

THE PULPIT.

A BRILLIANT SUNDAY SERMON BY
REV. W. T. BEST.

Subject: The Higher Criticism.

Remsen, N. Y.—The following sermon by the learned Rev. W. T. Best, was recently preached here with telling effect. The subject of the discourse was "The Higher Criticism, Its Advantages and Disadvantages." Dr. Best said:

Higher criticism is defined as follows: "The discovery and verification of the facts regarding the origin, form and value of literary productions upon the basis of their internal characteristics and contents." Dr. Harman defines higher criticism thus: "Higher criticism is a phrase used to express all investigations respecting the genuineness, authenticity and integrity of ancient literary work, especially the various books of the Bible.

There are three classes of critics. First, the radical, who reject the supernatural in Scripture; second, the conservative, who admit it; third, the conservative-radical, who hold a half-way position.

There are four principles upon which the higher critics see the origin of the books of the Bible. First, literary treatment; second, historical settings; third, religious thought; and fourth, cumulative force of combination of principles. On almost the same basis the critics are divided as to their aims; some have purely literary aims, others simply historical aims, while by far the larger class have religious aims.

The advantages and disadvantages of higher criticism may be viewed from two different standpoints, as they affect the critics and as they affect the church.

1. As they affect the critics: If the higher criticism is an enemy of the Bible, then every other enemy of the Bible is its friend and it has the advantage of whatever aid they may find it. But is the higher criticism an enemy? For one, I believe it is, though I do not wish to imply by this that every form of criticism is wrong, or that every higher critic is an enemy of the Bible. Many are its warmest friends; but taking the matter as a whole and judging by its fruits, I believe higher criticism to be an enemy of the Word of God.

1. Advantages. As an enemy of the Bible, it is easy to see that the higher criticism has the following advantages: (1) The devil.

The devil was the first person to question the authority of God's Word. He was the first person to dispute Moses and his revelations in hell, it will not be because the devil does not know anything about the Bible, but like the higher critics he never quotes it correctly, but always leaves out those parts which appear to him unreasonable. He will come to you as an angel of light and tell you that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Isaiah only wrote a part of the book that bears his name, the book of Daniel is a falsehood, Jonah is a myth, the song of Solomon is a drama, the book of Job is only a parable, etc., etc., and by the time you have taken everything out of the Bible that he may tell you is a falsehood, you will be qualified to stand before the world upholding its empty idols and say, "The course I believe in is the Bible; the only thing I am opposed to is it is the supernatural."

(2) The flesh.

The fact that so many Christian people do not enjoy the blessing of holiness is one of the strongest proofs that the flesh is a higher critic, and does not believe in those portions of the Scripture that refer to the higher life.

(3) The world.

The world is one of the most earnest and enthusiastic friends of higher criticism. The very scholars and religious leaders in the world, is one of the most comforting thoughts to the mind of the skeptic. The politician, who, when he is at home has one wife, is a deacon in the church and Sunday-school superintendent, but when he is in Albany has three wives and does not know where the churches are, will find great consolation in knowing that the Bible is not all true. The accomplished young lady, who is a member of the church, but does not see any harm in dancing, will be pleased to learn that men who know so much more than her pastor does, have decided once and for all that the Bible is not always to be relied upon. A young man, who is a graduate of one of our leading schools, said to me some months ago: "Science has not fully settled the question as yet, whether Enoch was translated or not. Mormonism and anarchism, spiritualism and all the other isms are friends of the higher criticism."

2. The disadvantages.

There are many disadvantages; we can only name a few of them.

(1) The Bible will not stay "put."

As soon as they get the Book of Genesis fixed up the way they think it ought to be, somebody over in Chronicles says or does something that upsets the whole plan, so they have either to destroy Chronicles or change their former position. By the time they dispose of all the witnesses throughout the Bible that testify against their position, the Book of Genesis has gotten back to where it was in the first place, and the work has all got to be done over again. The Bible is like a cube of granite; you may unset it as many times as you please, and it is always right side up.

(2) The principles of higher criticism are not to be relied upon.

Dr. Harman says if they were applied to American history they would make havoc of it. If you apply them to the Declaration of Independence they would place that document about the year 1855, as all men were about looked upon as equal, nor did they enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness until after that time. Applied to the tombstone of Jefferson, it could be proven that it was another man's name that was President of the United States, for while all the great acts of his life were

recorded it was not said he was President. Bishop Warren, in his book, "The Bible in the World's Education," says: "It is the higher criticism applied to Shakespeare that has produced the idiotic assertion that his works were written by Lord Bacon. The laws of historical criticism applied to Napoleon have proved that no such man ever lived." The same principle applied to a letter written from a husband to a wife, might prove that the first part of the letter was written by a husband, while the latter part was written by a lover. The chief difficulty with the critics is, they forget that a man may possess a variety of gifts. Julius Caesar was at one and at the same time a general, a statesman, a lawyer, a jurist, an orator, a poet, an historian, a philosopher, a mathematician, an architect, and was equally fitted to excel in any or all of these departments.

(3) The theories and methods of the higher criticism exclude and destroy each other.

Dr. Milton S. Terry, author of "Biblical Hermeneutics," has devoted the greater part of one chapter to exposing the fallacies of higher criticism. Here it is clearly seen that if one critic is right the others are all wrong. But who can tell which one is right? Dr. A. C. Zenos, author of "The Elements of Higher Criticism," shows that there are two leading difficulties in the way of the critics: First, the field of operations is vast and bewildering in its complications, and second, the science of higher criticism is born of strife. "Bauer laughs at Paulus, Strauss laughs at Bauer, Renan laughs at Strauss, and the hour-glass laughs at them all."

(4) Recent discoveries of archaeologists.

From the outset the literary critics instinctively felt that the testimony of archaeology would be against them, and they endeavored to evade it by depreciation or denying it in advance. Archaeologists, by proving that the art of writing existed in Egypt a century before the exodus, have taken the very foundation stone from under the higher criticism. Every little while the nick and shovel are bringing to light as clear as the very things that the critics laughed at as myths, such as the existence of Knidar-Laghmar, Menes, etc. Dr. A. H. Sayce, of Oxford University, says that the archaeological method is the scientific method of investigating history and is, therefore, the only critical method to establish beyond doubt the genuineness of the Bible.

(5) The last disadvantage we will name is the testimony of experience. Thousands of men, women and children in all parts of the world, at all ages, and in different circumstances, are proving by practical experience that the Bible is to be relied upon. It matters not whether they place their faith on a passage in the Epistle of Peter, the Book of Daniel, or even the much disputed Pentateuch; God is faithful and true to His promises. This method of testing the truthfulness of the Bible is also open to the higher critics, but as Bishop Warren says, very few of them wish to use it.

II. As they affect the church.

1. Disadvantages.

It will be seen at a glance that whatever is an advantage to the higher critics is a disadvantage to the church. But as these are the general disadvantages we will name in this division the particular ones.

(1) The difficulty of mastering the science.

The higher criticism, as yet, is largely in the hands of college professors, and it requires constant study in order to keep up with the ever increasing opinions of different critics. It is said that very few pastors thoroughly investigate the subject, so, at best, can only accept the opinions of men who make a study of the matter.

(2) The uselessness of the science to the average pastor.

The preacher of the Gospel is called to the work of saving men. Ministers who are carried away with the higher criticism generally fall to this work. They become a burden not only to their congregations, but to themselves, and sooner or later drop out of the ministry altogether. The pastor of to-day might better preach the Gospel and let the higher criticism alone.

(3) It destroys reverence for the Word of God.

The man who believes in it goes to the Bible, not in a reverent spirit, but in a critical spirit.

(4) It has a tendency to destroy the authority of the Bible.

When a critic reads, "Thus saith the Lord," he has to stop and decide whether God says anything or not. He becomes an interrogator and is compelled to live a life of doubt.

(5) It questions the inspiration of the Bible.

The fruits of this principle are: Prophecy is set aside altogether, miracles are explained on natural grounds, the unity of the Bible is destroyed, and several Biblical narratives, like that of Jonah, are said to be the products of imagination.

2. The advantages.

While the higher criticism may be looked upon as an evil, God has overruled it for good. Criticism is as old as the Bible. Before John had written his Gospel, the agnostics had appeared on the scene. The Bible has been overthrown, demolished, exploded, etc., etc., and now it has to be done over again. The fact of the matter is, the oftener it is supposed to be overthrown, the harder it seems to overthrow it. Many a man has run his head up against the Bible, but history proves it has been all the worse for his head. Let us now look at a few of the advantages of the higher criticism, as they affect the Christian Church.

(1) The inability of the critics to get at the truth.

The Holy Ghost wrote the Bible, therefore, the Holy Ghost must explain it. The majority of the critics, though they may be scholarly men, are unconverted. How can such men understand the Bible?

(2) Higher criticism has very little to boast of.

An idiot with a knife in hand, let loose in an art gallery, can destroy more in an hour than Raphael could create in a lifetime. It is an easy matter to criticize and tear down, but a hard matter to build up. Many

of the supposed new discoveries of higher criticism, such as the "document hypothesis," the age of the earth, etc., are centuries out of date.

(3) The higher criticism will be productive of the true Biblical criticism.

It may be truly said that, in most cases, higher criticism has driven Christian men to the Bible, rather than away from it. A Biblical criticism is now in process of formulation, before which mere theory and speculation will disappear as did the Spaniards before the guns of the Americans. Such a criticism will embrace, as Dr. Mendham said, the following characteristics: (a) It shall be scientific in method and results; (b) it shall be Biblical in spirit, scope and influence; (c) it shall be historic in tests and material; (d) it shall be evangelical in tone, character and form; (e) it shall be rational in its use of scientific, non-theoretic in its inquiries and authoritative in its ultimate decision. The Bible is not opposed to reverent criticism, for its standing invitation is, "Come, now, and let us reason together." The Lord Himself has said, "My people are consumed for lack of knowledge."

(4) A call for the retreat of the higher critics has sounded.

A reaction has taken place in Germany against the higher criticism. Many of the pastors of the country are denouncing it from their pulpits. Book after book is being written against it. One of the most important victories on the side of orthodoxy is the fact that Professor Harnack, the star of Berlin University and one of the foremost leaders of higher criticism, has so changed his opinions regarding the dates of a number of the New Testament books, as to favor the traditional view. A revolution among the critics will undoubtedly be the result.

(5) The Almighty God has declared that not one jot or tittle of the law shall fall until all is fulfilled.

A curse has been pronounced upon the man who would add to or take away from the sacred words of Scripture. I am aware that the devil does not like the Bible. "He has always been urging his followers to stamp it out. Porphyry tried it by his philosophy, Celsus by his brilliancy, Lucien by his ridicule, Diocletian by the power of the Roman Empire, and thousands of others have tried it by this means and that, yet, "It shall stand in its beauty and its glory."

It has withstood the storms that have covered the ocean of time with shipwreck, it has outlived the mythology of Greece, and the glories of the Roman Empire. It has withstood the attacks of ridicule and buffoonery, the criticism of scientists, the intrigue of diplomacy, and the agonies of the Inquisition. It has stood the test of five thousand centuries; her trophies are the conquests of nations, and her crown of glory the benediction of a thousand generations; and as the ages come and go, she will abide, while the lamp of her glory, as the Pharos of the world, will shine, while the roll of Heaven's last thunder shakes the world."

III. As they affect the church.

1. Disadvantages.

In the mountains of the Tyrol it is the custom of the women and the children to come out at the close of day and sing. Their husbands, fathers and brothers are at the plow on the hills on the way homeward. On the shores of the Adriatic a similar custom prevails, the wives of the fishermen coming down to the beach about sunset and singing a melody. After singing the first stanza they sing in order to keep up with the melody from over the water, telling that the loved ones are almost home. Thus the weary fishermen are cheered by song when the task of the day, through its long continuance, is becoming most burdensome. And so ever a cheerful Christian, praising a hearty optimism, a burst of melody that floats over the waters of life, heartens up a toiler and makes all work or warfare light.—Ram's Horn.

2. Advantages.

I have known a brother wanting to go abroad to preach the gospel to the heathen, but a great many difficulties have been thrown in his way, and therefore he said: "I can see that I am not called to go." Why not? Is no man called unless his way is easy?

I should think myself all the more called to a service if I found obstacles in my way. The course in true service never did run smooth. I should say, "The devil is trying to hinder me, but I will do it in spite of all the devils in hell." Will you always be wanting to have your bread baked on both sides? Must your road be gravelled and smoothed out as a garden roller? Are you a carpet knight, for whom there is to be no fighting? You are not worthy to be a soldier of Jesus Christ at all if you look for ease.—C. H. Spurgeon.

3. Opportunities.

A fall is an opportunity to get up again. A disappointment opens the way to achievement. Many a man, overwhelmed with the sense of his own failures, and his own weakness, drops hopelessly down wherever he is, and wonders how his neighbor ever manages to keep up in the face of a startling variety of hard trials. He cannot see how it is that, when things look so dark in the affairs of that most singular neighbor, he goes about with a cheerful face and head erect. But the neighbor has character that costs in the making, and counts always for more than it costs. He has not the hours of weakness and his momentary sinking of heart, but never overwhelmed, for he trusts in God and does his very best.—Ram's Horn.

4. With God's Help.

Wendell Phillips said that at the beginning of his Christian life he asked God that whenever a thing was wrong it might have no power of temptation over him, and whenever a thing was right it might take no courage to do it. "From that day to this," he said later in life, "God has answered that prayer." This, then, is the chief reason why the name of Wendell Phillips lives to-day. He was a man of strong will and that will was for justice and righteousness.



The "Blues."

Can one help having the "blues"? Can one help having a bad temper? Certainly. Moods are subject to the will as any mental faculty, asserts a woman writer. The difference between the successful, popular woman and the woman who, by her disagreeableness, drives everyone from her is simply the power of the former to control her moods and her temper.

Fluffy Hair.

To arrange the hair fluffily and yet securely is an art which few women possess. An infallible way of keeping the hair in position is this: Take a small strand at the middle of the crown, a trifle higher or lower, according to the style required, twist this closely and make it secure with hairpins, then brush and arrange the hair over this little knot. A strand of perhaps two fingers thickness should be used. It furnishes the solid something upon which to fasten the loose, wavy superstructure and make it secure.

School Girl Luncheon.

It is important. It should be simple. It must be nutritious. It depends on the breakfast. After a big breakfast it may be light.

After a hasty breakfast it should be carefully chosen.

It takes a few years as a rule to turn a blooming girl into a sallow woman.

The luncheon should consist of dainty sandwiches, half of brown or entire wheat bread, with meat or nuts and cheese, and fruit, or other nourishing, digestible food, and not of the crullers, cream puffs and other excuses for food which a girl is likely to buy.—Philadelphia Record.

Her Home Like a Camp.

On even the coldest days in the coming winter Mrs. William S. Cowles, sister of President Roosevelt, needs exercise her imagination only a little to believe herself back in her camp in the Adirondacks on a July day. She is decorating her sitting room so that it will be as nearly as possible a representation of a forest knot. It will have a dado of birch bark, and pipes, guns, hunting knives, alpenstocks and wooden drinking cups on the walls will heighten the effect. Bearskins will be of rustic wood, innocent of paint. With balsam pillows giving an aromatic odor and a few growing plants in the windows, one could imagine the room to be in the heart of the mountains, instead of in a steam-heated, electrically lighted house.—New York Press.

Marriageable Age.

A woman's prospect of marriage is distinctly affected by age. The statistics of all centuries show that the great majority of women marry between the ages of twenty and thirty. Before reaching twenty a woman has of course a chance of matrimony, but the objections raised by the parents or friends to marriage at a tender age frequently outweighs the desire of the young woman to acquire a husband, and lead her to defer a wedding day.

All statistics that have been gathered bear out the statement that a woman's best chance to marry is at the age of twenty-five, that over six-tenths of the marriages take place between twenty and thirty, and consequently that a woman's chance increases up to twenty-five, and steadily decreases after that age until it reaches the vanishing point somewhere about sixty. Out of 1000 married women 149 marry before the age of twenty, 680 between the age of twenty and thirty, 114 between thirty and forty, the women in the thirties not having so good a chance as the girl in her teens; between the ages of forty and fifty the falling off is enormous, only forty-one in 1000 contracting an alliance in that decade; while for the woman who has celebrated the semi-centennial of her birth has only nineteen chances in 1600.

Yankee Wives For Canada.

"A Colonial" writes to the London (England) Spectator, calling attention to the fact that more men than women emigrate to Canada, and asking that the Imperial and colonial governments do something to encourage the colonization of British women along with these men in the Dominion. The gist of his trouble is well expressed in the following paragraph: "The chances are that the majority of young bachelors from Britain will settle in those districts where whole families from the United States are taking up wheat lands in the Northwest, and naturally it follows that the young Britisher will find his helpmate in a woman born under the Stars and Stripes, and likely to engraft into of a united family the traditions of a united empire. Canadian women of British ancestry are probably even more loyal to the British flag than are the women of the old land; their loyalty to the best traditions of English home life is proverbial, but Canadian

THE MARINER'S COMPASS.

Where the Honor For Its Discovery Should Be Bestowed.

We are indebted to a magazine published about seventy years ago for the following paragraph: "Much interest must forever attach to the discovery of the mariner's compass and yet there are few subjects concerning which less is known. For a period the honor of the invention was ascribed to Giola, a pilot or ship captain, born at Pasitano, a small village situated near Malphi, or Amalfi, about the end of the thirteenth century. His claims, however, have been disputed. According to some, he did not invent, but improved it, and according to others he did neither. Much learning and labor have been bestowed upon the subject of the discovery. It has been maintained by one class that even the Phoenicians were the inventors; by another that the Greeks and Romans had a knowledge of it. Such notions, however, have been completely refuted. One passage, nevertheless, of a very remarkable character occurs in the work of Cardinal de Vitty, bishop of Ptolemais, in Syria. He went to Palestine during the fourth crusade, about the year 1204; he returned afterward to Europe and subsequently went back to the Holy Land, where he wrote his work entitled "Historia Orientalis," as nearly as can be determined, between the years 1215 and 1220. In chapter xli. of that work he has this singular passage: "The iron needle, after contact with the loadstone, constantly turns to the north star, which, as the axis of the firmament, remains immovable, while the others revolve; and hence it is essentially necessary to those navigating on the ocean."

It is now settled beyond a doubt that the Chinese were acquainted with the compass long before the Europeans. It is certain that there are allusions to the magnetic needle in the traditional period of Chinese history, about 2600 years before Christ; and a still more credible account of it is found in the reign of Chingwang, of the Chow dynasty, before Christ 1114. All this, however, may be granted, without in the least impairing the just claims of Giola to the gratitude of mankind. The truth appears to be this: the position of Giola in relation to the compass was precisely that of Watt in relation to the steam engine—the element existed, he augmented its utility. The compass used by the mariners in the Mediterranean during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a very uncertain and unsatisfactory apparatus. It consisted only of a magnetic needle floating in a vase or basin by means of two straws on a bit of cork supporting it on the surface of the water.

The compass used by the Arabians in the thirteenth century was an instrument of exactly the same description. But Giola placed the magnetized needle on a pivot, which permitted it to turn to all sides with facility. Afterward it was attached to a card, divided into thirty-two points, called Ross de Vents, and then the box containing it was suspended in such a manner that, however the vessel might be tossed, it would always remain horizontal. The result of an investigation participated in by men of various nations, and possessing the highest degree of competency, may thus be stated: The discovery of the directive virtue of the magnet was made anterior to the time of Giola. Before that period navigators, both in the Mediterranean and Indian seas, employed the magnetic needle, but Giola, by his valuable improvement in the principle of suspension, is fully entitled to the honor of being considered the real inventor, in Europe, of the compass as it now exists.—London Electrical Engineer.

Making Railroads Smoother.

The fact that within the past twenty years two-thirds of the unevenness in railroad tracks has been done away with on certain lines was discussed at a recent meeting of the American Academy of Sciences.

The improvement has been brought about principally through new designs and methods of manufacture of rails. A "track indicator" car, traveling twenty or thirty miles an hour, sums up the inequalities, the "ups and downs" in the rails for each mile traversed. Formerly the "total inequality" per mile amounted to six or seven feet, even for the best roads; now it has been reduced to only eighteen or twenty inches, and this remnant is said to be due to dents in the rails.

It has been pointed out that the improvement, which may be carried farther, brings with it heavier locomotives and cars, longer trains and higher speed.

How Long Ostriches Live.

Nothing is positively known as to how long an ostrich will live. Some writers claim that it will live 100 years. Ostriches which are known to have been in captivity for forty years are still breeding and producing feathers.

It is the experience of Arizona farmers that among birds having good nutritious green feed deaths seldom occur, except as the result of accident. A dog or other small animal will sometimes frighten ostriches and cause them to run into a broken fence, which may result in a broken leg. When this happens, the bird may as well be killed as faw ever recover from such an injury.—National Geographic Magazine.

M. Jaures, the French socialistic leader, finds socialistic journalism unprofitable.