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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.

II. A MISSIONARY COVENANT.

A COVENANT is an agreement between two parties. The parties need not be equals in any sense. One party may be a beneficiary, the mere recipient of a gift, coupled with conditions and obligations, expressed or implied.

The covenants of the Bible are of divine origination, proposed to man and accepted by him. They are all beneficiary, and made with and for the race, except the covenant of grace, made between the Father and the Son from eternity for the divine glory. All the other covenants are subsidiary to this and promotive of it, while the race are made partakers of *its* benefits in so far as we are members of the body of Christ.

The party to all the other covenants on the divine side is the Lord Jehovah, the Second Person in the Trinity, and the Mediator of all the covenants. We shall seek to discover the parties on the human side as we proceed.

There are found four covenants in the Book of Genesis—two secular, and two spiritual or religious. The first secular covenant is the creation covenant, giving man dominion over nature, bidding him to multiply and subdue the earth, and assigning him food and his social life. The other secular covenant was made the day that Noah went out of the ark. Here the creation covenant was re-stated in express terms, with certain important additions, and was sealed with the bow in the cloud. These two secular covenants were made with Adam and Noah, not as individuals, but as representatives of the race. They do constitute the bill of rights of the race on the secular side.

The two religious covenants were made, one with Adam, and one with Abraham. It need hardly be said that the "covenant of works" was made with Adam as the representative of his posterity, and that all have been materially affected by it. The Abrahamic covenant marks the great religious epoch of the ages, and there is reason to believe that his descendants kept the anniversary of its confirmation for many centuries. We propose to con-

sider this covenant in its trend and scope as made for the recovery of the race from the wreck and curse of the former covenant, the covenant of works.

We have glimpses of an earlier covenant, or dispensation, or hierarchy, which the Abrahamic covenant overlapped and finally superseded. There was a church, no doubt, before the flood, in which the patriarchs were both priests and prophets. After the flood we have evidence of an ecclesiastical system, in which Melchizedek, the great type of Christ, "called of God," was a hierarch; and perhaps Potipherah, priest of On, and Jethro and Balaam later on. The blight of decay and apostasy was upon this hierarchy, and it became necessary, in the economy of grace, to set up a covenant of universal and permanent adaptation.

Four hundred years after, the theocratic or Sinaitic covenant was engrafted on it, partly secular and partly spiritual. This was designed to be temporary, worn as a garment till it should decay and wax old, and then be folded away, to be superseded by the new covenant in Christ—the gospel dispensation, itself foreshadowed in all the ages by prophet and type. Neither the old nor the new in anywise modified or made of none effect the covenant with Abraham, either by their pulling down or their setting up. In due time the synagogue system arose, overlapping the old and the new, and subserving a purpose to be noted later on.

Our theme, therefore, is the *Missionary Character of the Covenant with Abraham*.

Let us examine its terms: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 2, 3.) "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxii. 18.)

Who are this seed? The natural seed? Hardly. Isaac and Jacob were counted, Ishmael and Esau rejected. John the Baptist said: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." And yet *partly* the natural seed, which is necessary to the right apprehension of history.

There is a visible side to all the covenants, just as we talk of the visible church.

Who are this seed? The spiritual seed? Largely so. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." (Gal. iii. 7.) "They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Verse 9.) He received the sign and seal of circumcision "that he might be the father of all that believed." (Rom. iv. 11.)

But who is this seed? Paul says *Christ*: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." The promises culminate in him and become efficient through him. He is Abraham's natural seed and the object of his faith, of the faith of every believer. Paul, therefore, made no mistake, and did not contradict himself when he added, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Who, then, are the beneficiaries and parties? Believers of each and every age.

It were a mistake to suppose that Abraham and his seed were parties to this covenant for their own sakes. The outlook for the covenant is the race, in all the working of it from Abraham to Christ. The beneficiary feature has been too much emphasized by poor, selfish human nature. "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake." (Ezek. xxxvi. 22.) "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." (Verse 23.)

But more than this, the beneficiary in receiving a benefit becomes a party to a covenant obligation. It is so in the family. The son who does not lavish on others an hundred-fold the wealth of love and blessing poured into his own bosom is a churl indeed. The daughter whose heart and life are not radiant with a mother's love and blessing is wretched in her selfishness, and blights the happiness of all around her. This is the true altruism, "Freely ye have received, freely give." It is so in Abraham's family. Prophecy becomes obligation. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" lays all the peoples of the earth a sacred trust on the hearts of his covenant people. It would be easy to show the liberality and the missionary spirit of this covenant by

large quotations from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, though it is not always easy to distinguish that which was strictly Messianic from that which was strictly within the horizon of the writer. I prefer, however, in this discussion to ascertain the trend and scope of the covenant as shown by the historic facts discovered in its administration.

Let us trace the catholicity of this covenant from the first. Peter summed it all up when he said: "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Abram was a cosmopolite, equally at home everywhere, and a good neighbor to all. His enormous household, of perhaps two thousand slaves, was gathered from Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. These *all* were parties to the covenant by circumcision before ever Isaac was born, and equally with Isaac and Jacob. And if you suppose that the sign and seal of that covenant was an empty thing to them, consider the faith of Eliezer, his trusted steward, when he prayed at the well in Padan-aram; or consider the further fact that Abram commanded his "household after him," so faithfully and successfully that the Lord assigned this as the reason for making him his confidential friend and counsellor. Isaac and Jacob were also cosmopolites, rich in men-servants and maid-servants, who were parties to the same covenant by circumcision. Steady manumission and intermarriages made them all a homogeneous people, unified by a common faith and worship. It might easily be shown that the genealogical tables do not contradict this. Assimilation was the law of their growth, as they expanded into a people, and not purity of blood. Judah's wife was a Canaanitish woman, and he begat Pharez, by Tamar, the defrauded widow of his two dead sons. Joseph married Asenath, of unknown blood, and she became the mother of the two great tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. Egypt was a composite people—the centre of travel, trade, and civilization. When the Exodus came, there emerged a somewhat homogeneous people, two millions strong, besides a "mixed multitude" that followed them and cast in their fortunes with them. These all constituted the visible side of the covenant at Mt. Sinai.

- Forty years in the wilderness completed the assimilation,

purged away the unbelieving, and made faith the homogeneous bond, sealed with circumcision at Gilgal, and winning its first triumph at Jericho.

Just before this, however, God gave them rules to guide them in making war and capturing cities (other than the condemned nations), that the women and children should be saved alive and distributed as spoil. And when Moses punished the Midianites for the agency in the seduction by Moab, thirty thousand female children were saved alive, distributed as spoil, and introduced into the families of Israel. And soon after the fall of Jericho, the Gibeonites, a royal city, with her towns, were incorporated by treaty, and were placed near to the covenant by being assigned to tabernacle service, and were no doubt finally assimilated. The unconquered remnants of the condemned nations were probably assimilated in the time of David and Solomon. Many of the Philistines also became their staunchest and most trusted adherents. During the period of the Asmonean princes, when theocratic faith reached its culmination, the Geshurites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites were proselyted and absorbed into Judaism.

It is a most significant fact in this connection that the blood of the Canaanite, Moabite, and Hittite flowed in the veins of the Son of man through Tamar, and Ruth, and Bathsheba.

From all these historic data we conclude that the covenant was a universal blessing in its earliest unfolding. But one will say, What mean the exclusive rites of Judaism, such as meats and drinks? The answer is easy. They were intended to shut the door of paganism against the Jew, while the door of Judaism was left wide open to the pagan to come into Judaism by proselytism and circumcision.

The visible side of the covenant reached its meridian during the kingdom. Palestine was the seat of the strongest kingdom on earth. For eighty years other great kingdoms seemed to pass into eclipse. By tribute, caravan-trade, and commerce by sea, the choicest treasures of Asia and Africa were poured into her lap, and Jerusalem became the centre of learning and culture for all nations. Kings and queens sat and learned wisdom from the son of the sweet singer of Israel. If ever the promise is to be

fulfilled and all nations receive the blessing, surely now is the set time. But no. They knew not that they "came to the kingdom for such a time as this." Instead of saving the nations, they are themselves corrupted by the seductions of wealth and luxury, and by contact with the heathen. The failure was most lamentable, and their opportunity was taken away. The kingdom was divided, and the story of decay and punishment is perhaps the saddest in history. It became a question whether the covenant they had betrayed would survive internal treachery and external hostility. There was a prolonged struggle between the two great politico-religious parties, the covenanters and the apostates, and orthodoxy sometimes seemed to be doomed. The kingdom of Israel went down in darkness in one hundred and eighty-five years, and the kingdom of Judah survived her only seventy-two years. Jerusalem was left in heaps, the land was left desolate, without tillage or vine-dressing. All seemed lost. The hope of Israel seemed perished, save to the eye of faith, confirmed by the vision of the major prophets.

When we examine the conditions we find that the apostate party had been largely exterminated and the power of their allies permanently broken. The orthodox party were deported and placed in conditions most favorable for fixing their faith and for eradicating the last traces of idolatry, with Ezekiel as their prophet, and Daniel as their friend and the prime minister in perhaps five dynasties. Nebuchadnezzar slew their false prophets, and the idolatrous king Jehoiachin languished in prison for thirty-seven years. By the captivity Judaism was purged of her apostates and took a new lease of life.

It was during this period that the synagogue was grafted on to Judaism for worship, doctrine, and discipline. Up to this time a modified patriarchy prevailed. The church was in the home, and the congregation was the family. The patriarchal system was broken up by the captivity, and congregations of fourteen or more were organized everywhere, each with its chosen officers, constituting what Gibbon calls a powerful commonwealth. This synagogue system was the catholic or universal feature, adapted to all climes and conditions, overlapping their crippled and waning cere-

monial and ritual system, and destined to live, as the dress and form of the covenant, after Sinai's covenant should be superseded.

So the synagogue, with the Law, Psalms, and Prophets, became to the Jews of the dispersion their church home. They built houses as we build churches, and every synagogue was a centre of religious light and life, a mission station among the heathen, with doors wide open to proselytes from every people, both proselytes of the gate and proselytes of justice.

But you say that the despised and persecuted Jew had scant hope of making proselytes. But was he despised and persecuted? Sometimes. Antiochus Epiphanes, in Syria, and Ptolemy Physcon, in Egypt, tried to persecute and destroy them, but were themselves riven and blasted by him who said, "Him that curseth thee I will curse." The Jews of the dispersion were a favored people and a trusted people. Nebuchadnezzar's settled policy for his empire was this. Cyrus the Great established this as the policy of the Medo-Persian empire against the machinations of all the peoples from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. Alexander the Great adopted the same traditional policy in the Greco-Persian empire for reasons of his own; and he left this policy as a legacy to the four consolidated kingdoms that sprang out of the ruins of his empire. The same policy prevailed in imperial Rome, if we can believe Juvenal, Strabo, and Seneca. Did they make no proselytes? When Haman, the Amalekite, plotted the destruction of all the Jews in the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the Medo-Persian empire, and was thwarted because Mordecai the Jew sat in the king's gate, and Queen Esther, the beautiful Jewess, lay in the bosom of King Ahasuerus, "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor." "And many of the people of the land became Jews." (Esther viii. 16, 17.) "For Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace unto his people." (Esther x. 3.)

During the dispersion, then, from Daniel to Christ, the Jews were missionaries of the covenant to the race, for they went everywhere. Immense numbers became proselytes, especially

women, who sought rest in Israel's hope from the despair of heathenism. The simple monotheism and pure morality of the synagogue served to loosen the shackles of a waning paganism and check a growing skepticism. They prepared the world for Christ and furnished the matrix for the gospel. May we not say that the covenant to bless all nations had its best Judaic fulfilment in that period of apparent decadence and eclipse?

When the gospel was preached by apostolic missionaries, beginning at Jerusalem, the great ingatherings consisted largely of pious Jews and devout proselytes, who were mightily convinced that "Jesus was the Christ"; the rest apostatized. The synagogue here parted into two streams, to be reunited some day in furtherance of the covenant.

The believing synagogue was and is the church, with the same aggressive instinct, stimulated by faith realized, by the charisms of the Spirit and by Christ's last commission. Every believer becomes in the very act of faith a party to the covenant. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The promise in its entirety of benefit and obligation belongs to the church and is transmitted from seed to seed for the salvation of men. You and I are only means to an end, links in the great chain of causation. We are not mere beneficiaries of a salvation scheme. Was Abraham a party to the covenant to bless all nations? So are we. Was Christ a party to the same covenant? So are you. The great commission may be new in its terms, but not in its significance. What says the covenant? "Abraham, go bless all nations; Moses, David, Daniel, go bless all the families of the earth." The Father said to the Son, "Go bless all nations" "Thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul and be satisfied." "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." He transmits the charge and the obligation to his immediate disciples, and they hand it down the centuries to all the seed. Have you realized that you are personal parties to the covenant, as distinctly so as Abraham or Paul or Christ? The very name of Abraham has been an inspiration in all ages and to all peoples, notably the Bedouins, and Jektanite Arabs, and the Magians of Central Asia.

The Shasters of India do him honor; the Mohammedans swear by his beard; the Jew's only hope is in Abraham his father. Much of this may be superstition, but it is a spontaneous loyalty to the man that God blessed, and made a blessing to all nations. Christians sometimes forget that he is our father also. Did Lazarus go to his bosom? So shall we, and not alone; we shall carry the nations with us.

But one will say that we have overlooked the secular side of the covenant, which promised a land that flowed with milk and honey, a goodly land of rest from all their long and weary wanderings and oppressions. True. And the promise still is, "The meek shall inherit the earth." "The righteous have the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." And "there remaineth a rest for the people of God," of which Canaan was only a type. The covenant still has its visible and secular side to us, and all the more if we be faithful to win others to him.

You remember the history of the covenanters of Scotland—their patriotism, their fidelity to kings and princes, their adherence to the rights of conscience, their sturdy fortitude in adversity, their bravery in battle, and their heroism. Yet their covenants were largely earth-born. They often made serious mistakes; but they won the blessedness of him "that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not." Many of us are the sons of those covenanters by direct descent or by adoption. All of us have a heaven-born covenant, God-given and oath-bound. Our only allegiance is to the Prince of Peace. We have battles to fight for our King; a warfare to endure, persecutions to face, and martyrdoms to suffer. Will we "quit ourselves like men"? "Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood."

"Who is sufficient for these things?" There stands one behind the covenant who says, "Him that blesseth you I will bless, and him that curseth you I will curse." "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

We have victories to win. The covenant is aggressive, and the nations shall be blessed by conquest. But "we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but

mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Christ the Lord is our captain and leader, and the triumphal day is coming. Paul says, "Now thanks be to God which always causeth us to *triumph* in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." A Roman triumph was a proud day for the emperor returning from successful war with long processions of captives and spoils taken in battle; and a proud day it was for his veterans, by whose valor he achieved it all; and a proud day it was for the loyal populations from all parts of the empire, which lined the Appian Way and made the heavens ring with their glad acclaim. May we not imagine something like this in the final triumph of our Lord and King? But when? The throne has been set, the archangel's trumpet has sounded, the dead, small and great, have stood before God; we who remain have been caught up to meet him in the air; the books have been opened, and the judgment is ended. The wicked are swept by the breath of his vengeance into chains and darkness forever. And now he is ready to lead his people home, and celebrate the triumphs of his grace along the streets of the golden city, where twelve legions of angels await his coming at the gates, and the walls, and the battlements, and the streets, and all the winged upper air are eager for his appearing.

Who will be marshal of the day? Michael? Gabriel? Hardly. One of his tried lieutenants, I am sure; perhaps Joshua, perhaps John the Baptist, perhaps Knox or Carey; we care not who. "*Fall into line,*" a great multitude that no man can number, as the sand of the seashore, as the stars in heaven. First Abel and his mother, and Seth, and all the antediluvian "sons of God." Fall into line, Noah walking almost alone at first, and his following for a thousand years, far more numerous than some suppose. These are the vanguards of the great procession.

Fall into line, Father Abraham, faithful Abraham!

"His faith is sweetly lost in sight
And hope in full supreme delight,
And everlasting love."

Then Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs and all the

tribes of Israel, prophets, priests, and kings, and judges, and all their faithful following.

But who is this that cometh, "meek and lowly, sitting on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass? And the multitude about him cry, Hosannah." 'Tis Zion's king, King Jesus, "with garments dyed from Bozrah." "He trod the wine-press alone."

Next to him walks John, and Mary leaning on his arm.

Fall into line, apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and helps, each with their trophies of grace, and the whole army of martyrs arrayed in white—Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, and Wesley, and all the redeemed to our day; and the procession is only begun.

There shall be in line China, Japan, India, Africa, South America and the isles of the sea. These all are His, and shall be His! Imagination fails to tell the story. But methinks that mighty host shall sing, as they march to seraphic music, Psalm xxiv.:

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is the King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle."

And the assembled universe of God shall catch up the refrain:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory. Selah."