whatever the facts in the case, it would scarcely enhance our confidence in the nebular hypothesis, as an explanation of those facts, to learn that it originated with Satan, and was put forth by him with the purpose and expectation of destroying among men a belief in the existence of a Creator and moral Governor of the universe.

The history of radical criticism from the times of Astruc to the present is divided by Dr. Briggs "into three stadia: the documentary, supplementary, and development hypotheses." (P. 45.) We cannot follow the movement in detail. It will not be amiss, however, to give an extract with which Dr. Briggs concludes, and in which he summarizes the results of his discussion of the documentary and supplementary hypotheses. It presents us with the conclusions which he supposes to be justified by critical researches and discussions during these two stadia. It is as follows:

"In a critical examination of the supplementary hypothesis we must distinguish between the theory and the facts upon which it is grounded. We should not allow ourselves to be influenced by the circumstance that many of the scholars who have engaged in these researches have been rationalistic or semi-rationalistic in their religious opinions, and that they have employed the methods and styles peculiar to the German scholarship of our century. Whatever may have been the motives and influences that led to these investigations, the questions we have to determine are: (1), What are the facts of the case? and (2), Do the theories account for the facts?

"(1), Looking at the facts of the case, we note that the careful analysis of the Hexateuch by so large a number of the ablest biblical scholars of the age has brought about general agreement as to the following points:

"(a), An Elohist writing extending through the Hexateuch, written by a priestly writer, commonly, therefore, designated by P. (b), A Jahvistic writing, also extending through the Hexateuch, designated by J. (c), A second Elohist writing, in close connection with the Jahvist, designated by E. (d), The Deuteronomic writing, chiefly in Deuteronomy and Joshua, with a few traces in the earlier books, designated by D. (e), These writings have been compacted by redactors, who first combined J with E, then J, E, with D, and at last J, E, D,

with P. Notwithstanding the careful way in which these writings have been compacted into a higher unity by these successive editings, documents may be distinguished by characteristic differences, not only in the use of the divine names, but also in language and style; in religious, doctrinal, and moral conceptions; in various interpretations of the same historic persons and events, and in their plans and methods of composition; differences which are no less striking than those which characterize the four Gospels." (P. 67.)

Chapter VII. deals with "The Analysis of the Hexateuch," and presents "some of the arguments for the differences of documents." The most valuable part of the chapter is the author's brief exposition of the nature of the "argument from language."

Chapter VIII. discusses "The Date of Deuteronomy." The important relation which this sustains to the validity of the supplementary hypothesis appears from the statement that "the pivot of the whole is the theory of DeWette, that Deuteronomy was composed shortly before the reform of Josiah." (P. 81.) The arguments for this theory are summarized from Riehm and Driver. The objections to it are also passed in review. One of these objections is based upon the language used in Deut. xxxi. 9-11, 24-26. We quote Dr. Briggs' reply, because it gives us his point of view, and illustrates the argumentative methods to which he finds himself compelled to resort. Let the reader first look up the passage itself, and then with it before his mind, or, better still, with it where his eye can revert to it easily, let him note Dr. Briggs' answer. It is as follows: "This seems to imply the Mosaic authorship and composition of a code of law, but was that code the Deuteronomic code in its present form? The view of Delitzsch can hardly be regarded as doing violence to the text when he represents that Deuteronomy is in the same relation to Moses as the fourth Gospel to Jesus, in that as the Apostle John reproduces the discourses of Jesus, so the Deuteronomist reproduces the discourses of Moses, giving more attention to the internal spirit than to the written form, and thus presents the discourses of Moses in a free, rhetorical manner." (P. 89.) The full, far-reaching significance of this view of the matter will probably be best appreciated in the light of the following statement of Dr. Driver when treating of this very same subject. He says, "The true 'author' of Deuteronomy is thus the writer who *intro-*

duces Moses in the third person; and the discourses which he is represented as having spoken fall in consequence into the same category as the speeches in the historical books, some of which largely, and others entirely, are the composition of the compilers, and are placed by them in the mouths of historical characters." (*O. T. Lit.*, p. 84.) It is unnecessary to stop to point out the bearing that such views must have upon our attitude towards John's Gospel.

From chapter IX. to the end, Dr. Briggs' book is taken up with the discussion and defence of "The Development Hypothesis." As to the origin and author of this hypothesis we are told, "Edward Reuss is the chief who has given direction and character to this stadium of the Higher Criticism. As early as 1833 he maintained that the priest-code of the middle books of the Pentateuch was subsequent to the Deuteronomic code. This came to him, he says, as an *intuition* in his biblical studies," etc. (P. 90.) It is through the labors of the pupils of Reuss, however, and notably through those of Heinrich Graf, that in recent times this theory "has won its way to so wide an acceptance." The alleged facts upon which this hypothesis is based are these:

"(1), Our Pentateuchal legislation is composed of several codes, which show throughout variation one from another. (2), If we take the Pentateuchal legislation as a unit at the basis of the history of Israel, we find a discrepancy between it and the history and literature of the nation prior to the exile in these two particulars: (*a*), A silence in the historical, prophetic, poetical, and ethical writings as to many of its chief institutions; (*b*), The infraction of this legislation by the leaders of the nation throughout the history in unconscious innocence, and unbuked. (3), We can trace a development in the history of Israel from the conquest to the exile in four stages, corresponding in a most remarkable manner to the variations between the codes. (4), The Books of Kings and Chronicles in their representations of the history of Israel regard it, the former from the point of view of the Deuteronomic code, the latter from the point of view of the priest-code. (5), The prophet Ezekiel presents us a detailed representation of the institutions which seem intermediate between the Deuteronomic code and the priest-code."

Having given the alleged facts upon which the development hypothesis rests, Dr. Briggs proceeds to show us how the hypothesis attempts to explain these facts and bring them into harmonious relation one to another. He says:

“The theory of the school of Reuss attempts to account, (1), For the variation of the codes by three different legislations at widely different periods of time; *e. g.*, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, of Josiah, and at the Restoration; (2), For the silence and infraction, the discrepancy between the Pentateuchal legislation and the history and literature, by the *non-existence* of the legislation in those times of silence and infraction; (3), For the development of the religion of Israel in accordance with these codes by the representation that the *origin* of these codes corresponds with that development; (4), For the difference in point of view of the authors of Kings and Chronicles, on the ground that the author of Kings knew *only* of Deuteronomy, while the author of Chronicles was filled with the spirit of the new priest-code; (5), For the peculiar position of Ezekiel's legislation by the statesmen that his legislation was in fact an *advance* beyond that Deuteronomic code, and a preparation of the priest-code, which was post-exilic.” (P. 97.)

In regard to this theory of the school of Reuss, Dr. Briggs makes the following candid admission: “It is evident that the school of Reuss propose a *revolutionary* theory of the literature and religion of Israel.” (P. 95.) The italics here are his own. Having made this admission, he proceeds to define his own attitude towards that theory. He says:

“How shall we meet it but on the same evangelical principles upon which all other theories have been met, without fear and without prejudice, in the honest search for the real truth and facts of the case? In a critical examination of this theory, it is important to distinguish the essential features from the accidental. We must distinguish between the rationalism and unbelief that characterize Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Reuss, which are not essential to the theory itself, and such supporters of the theory as König, in Germany, Lenormant, in France, Robertson Smith, in Scotland, and C. H. Toy, in this country. We have still further here, as throughout our previous investigation, to distinguish between the theory and the new facts which have been brought to light for which this theory proposes to account better than any previous ones.” (P. 95.)

As throwing additional light on Dr. Briggs' attitude to the development hypothesis, we may note the following: “No one can examine this *theory* in view of the facts which it seeks to explain without admitting at once its simplicity; its correspondence with the law of the development of other religions; its apparent harmony with these facts, and its removal of not a few difficulties.” (P. 97.) With these statements before him, the reader cannot be surprised to learn that, as a matter of fact, Dr. Briggs commits himself, practically without reserve, to the theory of the school of Reuss, and that, too, even in its most revolutionary features. In chapter X. he traces “The Development of the Codes.” These he finds to be four in

number. He regards them as having originated in the order and at the dates assigned by Reuss. Of these codes he says: "These four codes, therefore, present us the judicial, the prophetic, and the priestly points of view, which determine the variation in aim, form, structure, and character of the three codes." (P. 100.) In chapter XI. Dr. Briggs points out what he conceives to be the "Discrepancy between the Codes and the History," and adduces what he speaks of as "The witness of the literature as to the non-observance of the law," and finally he expounds what he conceives to have been the relation between an assumed "Religious Development of Israel" and the assumed development of the four codes. His point of view and the postulates which underlie and control all of his attempts to interpret the history and the literature of Israel come distinctly to view when speaking of the Deuteronomic and priest-codes. He says: "The providential historical circumstances did not admit of obedience to such elaborate codes before we find them in the times of Josiah and Ezra. A priestly code seems to require its historical origin in a dominant priesthood. A prophetic code seems best to originate in a period when prophets were in the pre-eminence. A theocratic code suits best a prosperous kingdom and a period when elders and judges were in authority. . . Would God inspire holy men to codify these codes of legislation centuries before they could be used?" (P. 124.) To which question we may with some confidence return answer, Certainly he would not, if he had thought it worth his while to call in the advice of Dr. Briggs. Dr. Briggs, we believe, belongs to a school who pride themselves upon nothing quite so much as upon being "scientific" in their methods; but every now and then, as in the present instance, a voice—which is neither that of Esau nor yet that of Jacob—greet's our ears and betrays what is under their lion's skin. It is naught but the old *a priori* method which our "scientific" critical brethren hold in such profound and deserved contempt.

We cannot follow Dr. Briggs through his chapters on "The More Recent Discussions" of the development hypothesis, "The Argument from Biblical Theology," and "The Results of the Argument." Enough has been said, we trust, to give the

reader a fair and fairly complete view of the plan and contents of the book. Before leaving the subject we wish to add a few things in the way of commendation and criticism:

Dr. Briggs' book unquestionably has many excellent points. Its style, while not faultless, is generally clear, and even where it halts, the reader can generally see that it is the author's logical faculty which is at fault, rather than his literary culture. The extensive Appendix and Indexes are other valuable features of the book. They are exactly what one wants in a book of reference. Our only regret here is that the "Index of Names and Topics" was not made fuller on its topical side. Even apart from the great body of the contents, there are what might be called incidental discussions, here and there throughout the book, which the reader will find very useful. We have an illustration of this in the opening chapter. This states the nature of the problem to be handled, and the lines of evidence upon which the radical critics rely to establish their conclusions. This, as already indicated, is certainly a very natural and proper introduction to such a discussion as Dr. Briggs has in hand. In our judgment, he would have been fully justified in devoting considerably more space to this important topic. He could then have been more explicit and exact in his treatment of several points. But we feel more disposed to thank him for what he has done here, than to criticise him for not doing all that we could have desired. What he has done, however, useful as it is, only serves to emphasize a need that the writer has often felt. We refer to the need of a full, formal statement of the postulates, principles, and methods of criticism, together with suitable illustrations of their application to cases outside of the biblical field. Until this ground has been thoroughly canvassed, the way seems scarcely to be open for either an intelligent assent or dissent from the conclusions reached by any particular school of critics. We may remark, in passing, that the reader will find some valuable material bearing upon this point in Dr. Briggs' book on *Biblical Study*, chapter IV., but even there the treatment is wholly inadequate to the vital importance of the subject.

The extent of Dr. Briggs' acquaintance with the literature of

his subject is another feature of his present volume that will arrest attention and elicit admiration. In fact, some will feel that he would have done wisely had he read less and thought more. He reminds one of a man whose appetite is wholly out of proportion to his powers of digestion, the former inordinate and insatiable, the latter scarcely, if at all, more than mediocre. But before indulging in any harsh judgments here, it will be only fair for the reader to make due allowance for the difficulties of the situation in which the distinguished Union Seminary professor finds himself. Canon Cheyne, who, in his book on *The Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, a volume of some three hundred and seventy-two pages, devotes something less than a half of one page to Dr. Briggs, may not esteem him a great critic, but no one can carefully read Dr. Briggs' writings without lighting upon much that indicates that he is at least a good man. This crops out in his somewhat awkward and hesitating attempt to save the credit of the chronicler for veracity. It appears again in his clinging so tenaciously to the idea that the Bible is in some sense or other the word of God; and also in his pleasing, though not specially probable, fancy that not only E, J, D, P, and the whole series of R's were inspired, but that they were inspired to produce that most remarkable literary "Joseph's coat," known as the Hexateuch. Now, when a man holding such views attempts to appropriate bodily, and to assimilate, the "revolutionary theory" of the school of Reuss, which scouts at the fetich of inspiration, and relentlessly shatters the historical credibility of the Old Testament, it will be seen at once that to succeed in his attempt he must needs have powers of intellectual digestion superior even to the digestive endowment attributed to the ostrich. Under these circumstances, therefore, however much our judgment may condemn the folly of the attempt, we should be sufficiently generous to make the largest allowance for the foredoomed failure of the result. But to return:

The plan of Dr. Briggs' book is wholly admirable. For a bird's-eye view of the entire field, embracing both the history and the argument of radical criticism, it would be difficult to find its equal. His resumé of the history of radical criticism, while far

brief, is, in our judgment, in every way superior to Canon Cheyne's more bulky volume. The reader puts down the book with a pretty distinct idea of the significance of the several stadia in the history of the movement, and of the relation of each stadium to the others. His presentation of the radical argument is also vigorous. By eliminating the multiplicity of details with which it is frequently loaded down, he enables his readers to obtain a tolerably clear view of its leading elements, and of their mutual relations, and combined force. At the same time he gives, either in the body of the book or in the Appendix, sufficient in the way of details to enable the reader to form an intelligent idea of the grounds upon which it rests, and to estimate its validity. We might mention other excellencies of the book, but it must suffice to say that we would earnestly advise our ministerial brethren, who wish to post themselves in regard to the radical position in the controversy now waging, to buy this book of Dr. Briggs', and study it; for it is not only readable, but will bear and will repay careful study. It remains to point out as briefly as we can some of the defects which characterize the book as a whole.

And here we may notice, first of all, the fact that Dr. Briggs is essentially an advocate. He sadly lacks judicial balance, calmness, and fairness. One perceives this at the very beginning, and feels it all through the book. In this respect he stands in contrast with such a writer as Dr. Driver, or Bleek. His confidence in his cause is interesting, and his enthusiasm for it pleasing, but they sometimes betray him into statements which provoke a smile by their utter abandon of extravagance. Thus, with sweetest seriousness, he tells us that the radical criticism "of the Hexateuch vindicates its historical credibility. It strengthens the historical credibility, (1), By showing that we have four parallel narratives, instead of the single narrative of the traditional theory; and (2), By tracing these narratives to their sources in the more ancient documents buried in them. . . . It finds minor discrepancies and inaccuracies, such as are familiar to students of the Gospels; but these increase the historical credibility of the writings, as they show that the writers and compilers were true to their

sources of information, even where they could not harmonize them in all respects."

On reading this, one finds himself sadly puzzled to know what, according to Dr. Briggs, constitutes "historical credibility," and in what it grounds itself. We feel quite sure that the more than Assyrian assurance of this claim must have startled some of Dr. Briggs' co-critics, and have left them wondering, "What next?" We cannot but question whether it has secured for him their unqualified admiration and thanks; for they can scarcely fail to reflect that when human credulity has been taxed beyond its utmost capacity, nature herself provides relief in one or the other of two ways, neither of which is likely to be wholly agreeable to the person who has been so unkind or so unfortunate as to outrage our sense of the possible. This reaction, which is necessary and inevitable, takes the form of anger or of mirth, according as our sense of injustice or our sense of the ludicrous gets the upper hand. Here, but for the gratuitous insult put upon the Gospels in bringing them down to the low plane of what the radical criticism is pleased to call "prophetic histories," we would expect relief to come in the form of a serene, derisive smile. This extravagance of Dr. Briggs' will, however, serve a useful purpose if it only reminds his co-critics of the same school that there is, in every properly-constituted soul, a craving for *truth* in writings claiming to be a revelation from God, and for *historical credibility* in writings purporting to be *bona fide* histories; and that the impassable gulf between truth and falsehood, between historical fact and religious fiction, no matter how well meant the latter may be, cannot be bridged by inventing a nondescript *tertium quid*, which, like the legs and toes of the beast in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, is "part of potter's clay, and part of iron," and dubbing it "prophetic history." Oleomargarine may be not only cheaper and more easily produced, but also sweeter and more wholesome, than the best product of the old-time dairy. This last point is clearly, in part, a matter of opinion; and in all mere matters of opinion the largest liberty should be allowed, since the maxim "*de gustibus*," etc., still holds; but commercial honesty, to say nothing of justice to those of a different opinion, demands that oleomarga-

rine, when put upon the market, be branded "Oleomargarine," and not "Elgin Creamery Butter." And just so, if this new compound, which radical criticism has produced by working over the remains of E, J, D, P, and the Great Redactor, is to continue to be circulated among us, we insist that it ought to go under its own proper, prolonged, complex, and, in the eyes of some, contemptible, name of "Religio-Historico-Philosophico Fiction," and not be palmed off upon an unsuspecting public under the seductive title of "prophetic history." As well call oleomargarine "prophetic butter." If our only legacy from the past in the way of so-called religious literature is a collection of pretty, pious stories, or, for that matter, if any one prefers so to consider them, of "grand, religious stories," let us not blink the fact; on the contrary, let us, by all means, look it squarely and bravely in the face; let us hold them in such reverence as we may be able, and make the most of them for ethical purposes; let us even, if possible, regard them as in some vague sense inspired; but let us not deceive our own selves, impose upon others, insult the muse of history, and make the memory of the poor dead prophets a butt for ridicule by calling them "prophetic histories." History is one thing, and the product of the religious imagination, however precious, is another and wholly different thing. Our only contention—and surely it must commend itself to the intelligence as an important, and to the conscience as a righteous, one—our only contention is, that things so radically different ought to be done up in separate packages, and each package branded according to the real nature of its contents.

We have referred to Dr. Briggs' confidence in and enthusiasm for the cause which he has espoused. Beautiful and important as are these characteristics in themselves, yet for lack of being properly regulated and controlled they are the occasion of certain minor blemishes in his book. Thus he habitually speaks of those who dissent from the critical views which have commended themselves to his own mind as "anti-critics," and of those who accept his "doxy" as "all critics"; his style of criticism is the "Higher Criticism," and all dissent from it is opposition to the "Higher Criticism." It is true that these and similar conceits are harmless,

but there is, nevertheless, a tinge of the ridiculous about them that might with profit have been avoided. When the reader is forced to smile at the author, he is less apt to smile on the argument. Moreover, this over-confidence of Dr. Briggs' sometimes betrays him into an unseemly impatience with those who, as he himself expresses it, "are incapable of being influenced by any arguments of criticism or by any weight of authority, however great." (P. 145.) Thus, speaking of men like Drs. Green, Osgood, Bissell and others, he says, "In view of such facts as these, is it not time that these American professors should have scholarship sufficient to deter them from calling the compiler's work in our Hexateuch a piece of patchwork?" (P. 142.) This, again, is a minor blemish; no doubt Drs. Green and Osgood will have sufficient of piety to forgive, and of magnanimity to despise, the aspersion put upon their attainments; no doubt a generous public will be more ready to condone this outburst as a passing spasm of irritability, than to condemn it as a piece of wanton insolence; still, Dr. Briggs should for his own sake have a care, or even his admitted scholarship may be largely lost sight of in the dazzling impression left by his extreme self-importance. It would be especially galling to him to find himself reduced in the public opinion to the low level of certain "southern slaveholders" of the lesser sort, who, while not without their good points, yet left the public no time to discover these, by absorbing attention upon their imperious self-assertion. With all his learning, Dr. Briggs has something yet to learn. The fact is, while he possesses all of Canon Cheyne's soul-satisfying sense of self-appreciation, he lacks the good canon's self-command, and his dainty, icy superciliousness, which, to a moderately well-informed and self-contained conservative, lend such a peculiar piquancy to his writings without lacerating the æsthetic sensibilities. If Canon Cheyne can treat with gentle and gracious condescension what, in his estimation, are the frailties and foibles, not to say the falsehoods, of all inspired men from Moses to Malachi, surely Dr. Briggs might rise to the dignity of treating with forbearance the backwardness of those whom he regards as his less gifted brethren.

Another marked defect of the book before us lies in its author's

singular lack of, let us not say acquaintance with but insight into the conservative position. Take a specimen. When examining the testimony of the Hexateuch to its authorship, he says, "In Numbers xxi. 14 a piece of poetry is cited from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh. . . . It is not said who was the author or compiler of this book. Is there any reason to think of Moses? or shall we not rather conclude, in accordance with the methods of reasoning of the anti-critics, that because this piece of poetry was taken from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh the whole Pentateuch was taken from that book, and was written by its author?" (P. 12.) Again, he says, "All that the Pentateuch says as to Mosaic authorship we may accept as valid and true; but we cannot be asked to accept such a comprehensive inference as that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch from the simple statements of the Pentateuch that he wrote out the few things distinctly specified." (P. 11.) We shall not pause to show that the conservative position rests upon no such "comprehensive inference" as is here supposed. To do so would, in the case of others, be unnecessary, and in the case of Dr. Briggs it would be useless. If after studying with Hengstenberg in 1886, and working over "the chief authorities" on the conservative side, he has gotten no clearer conception of the conservative position than is implied in such statements as these, the only possible explanation seems to be some constitutional idiosyncrasy which renders him incapable of a correct understanding of conservative ideas. With his crude notions of the conservative view, it is no wonder that he found himself compelled to reject it. The wonder is, that there was ever a time, as there seems to have been, after he had passed adolescence, when his mind was still so immature as to entertain it, and that it should be so tenacious of misapprehensions once conceived as to retain them despite all the studies of his maturer years. We shall only add in this connection that Dr. Briggs' discussion of "The Traditional Theories," in chapter III., is ingeniously inadequate, inaccurate, and misleading. It ought surely to have occurred to Dr. Briggs, that while "conflicting statements" as to the authorship of "the eight verses of the law" might confuse some simple mind and distract attention from the main issue,

they in nowise impinge upon the uniformity of the Jewish tradition making Moses the author of the Pentateuch. Equally vain is his endeavor to chop up this one and uniform tradition into two or three, speaking of the legend about the restoration of the law by Ezra as though it presented a different tradition as to the authorship of the Pentateuch from that contained in the Talmud; and the view of Irenæus as though it were a tradition differing from both of those just mentioned.

The last defect which we shall notice relates to the argumentation of the book. This is, of course, a much more serious defect than any of those yet mentioned. It affects the contention of the book at its very core. To put the whole case briefly, we may say that a conservative who will carefully study the book will be apt to heave a sigh of relief when he finishes it, and say, "Surely the bitterness of death is passed." While he cannot fail to perceive and admire the distinguished author's vigor and learning, he will also find abounding evidence that Dr. Briggs' mind is acute without being really discriminating, argumentative, without being really logical. The learning by which the argument is adorned will only serve to enhance his feeling that the argument itself is destitute of breadth and let us not say candor, but fairness. Dr. Briggs shows himself continually to be a swift witness for the neo-criticism; and his argument has all the weakness that vitiates special pleading. Let us notice some specimens.

He is speaking a good word for Reuss' revolutionary theory. He urges us to "distinguish the essential features from the accidental," and seeks to allay our fears of "the rationalism and unbelief which characterize Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Reuss"—the men, by the way, who gave being and character to the whole neo-critical movement. Now let the reader guess, if guess he can, the names which Dr. Briggs uses to conjure away our fears of the unbelieving rationalism of this "revolutionary theory" of Reuss. He had as well give up the attempt, for who could have supposed that the names used to allay our fears would be those of "Robertson Smith in Scotland, and C. H. Toy in this country"? We readily enough admit that underlying such an appeal as that here made by Dr. Briggs is a question of judgment and taste. But,

if this is a specimen of Dr. Briggs' judgment and taste in these matters, where our knowledge of the facts enables us to put them to the test for ourselves, certainly few will feel encouraged to rely upon them in untried paths.

Let us next look at his manner of dealing with the testimony of the so-called Hexateuch to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Passing by the very large number of passages in the Pentateuch which speak explicitly of the Mosaic origin, not only of its manifold rites and ceremonies, but also of the minute and extensive ritual connected with them; passing by all internal incidental evidences of the Mosaic authorship of narratives in this or that part of the Pentateuch; passing by all inferences from the admitted UNITY of the Pentateuch; passing by the fact that the contexts of the passages which he quotes are in their turn each and all integral and inseparable parts of much wider contexts; passing all of this by, he contents himself with noting those passages of the Pentateuch and Joshua, and only those, which speak expressly of authorship, that is, which speak of some covenant or document as actually reduced to writing by either Moses or Joshua. Summing up the evidence from several of these selected passages, he says: "From all these passages it is plain that Moses wrote one or more codes of law, but they give no evidence that Moses wrote all the laws of the Pentateuch contained in other codes and those which are embedded in the historical narratives." (P. 9.) This style of argumentation may be scientific and scholarly, but it is certainly insipid and jejune. Dr. Briggs could hardly expect every code to be signed by Moses and countersigned by Aaron, after the fashion of the legislative enactments of our own day.

In summing up the evidences of Mosaic authorship found in the Pentateuch as a whole, he reaches this conclusion: "When the author of the Pentateuch says that Moses wrote one or more codes of law, that he wrote a song, that he recorded a certain memorandum, it would appear that, having specified such of his materials as were written by Moses, he would have us infer that the other materials came from other sources of information." This would be more plausible but for the fact that the reader finds himself wondering and regretting that the worthy Great Redactor

did not follow his own excellent example just a little further and give us the names of a few of his other principal "sources of information." He cites the "Book of the Wars of Yahweh" by name, and also the Book of Jasher by name; why, then, we find ourselves asking, is he so painfully reticent in reference to the "four parallel narratives," in regard to which the neo-criticism, with less light, we may suppose, than he, has so much to say? Had he spoken it would at least have saved the authors of these narratives from the mortification of being represented to modern readers under the suspiciously algebraic-like symbols E, J, D, and P, which would, in mathematics, *ex gratia*, and by a purely conventional agreement, be supposed to stand for known quantities, but which in reality may stand for whatever anybody pleases, and, as a mere matter of fact, usually stand for *no real quantity whatever*.

At the outset we referred to the pious zeal which now characterizes certain propagandists of the neo-criticism. In concluding, we must confess that to us this zeal seems both inexplicable in itself and sadly misdirected in its aims. We can understand, from their point of view, why the Roman soldiery should strip Christ of his raiment, scourge him, spit in his face, clothe him in mock purple, crown him with thorns, put a miserable reed into his hands for a sceptre, and then bow the knee before him and cry, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Their praise was of a piece with the rest of their treatment of Christ. It expressed their contempt for him, and was designed and suited to bring him into contempt with all the people. But when radical criticism, *in the name and interests of religion*, subjects the written word to treatment not one whit less ignominious and degrading than that to which Pilate's minions subjected the incarnate Word, and then in all seriousness and with much enthusiasm clasps it to the heart, crying, Hail! oracles of the living God, inspired word of God, fountain of all our hopes, source of all spiritual life and light—we say, that when we witness this performance, we have to confess ourselves wholly unequal to the solution of the psychological problems which it involves.

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