



THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

THE HISTORY AND DEFINITION OF HIGHER  
CRITICISM.

BY THE REV. HOWARD OSGOOD, D.D., PROFESSOR IN ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

IN his "History of the Old Testament in the Christian Church,"<sup>1</sup> Diestel says that the special novelty in Eichhorn's treatment of the Old Testament is found in his application of "higher criticism, that is, careful separation of the original and later parts of a book." What the meaning of this higher criticism is, we can learn only by its history, for no two of its disciples define it alike.

Criticism in its simplest, widest meaning is nothing more than decision, judgment. By necessity we are all critics; we are compelled to balance the "for and against" of all matters brought before us every day that we may reach intelligent decisions. To oppose criticism as an operation of the mind is bald self-stultification, for the very opposition is criticism. No intelligent man would hinder the freest exercise of the mind, for only by that can intelligence be continued and increased among men. Criticism is also used in a special sense, of the art of judging works of literature or art. Here, too, no one has any right to impose

<sup>1</sup> 1869, p. 608.

restrictions. Liberty is the first requisite for truth, discovery, progress, as well as for the right preservation of what has previously been gained. The truth has nothing to fear from liberty. It has fought for liberty through the centuries, and flourishes where liberty is best understood and practised.

There seems to be one apparent, but not real, exception to this liberty. Men agreeing in certain fundamental views of the Bible or of society, unite in a society to maintain and defend these views. If one of these men in the use of his liberty reaches views which, in the minds of those with whom he formerly agreed, are subversive of any of their fundamental views, what is his duty? To deny his liberty and retract his views? Certainly not. To maintain his views in that society and deny the liberty of other men who will not receive them? Certainly not. But, if he is one who understands and maintains the liberty of other men as well as his own, he will preserve his liberty and theirs by maintaining his views among others who willingly receive them. This is both the gospel and the law.

It is with criticism and the critic in their technical signification, meaning judgment and a judge of literature or art, that we are now concerned. Wide knowledge and judgment educated by theory and practice are supposed to be essential to the critic. The centuries show us that birth is as indispensable to a critic as to a poet. Cobet, than whom this century has known no finer exemplar of the classical critic, repeats the story, "*nec quemquam fieri criticum, sed nasci ut poetam*" in his "*De Arte Interpretandi*."<sup>1</sup> Neither poet nor critic can be ground out by any known process. Learning does not make the critic. Cautious judgment and careful statement do not make the critic. That a critic's opinions may gain the assent of any large number of the well-informed and judicious in his own line of study there is need of a large, genial, healthy mind, open to light from

<sup>1</sup> Leiden, 1847, p. 21.

every source, of exact learning almost encyclopædic, of judgment as honest and impartial as the scales of justice, and of ability to state in simple terms, without pretence and without passion, his own views. Critics thus qualified to lead are rare in any department of literature. The other critics in literature or art are too numerous to be counted.

The personal equation, which asserts itself even in mathematics, forms a large part of all criticism and cannot be deducted from it. The whole criticism, in every part and portion of it, is also determined by the point of view taken by the critic. For instance, if a man believes in supernatural inspiration, his whole criticism of the Bible will be determined by that view; if one does not believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, his whole criticism of the New Testament will manifest that view. If one is lax in his views and practice of morality, he cannot hide himself so that his criticism will not uncover him. Renan's Abbess of Jouaire appears under various names in all his writings on the Bible. Göttingen has, within a century, been served by three professors of Old Testament literature, who have been men of wide reading, of ceaseless activity, of great learning, prolific in authorship. Eichhorn, Ewald, Lagarde,—the very names call up the supercilious contempt, the bitter denunciation of dissentients, which ferment in their writings, and made them incapable of leading self-respecting free men.

J. G. Eichhorn, the son of a Protestant German pastor, was born in 1752. In 1770, at eighteen years of age, he went to the University of Göttingen, and remained there four years under J. D. Michaelis, Heyne, and others. In 1775 he became professor of Oriental languages at Jena. He left Jena in 1788 to become professor at Göttingen, where he continued until his death in 1827, at seventy-five years of age. Unwearied diligence, ceaseless activity of mind, great facility of expression, boundless dogmatism, insatiable ambition, were his salient characteristics. He was a close

mental relative to that German professor who wished to die with a proof-sheet in his hand. At his death Eichhorn left behind him one hundred and twenty volumes; equal to nearly two and a half volumes a year for every year of the fifty of his professorship. His fatal facility of work and expression led him over all the fields possible in his office. He was editor of a review for twenty-six years. He lectured six hours a day six days in the week on oriental languages, Old and New Testament exegesis, history in general, history of literature, of politics, of the French Revolution, of culture and literature of Europe, of arts and sciences, etc., etc., and on all these large subjects left bulky volumes. These simple facts are sufficient to prove his unwearied labor, but they also prove that he was not an original investigator. He was a skillful appropriator of other men's work which he used as supports for the theories he advocated at the time of writing. His acknowledgments of his debts were as rare as his debts were frequent. As Eichhorn was only twenty-seven years old when his "Introduction to the Old Testament" was published, it has been asserted, with great appearance of truth, that in this work he anticipated Michaelis in the publication of his professor's lectures.

For belief in the supernatural origin of the Bible Eichhorn had an intense hatred that flares out in his writings and becomes almost comical, since such belief was not represented by professors and was well-nigh unknown in Germany during his life. It is to Eichhorn, who is called modest by a living disciple of his, that we owe the chaste figure of his opposers, as beasts snorting at him, which has been drawn by a living writer from his tomb and made to do duty in our land, with the added color of "hissing serpents" and "dogs." Criticism in this case, for a hundred years, has gone from bad to worse. Eichhorn saw progress only in treating the Bible as a compilation of sagas and childish

histories, and in accounting for its origin on the basis of human thought alone.

When twenty-seven years old Eichhorn tells us in his "Repertory of Biblical Literature": "If in a book of archives, as Genesis is, there are various monuments of one event woven together, the higher criticism must exercise its office on sections of this kind, and seek to separate them from each other. In this way it prepares for its lower sister, which busies itself merely with words, and spies out false readings. Great criticism teaches us to distinguish writer from writer, and characterizes each one according to his own method, expression, favorite words and other peculiarities, and to establish rules and principles for the use of little criticism, by which it must test single words and readings. The first lightens the work for the interpreter, and, in historical monuments, for the investigator of history in the greater matters, as the second in the lesser, and both guard against all kinds of errors."<sup>1</sup> In his Introduction to Old Testament: "My greatest labor has been turned to a field hitherto unworked, the investigation of the various writings of the Old Testament by help of the higher criticism, a name not new to any humanist."<sup>2</sup> Higher criticism is said to deal with the genuineness of books.<sup>3</sup> "Great is the profit of criticism. If higher criticism first separates writer from writer and characterizes each according to his own methods, favorite words, and other general peculiarities, then its lower sister, which busies itself merely with words and spies out false readings, has rules and principles by which it must test single readings."<sup>4</sup>

Two points are to be marked here: 1. No definition of "higher criticism" is offered by Eichhorn. No rules or

<sup>1</sup> Vol. v. p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. i. p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. p. 330.

principles are stated by which higher criticism is to gain its positive results in the most delicate literary investigations. Higher criticism is simply said to be a means that "teaches us to distinguish writer from writer and characterizes each one" etc., and "deals with the genuineness of books." 2. Eichhorn calls it higher criticism because he makes it precede lower criticism, and give to its "lesser sister" "rules and principles by which it must test single words and readings."

But it is self-evident that the scientific investigation of all literary productions must begin with the multitudinous facts of the text, and until they are settled by the well-known laws of textual criticism all founding of conclusions upon the text is guesswork. Eichhorn's statement of the precedence and magisterial office of higher criticism builds his roof and second story in order to obtain rules and principles by which to build the foundation. This statement also reveals Eichhorn's false conception of, and contempt for, the exact science of textual criticism, and his exaltation of free conjectural criticism.

Whence did he get his new term, higher criticism? He says it is "a name not new to any humanist," i. e., man of letters. But if it was not new, absolutely new, the way is open for proof of the fact. Great philology and little philology had been known in the schools of Alexandria in Egypt fifteen hundred years before Eichhorn, and as technical terms had for all these years fallen into innocuous desuetude. The clue to the discovery of higher criticism is found in Eichhorn's mingling great and little criticism with higher and lower criticism. The only source known for the distinction of great and little philology is an ancient scoliast on the Alexandrian grammarian, Dionysius of Thrace, B. C. 80, who tells us:<sup>1</sup> "Philology was understood by the ancients in two senses; they called the method of writing and

<sup>1</sup> Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, p. 667.

reading the written language, of knowing the form of the letters and their combinations, that is, syllables, little philology; they called a theory about the poets which the philologists now explain, great philology. This theoretical method is applied to the poets and prose writers." The scoliast makes the divisions of philology; criticism, pronunciation and orthography, explanation, and literary criticism.<sup>1</sup> The technical terms of the philologists were peculiar to themselves; and according to their use we would have to understand little philology as covering all criticism directed and restrained by law, and great philology as conjectural criticism. Eichhorn makes his higher criticism the equivalent of great philology, but turns the Alexandrian method upside down in making higher criticism the antecedent and director of lower or textual criticism.

This peculiar term, higher criticism, was invented by Eichhorn to apply to his method of treating the Old Testament, for he utterly failed in the courage of his convictions to apply this method to the New Testament. From 1780 to 1850 the use of higher criticism was mainly confined to the rationalistic treatment of the Old Testament, and when spoken of it meant rationalistic free conjecture concerning the Old Testament, as abundantly appears from Drechsler's work on "Old Testament Criticism."

The endeavor was also made by Eichhorn to stamp higher criticism as a true division of criticism in general, but it found no favor with the masters of classical criticism in his day, nor has it ever been accepted by them. The following opinions will show how it has been regarded by the great leaders of classical criticism in Germany:—

*Wolf*, in his Lectures, delivered in 1798–9, Leipsig, 1845, p. 179, divides all criticism into "historico-philological"

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Reinach*, Manuel de philologie classique, p. 114; *Matter*, Ecole d'Alexandrie, Vol. ii. p. 97 ff. *Lersch*, Sprachphilosophie d. Alten. 1838. ¶ 1, p. 69 ff. *Steinthal*, Sprachwissenschaft bei d. Griechen u. Römern. 1863. pp. 525–550.

and "philological," rejecting "higher criticism." In this connection he makes the sound remark, that "to decide a single reading is often more difficult and requires more acumen than to decide the genuineness and the author of a writing."

*Johannes von Müller*,<sup>1</sup> in 1805 says: "There is nothing lighter than the 'inner grounds,' the 'higher criticism,' by which each one denies the authenticity of some ancient author's book, because it seems so to him."

*Bernhardy*:<sup>2</sup> "It is customary to divide criticism into the lower and higher; the lower is occupied with archives; the higher throws light by means of internal reasons, though these are destitute of proof. Here by an easily understood illusion the various differences between common and nobler critics are transferred to the art itself." Bernhardy prefers other terms.

*Boeckh*:<sup>3</sup> "Individual criticism has been called higher criticism and grammatical and diplomatic criticism has been called lower criticism; a distinction that has no scientific value."

*J. Müller*:<sup>4</sup> "The criticism that is concerned with questions of genuineness and falsity is called the higher in distinction from the lower, which is concerned only with words, criticism of words; but this is an unstable distinction." "Neither Schleiermacher nor Boeckh allowed this distinction."

*Bursian*<sup>5</sup> makes no point of higher criticism at all. These are the great authorities in Germany for the past hundred years on classical criticism and they reject both the term and the distinction proposed by "higher criticism."

Among classical critics of the first rank in Holland

<sup>1</sup> Works, Part vii. (1812), p. 159 f.

<sup>2</sup> Encyclop. of Philology, 1832, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Encyclop. of Philol. Science, 1877, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Manual of Classical Antiquity, 1886. Vol. i., p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> Hist. of Class. Philology in Germany, 1883.



from Ruhnken to Cobet, and in France from Villoison to Reinach, Brunetière, Vernes, and others, there is no use either of the term or of its fictitious distinction. *Reinach*<sup>1</sup> says: "The distinction of a higher criticism, dealing with the character and authenticity of texts, etc., and a lower or grammatical criticism is wrongly made. There are wretched critics, but there is no lower criticism."

Only one German author on classical criticism in this century, Gräfenhan, uses the term higher criticism, and he places it between lower and æsthetic criticism; but he is not in the first rank of critics.

If we turn now to German biblical critics, we find *Planck*<sup>2</sup> does not use higher criticism. *Fahn*<sup>3</sup> says: "Higher criticism is in reality nothing else than critical conjecture." *De Wette*<sup>4</sup> defines criticism, but does not mention higher criticism. So *Lücke* in his *Hermeneutics*, 1817, never mentions higher criticism. *Schleiermacher*<sup>5</sup> rejects both the term and its proposed distinction. "If one asks what is the higher and what the lower criticism, he does not always get the same answer." "It is said the lower criticism has to do with the genuineness of special letters and words, the higher with writings in whole or in part. But this is a mechanical and untenable distinction. Are not words parts of the writing? Cannot the genuineness of a word be of much greater importance than that of a whole part?" "Plainly there are cases where these higher and lower intermingle so that it is impossible to separate them." "There is no boundary. This whole view is unsatisfactory and it is better to cast away the distinction." He prefers the simpler term criticism.<sup>6</sup> *Augusti*<sup>7</sup> says, Spinoza's "Tractatus hist. polit."

<sup>1</sup> Manuel de Philologie classique, 1883, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction, etc., 1794.    <sup>3</sup> Introduction, 1802, Vol. i., p. 503.

<sup>4</sup> Introduction, 1817, p. 133.

<sup>5</sup> Hermeneutics, 1838, p. 266 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Comp. Works, 1835, Vol. iii., p. 390 ff.    <sup>7</sup> Introduction, 1832, p. 47.

furnished the kernel and was the *magna charta* of the so-called higher criticism. *Drechsler*<sup>8</sup> constantly speaks of higher criticism as equivalent only to rationalistic criticism of the Old Testament. *Pelt*<sup>4</sup> gives his estimate as follows: "Those whose inclinations led them over the wide field of baseless fancies and suppositions, took with pleasure the proud name of higher criticism, and often looked down with contempt upon the valleys where they beheld the lower diplomatic criticism pursue its work." *Hupfeld*<sup>5</sup> makes criticism of words equivalent to proof-reading and higher criticism to general judgment. *Thiersch*<sup>6</sup> and *Lutz*<sup>7</sup> never mention higher criticism. *Ebrard*<sup>8</sup> never uses the term "higher criticism," and so, *Rothe*<sup>9</sup> and *Immer*.<sup>10</sup> *Hagenbach*:<sup>11</sup> "Criticism of writings and books is commonly but improperly called higher, criticism of words or text, lower. Equally liable to misunderstanding is the usage of others who by higher criticism designate internal criticism, and by lower, the external." "Some use lower criticism with respect to the genuineness or falsity of special letters or words, and higher criticism with respect to whole writings or parts. But the mechanical and untenable nature of this distinction Schleiermacher has well pointed out." *Raebiger*:<sup>12</sup> "Biblical criticism has been divided into lower and higher criticism, but without reason." *Weiss*<sup>13</sup> never mentions higher criticism, nor does *Perthes*.<sup>14</sup>

French biblical critics of all schools reject higher criticism and its distinction; as, for instance, *A. Sabatier*:<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Old Test. Criticism, 1837, see pp. 5, 12, 16, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Theol. Ency. 1843, p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> Idea, etc., of Biblical Introd., 1844, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Crit. of N. T., 1845.    <sup>7</sup> Bibl. Hermeneutics, 1849.

<sup>8</sup> Scientific Criticism, 1850, and in art. "Criticism" in Herzog's Encycl.

<sup>9</sup> Theol. Encycl., 1880.    <sup>10</sup> Hermeneutics of N. T., 1877.

<sup>11</sup> Encycl. of Theolog. Science, 1874, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> Theol. Encycl., 1880, p. 243.

<sup>13</sup> Intro. to N. T., 1887.

<sup>14</sup> Lex. for Evang. Theologians, 1890, comp. vol. ii., p. 384.

<sup>15</sup> Art. "Sacred Criticism" in Lichtenberger, Ency. of Relig. Science.

“There are two sorts of criticism, of words and of facts, which have often been improperly divided into lower and higher criticism.”

In Holland the man who was the supreme teacher and leader of the modern school of destructive critics, a man of great learning, of calm, cautious speech, Professor Kuenen, (died in 1891) never speaks of higher criticism. For his exact and clear thinking that term was too empty, deceptive, and supercilious. But if the term higher criticism and its fictitious distinctions have been since their invention, a half a century ago, rejected by the European leaders of classical Greek and Latin criticism and by all the first writers in Germany on biblical criticism as a science, how shall we explain its persistence in appearing again and again? Simply by the fact that the rationalistic school of Old Testament critics in Germany, in despite of all that classical and other biblical critics have said, have used the term to express their method. They use it as though it really meant something scientifically definite and were the highest possible reach of scientific exegesis. They have never explained its principles and processes any more than Eichhorn explained them. But they assert, just as Eichhorn asserted, that they attain their results by this science. And as, for the past twenty-five years, the criticism of the Old Testament has been the most aggressive subject in European theological lecture rooms, higher criticism has been heard of in connection with it.

These, it is believed, are the main and decisive facts with respect to the origin, the history, and the appreciation of higher criticism in Europe. Men of the first standing as critics utterly reject the term and its proposed distinctions, not because they are opposed to criticism in general or to any special department of criticism, but because as a term it is unscientific, unstable, meaningless, and the distinction

from lower criticism sought to be made by it is false. A few instances will prove this last point. In Acts xx. 28 there is a case of doubtful reading, whether "lord" or "God." Only one word, and yet how much turns upon that one word! To reach a conclusion on that verse that shall fairly represent the state of the case and be true to all its elements requires just as minute, exact, and comprehensive knowledge of history, opinion, and text, as the decision of any other question of criticism. In Rom. ix. 5 there is a question of punctuation alone. Does it require less knowledge, less acumen, less natural and educated critical ability, to deal fairly and conclusively with this point, than to deal with any other question in the Epistle? Or, turning to the Old Testament, in Gen. iv. 8 there seems to many to be a broken sentence, or a word used in a signification that it cannot bear, and tyros in Hebrew or those who prefer to cut knots rather than untie them are apt to put their prentice hand to this verse. But to treat this text with consummate clearness and fairness demands a skill in Hebrew, and a comprehensive knowledge that would be equal to any other task in biblical criticism. These instances might be multiplied a hundredfold. Let us ask if Westcott and Hort, or Ezra Abbott, or Tischendorf, or Tregelles are lower critics than Kuenen, Weiss, Wendt? If equally comprehensive, nay, the same knowledge and judgment are required for deciding questions of text as for those of doctrine or history, then to call one lower and the other higher criticism is to use terms without meaning. This is still more manifest when we consider that the same general rules, principles, laws govern criticism of the text and of the contents of the text. Every question that the critic of the contents of the text must consider, must be considered by the critic of the text before he can reach a sound conclusion. To make one of these critics lower than the other is a survival of the utter misconception that only a proof reader's eye

and hand are required to deal with the text. The fact is that the man who sets out to criticise the Bible, after the labors of seventeen centuries, needs all the tools of criticism now known and all the divisions of criticism the Germans have ever imagined, or he will soon find himself at the bottom of one of the many pitfalls in his way. Unless higher criticism means the whole sphere of criticism, it is self-condemned as an instrument to use upon the Bible, or on any great work either of antiquity or of the present. If higher criticism, as now defined by a living writer, means criticism only of the human side of the Bible, its incompetency and incompleteness is self-confessed, unless the Bible is only a human book. It would decide fundamental points and, in the hands of its chief disciples, claims to decide fundamental points, by considering only the human side of the Bible.

In the United States for the past ten years higher criticism has been more talked about than it ever has been in Europe. Higher criticism is said to be a science, having proved its claim to that distinction by its results. The young are warned against objecting to higher criticism, for it is the science of the future; and if the elder scholars suggest that a nonentity cannot possibly be a science and show results constraining belief, this suggestion is taken as a proof that these men are bound to impervious traditions.

This attachment to, and defence of the name, higher criticism, in America has been largely due to the vehement advocacy of Dr. Briggs and some younger scholars, who would make this name represent all progress in biblical criticism. In Dr. Briggs' "Biblical Study" (1883), there is a chapter on The Bible and Criticism, in which he seeks to do what has never been done by its most ardent adherents in Europe, show the genesis of higher criticism and fix its principles and methods. Dr. Briggs tells us (p. 82) that "Criticism divides itself into various branches in accordance

with the departments of knowledge: (1) Philosophical Criticism; (2) Historical Criticism; and (3) Scientific Criticism. Limiting ourselves to historical criticism, we distinguish it from other criticism, in that it has to do with the materials of the past, the sources of the history of mankind." "Historical criticism deals with the various sources of history; literary documents, monuments, laws, customs, institutions, traditions, legends, and myths. The great importance of the literary sources justifies their separation in the distinct branch of literary criticism. Biblical criticism is one of the sections of literary criticism." "The principles and methods of Biblical Criticism will thus embrace (1) those of Criticism in general, (2) of Historical Criticism, (3) of Literary Criticism, and (4) of Biblical Criticism." Page 5: "From Literary Criticism Biblical Criticism derives its chief principles and methods. As literature it must first be considered as text." Page 86: "Having secured the best text of the writings, criticism devotes itself to the higher task of considering them as to integrity, authenticity, literary form, and reliability. This is appropriately called Higher Criticism."

The genesis is, according to this, 1. General criticism, 2. Historical criticism, a section of which is literary criticism, and a section of literary is Biblical criticism, which is again divided into textual and higher criticism; but when the task of higher criticism is stated, it is found to comprehend all the others; that is, a small part, a section, is greater than the whole. Literary criticism is, also, distinguished from historical, but not so that its lines are plain. The two do, in fact, coincide, and cannot be successfully separated. If one criticises Ps. cx. on its literary side, can he take a step that is not also historical criticism? Is there any perceptible meaning in the statement, "The principles and methods of Biblical Criticism will thus embrace those . . . (4) of Biblical Criticism?" When we turn to the task assigned by Dr. Briggs to higher criticism the ambiguity and obscurity

rapidly increase. Integrity may mean either completeness as it was originally, or honesty, veracity; but both these aspects of the text must have been fully considered and decided in textual criticism, if it was thorough. Authenticity may mean either true in its relation of facts, or by its professed author. If it means the first, why add reliability? If it means the second, why distinguish it from integrity? If a work is approved as to its integrity and authenticity, can there be any question of its reliability? If higher criticism has the task of "considering writings as to integrity, authenticity, literary form and reliability," would not this include all that general, historical and literary criticism has to do? Can any other be shown?

In close accordance with this unscientific genesis and these ambiguous definitions are the principles and methods of higher criticism which Dr. Briggs assigns to it. He has answered to his satisfaction that most difficult question, "Where was higher criticism before it was," by giving us parts of the treatise of Du Pin on criticism in general, written a hundred years before higher criticism was invented by Eichhorn, and by the instance of Bentley's proof of the falsity of the Epistles of Phalaris, also, a century earlier than Eichhorn. Both the treatise of Du Pin and that of Bentley proceeded on the simple, plain, common sense principles of general criticism, both of text and contents; and these are no more the principles and methods of higher criticism than they are of historical or literary or textual criticism. But the very fact, that Dr. Briggs is compelled to go back a hundred years to find rules for higher criticism, is a proof that he knows of none that have been specially given to it since it was invented; as well as a proof that higher criticism cannot be distinguished from general criticism, that it has no reason for separate existence, and thus all his labored evolution of higher criticism falls by his own hand. Let any one take up the editions of the Greek New Testa-

ment by Bengel and Wetstein, before Eichhorn's day, and by Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort, of this century, and decide whether these "lower critics" did not work by the same principles and methods as Du Pin and Bentley. If so, then these very principles and methods are those also of the "lower criticism," and do not pertain pre-eminently to what Dr. Briggs, after Eichhorn, styles the "higher task." The masters of criticism, classical and biblical, in Europe have known all that Dr. Briggs tells us, but they have never thought of uniting Du Pin and higher criticism, and those European scholars who do their work and mark it higher criticism, have been and are altogether too bright to put their feet in the snare of an attempted explanation of higher criticism.

This endeavor to give form and feature and laws of life to the unscientific, unstable, and elusive higher criticism, the invisible, fateful Lurlei of a German stream of thought, has not the merit of the first demand of science, an induction from and correspondence with all the known facts in the case, accuracy of definition and cohesiveness of statement. It utterly reverses the dictum of Eichhorn, for Dr. Briggs makes textual precede higher criticism, while Eichhorn makes higher precede and gives laws to textual criticism. The only effect this advocacy of an unscientific definition can have is to lead some, whose logical powers are weak, and others who have no time for investigation, to believe that a balloon or a parachute is the symbol of all true progress, and that the man who prefers the limited express train for land and the best steamship for sea is an enemy of true progress, a stubborn traditionalist, and a "dogmatician."

Professor Francis Brown in the *Homiletic Review*, April, 1892, says "Higher Criticism deals with the human element in the Bible, and with that under certain aspects only. It has to do simply and only with the literary problems furnished in the Bible. It aims to learn the structure and au-



thorship of the different books, to study the literary form of the Bible as distinguished from other biblical matters. . . . It is concerned with literary phenomena, with historical situation, with anything that throws light on the problem of how, when, and by whom the books of the Bible were composed. . . . The Higher or Literary criticism deals only with the literary form of the Bible."

Here, again, while higher criticism is by name distinguished from literary criticism, by all its aim and sphere it is made synonymous with historical or literary criticism and at last it is called higher or literary criticism. Dr. Brown is an excellent scholar and usually writes simply, clearly, and to the point. But all his acumen is not sufficient to make a distinction between higher and literary criticism that will bear the slightest scrutiny, or that he himself can preserve.

A century of intense activity in criticism of all literatures has brought forth new worlds of thought, and introduced severer and more accurate methods of proof; it has destroyed many illusions, and restored many defaced portraits. We cannot be too thankful for all the real gains it has brought and the surer paths it has pointed out. But the history of criticism of literature has proved that nothing is more illusive than the attempted divisions of criticism into certain spheres and the names given to these divisions. Every leading German critic makes his own divisions and appellations, but fails in getting others to agree with him. Germany has been the most fertile in these attempted and rejected divisions and definitions. France and Holland, where criticism has borne some of the best fruit, have steadily resisted the allurements of these shadowy divisions, and have been content to place all their work simply under the comprehensive term, criticism. Of all the attempted divisions of criticism the most unscientific and meaningless is that of higher criticism. Its emptiness becomes more plain by every attempted definition.