

## THE NEW OLD TESTAMENT.



THE Old Testament becomes new to one who reads it with new eyes." This remark of a distinguished biblical scholar, who was a pioneer in the work of the higher criticism, aptly describes the gift which modern biblical research promises to readers of the Scriptures — it will give the people new eyes for the Old Testament; and next to the divine gift of new revelation may be placed the human acquisition of new gifts of interpretation. A comparison by no means fanciful might be drawn between the return of Wordsworth and the Lake School of poets to nature, in the fresh joy of their spiritual interpretations of nature, and the return of biblical scholarship from traditional methods of regarding the Old Testament, and conventional views of its literary structure, to the Bible itself, as it lies before us to be seen afresh in its own inspired naturalness. The methods, indeed, of these two movements — the new baptism of poetry into the spirit of nature, and the revivification of biblical interpretation through closer contact with the inspired Hebrew literature — are by no means alike. Modern poetry in its return to nature followed the guidance of the spiritual imagination — Wordsworth's "vital soul"; while biblical interpretation has been critical and scientific in its method of attack, although not unilluminated by flashes of historical intuition. But there is a similarity to be observed in the directness of the return to the object itself to be known, whether it be a natural object or the sacred literature; and a similar result also is reached alike by our higher poetry of nature and by our higher criticism of the Bible; for each study in its own way brings new gifts of interpretation. Moreover, we have drawn the comparison between the modern literary study of the Bible and modern poetry, rather than science, because we wish to emphasize the often overlooked fact that biblical criticism is not merely inductive in its methods, and hence scientific; that it is not simply criticism, and hence sometimes destructive in its tendencies: but that it is also characterized, at least in its best work, by those powers of vital sympathy, imaginative insight, and reproductive reason which we recognize as distinctive elements in our truest poetic interpretation of nature. The phrase "higher criticism," it should be explained, is now currently used among scholars to designate a method of knowledge by means of which all

questions concerning the literary structure or form, the historical character and credibility, the authorship, date, and literary position of any writings, may be determined, especially by a careful scrutiny of the writings themselves, and by comparison of them with other writings which may throw light upon them. It is distinguished from lower, merely textual criticism as a higher method of literary and historical knowledge.

This higher criticism at first appeared to many in this country as a reckless disturber of received opinions with regard to the Bible; it is still regarded in many quarters as a portentous apparition from Germany, which comes, among the evils foretold in the latter days, brandishing a sword, and breathing forth fire and destruction for all but the remnant of the faithful. It has awakened much alarm; it provokes no little controversy; it sounds a new battle-cry on oft-fought fields where valiant defenders of the faith, resting on the victories of other days, have fancied that they should be left in peaceable possession of their heritage.

The controversial period, however, is usually only a passing, and never the most fruitful, period of any new loyalty to truth. After a science has gained recognized footing, it has before it its real work to do. The question, "What can you build?" quickly follows the question, "What have you come to destroy?" Construction must be the final test of criticism. We cannot, indeed, say that the comparatively new science of higher criticism in its application to the Bible has passed as yet through its controversial period; but it has already been at its chosen work long enough among the sciences to disclose somewhat its constructive powers. As a result already appearing from the labors of many scholars, some questions concerning the place, time, and authorship of the books of the Old Testament are cleared up, and we can now follow with no little confidence the critical reconstruction of the main lines at least of the history of Israel. This holds true, although we admit that many theories of the critics still waver in airy uncertainty, and the caution is still needed that scholars should wait patiently for the sifted wheat of criticism before mixing it too confidently as bread of life for the people.

Those believers in the Word of God who look with apprehension upon this new criticism of the Bible, as a dangerous foe, may possibly be induced to regain somewhat their assur-

ance, if reminded of the story which Lessing once told for the benefit of the theologians of his day, concerning the sudden appearance of a strange face in a company of children at play. They were greatly frightened until one child, bolder than the rest, went up to the apparition, pulled off its mask, and found under the frightful appearance the face of an old friend. Those who have not been afraid to look beneath the rationalistic mask which the higher criticism at its first appearance wore, are assured that it is not a foe, but a true friend, to their faith. It is the purpose, accordingly, of this article to disclose the real friendliness to the household of believers of this so-called higher criticism, the nature, scope, and methods of which, as a study of the literary structure and historical marks of the Scriptures, have been described in *THE CENTURY* for March, 1893. We do not care to rush at any point to the front, where the critics may still be engaged in hot-controversy, but rather, avoiding doubtful issues, we would mention some of the more assured gains which modern criticism renders to general readers and students of the Bible.

One of the first and happiest of these results of criticism is the advantage of a new point of view. A different light over a familiar landscape will sometimes lend to it a fresh charm and beauty. It is always intellectually stimulating to gain a new view of an old truth. And the novel interest should be the more welcome when the subject possesses a sacred significance and is of spiritual worth. Nothing should be hailed more eagerly than a promise of gaining, in this far-off age, some higher position from which the early course of revelation may be more clearly and broadly surveyed. Biblical criticism not only promised to lead to new vantage-ground; it is actually opening up the whole history of Israel from a new point of view. However we may regard particular theories of the critics, or seek to harmonize older and newer views, we can hardly help feeling the quickening impulse, we must recognize the suggestive power, which proceed from the scholarly investigations and perhaps sometimes over-confident enthusiasm of the teachers who belong to the school of the higher criticism.

There are two classes of persons to whom the discovery of a new point of view in the study of the Bible may be specially interesting and valuable. The first consists of that considerable number of literary men for whose benefit John Foster once wrote his celebrated essay on the "Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion." Literary men now may eagerly avail themselves of the fresh critical interest in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. The

other class consists of those numerous devout readers of the Bible who have found their way to familiar and favorite passages of the Old Testament — places which lie amid the rugged and unexplored grandeur of the ancient prophets like those valleys and sunny shelters among the hills where the early May-flowers fill the air with their sweetness, and in which fresh warmth and brightness from the heart of the summer seem already to have come. To these devout frequenters of favorite passages in the Old Testament the larger portion of it remains rarely visited, and indeed is almost an unknown land. But now our new, robust biblical explorers are making ways for everybody through the more difficult and unfrequented portions of this scriptural land, and discovering new meanings and interesting views at every turn. It is no slight service to restore to vivid reality any past age or historic character. Biblical criticism is thus restoring in particular the great age of the Hebrew prophets. They may now be seen to have been the men of light among their contemporaries, great leaders and true statesmen in political crises, and amid the crash of the world-powers. The prophet, as Michelangelo drew his noble figure in his sublime frescos,— the man of God gazing into far futurity,— is a grand conception; but the prophet becomes a more interesting and instructive personality as modern biblical study presents him to us in his life-work among his contemporaries, and in his mighty spiritual contacts with the social questions and national politics of his age. That earlier Hebrew preacher and poet, the prophet Amos, we may read and understand as a man with a message for his times, very much as we may read and understand, in relation to our country's history, Whittier's early antislavery poems. Amos might be called the Whittier of the early prophetic age of Israel. Our prophet-poet foresaw the storm which broke upon our guilty land.

Oh! rouse ye, ere the storm comes forth,  
The gathered wrath of God and man,  
Like that which wasted Egypt's earth,  
When hail and fire above it ran.  
Hear ye no warnings in the air?  
Feel ye no earthquake underneath?

So the prophet Amos, dreading the crisis in his country's history in which he knew the social wrongs that he saw would surely issue, wrote of "the trembling of the land," and "the earth darkened in a clear day," and "judgment rolling down as the waters," and "the day of the Lord, which is darkness and not light." The Hebrew Whittier knew that the just God "despises the feasts, and will take no pleasure in the solemn assemblies" of a religion

that "takes a bribe," and "would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail"; even as our New England poet-prophet Amos despised "the clerical oppressors" who had no gospel for the slave.

Just God! And these are they  
Who minister at thine altar, God of Right!  
Men who their hands with prayer and blessing lay  
On Israel's Ark of light.

Paid hypocrites, who turn  
Judgment aside, and rob the Holy Book  
Of those high words of truth which search and burn  
In warning and rebuke.

Our Whittier found small audience in an age  
when "cotton was king."

Would ye barter man for cotton? That your  
gains may sum up higher,  
Must we kiss the feet of Moloch, pass our children  
through the fire?  
Is the dollar only real? God and truth and right  
a dream?  
Weighed against your lying ledgers must our man-  
hood kick the beam?

So Amos denounced the social wrongs of his day — those that "buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat"; and the ruling classes bade him go and eat his pittance of bread in his own home, and not to sing such strains of prophetic wrath against prosperous Israel. And, like our own Whittier also, the early Hebrew advocate of the rights of men, and God's chosen prophet of justice, could sing "in clear-eyed Faith and Patience" the sweeter songs of his country's hope and promised peace, "when the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel."

We give thy natal day to hope,  
O Country of our love and prayer!  
Thy way is down no fatal slope,  
But up to freer sun and air!

Tried as by furnace fires, and yet  
By God's grace only stronger made,  
In future tasks before thee set  
Thou shalt not lack the old-time aid.

Similarly, in the light of historical research we may read the addresses of the first Isaiah, which were masterful forces amid the conflicts of parties in Jerusalem and during the Assyrian crisis, very much as we may take up now a volume of Charles Sumner's orations, or read Mr. Seward's epoch-making speech on "The Irrepressible Conflict," knowing the relations

which these leaders held to the struggle for national integrity and liberty through which our country passed in those never-to-be-forgotten days. The prophet as an antislavery poet — the prophet as a great champion of the people who took his stand on eternal principles of justice when the ruling classes were joining field to field until their monopolies left no room for the poor; when luxury, pride, oppression, and a religion that consecrated injustice were breaking up the foundations of the social order, and hastening the day of Jehovah — the prophet as the grand statesman who would save the nation by truth and not by expediency, may appear as a newly discovered and commanding historical character in the eyes of many who have been accustomed to regard him only as a vague seer, a dreamer of mystic dreams, whose chief mission it was to gaze idly into a distant and golden futurity. Isaiah's political predictions, under a critical examination of his speeches, are seen to have possessed that sure political foresight which results from clear moral insight. They have been justly compared to the predictions concerning the movements of the heavenly bodies which an astronomer may make who has apprehended the universal astronomic laws. Isaiah's supreme confidence was in the moral principles of God's government, which had become to him in his religious faith absolute moral certainties. He made no mistake in his political chart, because he had made his observations from the eternal stars. Hence the prophetic writings are to this day the storehouse of the highest and surest political wisdom. Rightly read, and when understood in their relation to contemporary events, they are living text-books of social ethics.

The book of Hosea furnishes another and somewhat different illustration of the new interest which historical criticism restores to the Old Testament. To the ordinary reader the opening chapters of Hosea present a strange and even repulsive symbolism. We cannot easily set the supposed symbolic action of the prophet into our view of human conduct. But rightly understood, this seemingly abrupt and difficult prophecy is found to contain one of the rarest and most pathetic stories of personal experience through which a human soul has ever been led to a profound knowledge of the divine love. A domestic tragedy had overshadowed the prophet's life. His wife Gomer, whom possibly he may have first seen and loved amid the wild dances of Ashteroth, "the wreath on her dark locks, the scarlet over her limbs, the jewels on her arms, and anklets," had from the first disappointed the saving power of his pure passion. She had deserted him, yet he had followed her with a persistent love; and when she had been

herself forsaken by her false lovers, he had bought her back at a slave's price, and set her apart in a safe place where she might in the slow years purify the stain of her sin :

Weeping blinding tears,  
I took her to myself, and paid the price  
(Strange contrast to the dowry of her youth,  
When first I wooed her); and she came again  
To dwell beneath my roof.

. . . . In silence and alone,  
In shame and sorrow, wailing, fast, and prayer,  
She must blot out the stains that made her life  
One long pollution.

Hosea's life has been happily regarded as an earlier Hebrew instance of the idyl of King Arthur; and to the prophet also, in his tragic suffering, have been ascribed these words in which Tennyson represents the love of the "stainless king":

For think not, tho' thou would'st not love thy  
lord,  
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.

Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives: Do thou for thine own soul the rest.

Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God.

By the deep sorrow of his life, and through his intense purifying love, stronger than sin or shame, Hosea had received his prophetic consecration. The verses of his Hebrew song are broken by the accents of his strong and noble passion. To those who can understand him he is the greatest and the most tender teacher in the Old Testament of God's undying love to unfaithful Israel. His prophecy, when recovered by true criticism from allegorical interpretations, and read as a chapter from real life, will be felt to be in the Old Testament what the parable of the prodigal son is in the New.

Many other instances might be given of the new interest which literary and historical criticism lends even to familiar passages of the Old Testament. But not to enumerate these further, we may say in general that the service of the higher criticism may be compared to the work of restoring some masterpiece of art: later glosses and traditions which had concealed the original inspired canvas are removed; the lines and colors of the master's work reappear. In their literary restoration, these sacred books gain a diviner fascination.

Another distinct gain of biblical criticism con-

sists in the surer possession of the Old Testament ground which it gives us. Knowing better the structure of the Old Testament, and the course of the true religion in the history of Israel, we can enter also into a fuller and more restful possession of its inestimable riches. But quite the opposite of this result is often apprehended to be the consequence of this new study of the Bible. It is alleged that such criticism is so much learned guesswork; that the theories of German scholars concerning the different strata in this sacred deposit of our faith are only a series of uncertain guesses; and that the main tendency of all this historical speculation is to destroy confidence in the facts of the Old Testament history. Nothing, however, can in reality be further from the ultimate effect of the higher criticism than this distrustful estimate of its tendency. It is true that much of it is only guesswork, and not a few confident conjectures of scholars have proved to be worthless. It is also true that too much biblical criticism has proceeded from arbitrary rationalistic assumptions. Nevertheless, a good guess has sometimes proved to be the first step toward new knowledge, whether in deciphering ancient monuments, unraveling the intricate threads of molecular physics, or in discovering the message which the light brings from the stars. A good conjecture may serve similar ends in the science of biblical criticism. Among the now demonstrated facts of scientific progress are some former speculations of the scientific imagination. "I touch not hypotheses," is an often quoted dictum of Newton; yet the great mathematician worked out the law of gravitation from a conjecture, and a wrong hypothesis which he held concerning the nature of light retarded for many years scientific knowledge of the revelations of the spectrum. Many received opinions, moreover, concerning the books of the Bible are nothing but late Jewish guesses, which have become congealed and rigid in Christian opinion. Not a few theories of our biblical critics may indeed prove to be airy and unsubstantial, as the clouds which increasing light soon dissipates. But some literary conjectures have already been signally confirmed by subsequent discovery. For example, scholars had separated by purely critical methods certain interpolations from Demosthenes's Oration on the Crown. The accuracy of their critical determination of the original has since been shown by the discovery of a record of the exact length of the original oration. Similarly, a critical study of the "Apostolic Constitutions" and an "Apostolic Epitome" led to the conjecture that these writings embodied an earlier and simpler document, which the critics undertook to reconstruct. The subsequent discovery of the "Teaching

of the Twelve Apostles" brought to light the very document of the critics' conjecture, and signally justified their learned guesswork. Much, doubtless, in the Old Testament must always remain to us matter of learned conjecture or of simple faith; but the higher criticism is slowly recovering from the dim vistas of the past the grand outlines, at least, and the main course of the religion of the Bible. In proportion as it succeeds in accomplishing this desirable result, our confidence in the distinguishing features of the biblical revelation ceases to be a mere dependence on Jewish tradition, or an act of unquestioning faith, and grows into the definiteness and firmness of securely rooted knowledge. Amid whatever is still uncertain and theoretical, a great deal also is coming to be definitely known concerning the structure of the several books of the Old Testament, the social conditions in successive ages of the chosen people, the tasks and problems with which the true Israel was confronted, and the development of the moral and religious faiths which rendered Jacob an elect servant of the true God, amid the great world-powers which had their day and passed away; while through all the tumults and confusions of this marvelous history the one divine purpose may be the more clearly discerned, as it "marched on in strength" toward its Christian consummation. The time will come when the Church will recognize its debt of gratitude even to the critics who have seemed to be its enemies, and who sometimes may have too rudely disturbed its peace by their skeptical challenge of its inherited dogmas. When all their warfare shall be accomplished, we shall have gained firmer historical ground on which to build the peaceable habitations of our faith in the true God of Israel. Already, in reconstructing the argument for revelation, of which the Old Testament is at once the means and the product, we may build with much hewn stone and seasoned timber, for quarrying and cutting which we have to thank the higher critics.

As another happy consequence of their work, we can now see still more clearly what may be called the naturalness of the supernatural in history and revelation. Nothing is more helpful to faith at the present time than to accomplish just this — to discern and to follow the natural methods of God in the higher and diviner work of his Spirit in the world. For the deepest tendency of modern thought is not to run into violent denial of the supernatural: the profounder endeavor of all our thinking, whether in science or religion, is to discover the points of unity, to follow the lines of continuity, between the material and the spiritual phenomena of the universe, and throughout the whole

development of life and the progress of history. We hesitate to admit evidence of the supernatural which cannot at the same time be *located* as part and element of some larger and diviner order. The universe must speak one language of divine reason to our ears. Miracles may be accepted as the superlatives of the divine speech, of which the ordinary forces of nature are the positives; the comparatives might be found in our higher spiritual masteries of nature. But miracles as isolated events are not so credible. Miracles which cannot be seen to lie connected with one another as moments of some higher process of events do not easily command our rational assent. Miracles which seem to be mere dashes of motiveless color on the surface of nature's canvas,—miracles which do not weave themselves as one golden thread through the woof of history,—if not regarded as impossible, at least will not find ready credence in our critical habits of mind. While "the modesty of true science" may prevent dogmatic denial even of a seemingly strange and meteoric miracle in the firmament of the world's faith, the truth of the scientific intellect requires the evidence of order and continuity in the realm of the spiritual and the supersensible, as it finds order and continuity in the play and movement of those forces the effects of which are sensibly discovered. A method of investigation, therefore, or a conception of religion, which serves in any degree to introduce order into the realm of the spiritual, and to render more demonstrably evident the laws, processes, and harmonies of the one divine working in all spheres, cannot fail ultimately to be a powerful contribution in aid of faith in the supersensible and the eternal.

Precisely this result is appearing from the new biblical science. It may indeed measure more accurately, and leave us more familiar with the breaks and the flaws, the fissures and the chasms, in the formation of the Old Testament; but it causes the higher order of the whole Bible to stand out before us more impressively, like a mountain-range which has been lifted up by one and the same great power — height of this revelation answering to height, and glory to glory, in the one supernal Light. The laborious investigations and critical work of modern scholars are enabling us to perceive still more clearly what mankind has long believed, that the history which produced the world's Bible, and which culminated in the world's Christ, was not a series of isolated wonders or detached events, but a progressive course of revelation, a highway for the coming of the Lord.

When, about half a century ago, Strauss wrote his new life of Jesus, his rationalistic criticism, with its anti-supernaturalistic premises, was received as a challenge and an alarm to faith.

But the study of the New Testament times, which the reckless venture of Strauss awakened, has since then brought every portion of the literature of the earlier Christian centuries under microscopic scrutiny; and the alarm which the critical method aroused has given place to Christian gratitude in view of the results which by means of it scholarship has gathered for faith. It has taught us with increasing evidence that we must go back to the person of Christ, as the first disciples saw him, full of grace and truth, in order that we may find an adequately scientific explanation of the origin of Christianity in its new access of spiritual power. In a similar manner the present criticism of the Old Testament, if we do not entirely mistake its deeper significance and misread its farthest signs, will eventually prove, and with increasing historical certainty, that the ultimate and real explanation of Israel's mission among the nations is to be found in Isaiah's vision of the Holy One of Israel; and that our reason must see with prophetic clearness "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and "the whole earth full of his glory," or it will fail to understand the higher law of all history, and have no eyes to perceive the one revelation of divine purpose through the whole succession of events.

This contribution of reasoned and intelligent faith, which the higher criticism is already bestowing, may be illustrated further from the broader view which it helps us gain of the so-called argument from prophecy. Matthew Arnold, in his "Literature and Dogma," let the keen shafts of his ridicule fall thick and fast upon the good bishops who maintained the "proof from prophecy." So long as this argument was displayed as an exhibit of precise predictions with exact fulfilments, it was not difficult to find the weak points in the reasoning. More strain was laid upon the chain of predictions than some links of it seemed strong enough to bear. For criticism, testing the proof from prophecy at every point, shows that it will not do to overburden it with too great a claim of wonderful prediction and subsequent definite fulfilment. Some anticipations of the prophets never came to pass; others were not realized within the times, or in the ways, which had been prophesied; others seem too vague and vastly luminous to be compared with correspondences of future events. Still in their ideal glory they lie beyond us like the measureless vistas of a sunset; they are not, as promised, harvest fields of earth and fruits of some not distant autumn. It may, however, be still urged, even in the most searching light of criticism, that the great Hebrew prophets possessed in a signal degree the power of foreseeing the course of events, and foretelling the

issues especially of the political movements of their times. Mr. Arnold's hasty remark that prophecy is "an embarrassment to the Bible" is superseded by the following judgment of one of the soberest and most discriminating of recent biblical scholars, Professor Driver:

An impartial criticism, while, on the one hand, owning that temporal predictions exist which have been apparently unfulfilled, and admitting the probability that in the case of such as refer to a distant future, they have been incorrectly dated, or not transmitted to us in their original form, will, on the other hand, frankly acknowledge such as are beyond reasonable doubt or suspicion, and will not seek to eliminate them, or minimize their significance, by special pleading.

It would be going too far, in view of this judgment of so competent a scholar, to affirm that the proof from the literal fulfilment of precise prophecies, which was a favorite argument with the early Church fathers, has been emptied of all reality by recent biblical criticism; the remark of Professor Driver, just quoted, shows that it has not. But the argument from prophecy need not be risked on too low ground. Rather the most critical scholarship lifts it up and gives it broader scope. The predictive element which characterized Hebrew prophecy may be seen to have been a moral and spiritual element, the truth and power of which were from the living God. It belonged to the religious endowment, to the special religious genius, of the bearers and interpreters of the revelation which found its fulfilment in Him to whom the Spirit was given without measure. In proportion as we recover the grand outlines of this supreme history, and are enabled to estimate the forces which marshaled this supernal order of events, and can behold, rising in clear spiritual truth above the low horizons of their times, the celestial ideals of the prophets, the whole Old Testament will become to our rational understanding of it one increasing Messianic prophecy: the religion of Israel moves on, impelled by a higher purpose, and instinct with a divine prescience, of which inspired interpreters, like Isaiah in moments of vision, become gloriously aware.

A suggestive comparison may be drawn between this larger view in which we now hold the "proof from prophecy," and the better conception which Darwinism has opened to us of the old argument from design. In Paley's "Evidences," which not many years ago was used as a text-book in our New England colleges, the existence of an intelligent Designer of the world was inferred from the presence of special contrivances in nature, such as the ear or the eye: very much, it was argued, as one could infer the existence of a watchmaker if he should find somewhere a watch. The evi-

dences, on this scale of reasoning, in favor of the existence of a divine Artificer were summed up in the answer which a student once gave to the professor who asked him, "What are the probabilities in favor of belief in God?" The reply was, "A hundred to one, sir." These probabilities of faith, however, Darwinism apparently swept away, and left in their place the theory that these seeming contrivances in nature are the results of natural processes, and prove only the special utilities of favored forms under the laws of natural and sexual selection. At first believers were disposed to defend the argument from design by attacking Darwinism. But the belief in design in nature evinced its vitality by proving itself able to survive the folly of such defenders. Other and wiser champions of it were emboldened before long to inquire whether the evidence of design had not been dislodged by Darwinian science from its former hiding-place in special contrivances, only that it might find a more spacious and securer place of abiding in a higher and larger conception of purpose in the creation. An eminent American botanist, the late Professor Asa Gray, wrote a volume of essays entitled "Darwiniana," in which, accepting evolutionary principles, he argued that they are not inconsistent with design, but rather enable us to reconstruct the argument from design, relieving it of many difficulties, and lifting it up to a firmer position. The evidence of design which, through the explanation offered by natural selection, we may lose from particular parts of nature, we find again in the whole economy of nature. "Design in nature," so the eminent Darwinian botanist argued, "is distinguished from that in human affairs—as it fittingly should be—by all-comprehensiveness and system." Similarly, a leading, more pronounced Darwinian, Mr. Wallace, in the conclusion of his book on "Darwinism," in which he has given a thorough "exposition of the principle of natural selection," writes this summary of his belief in design:

To us, the whole purpose, the only *raison d'être*, of the world,—with all its complexities of physical structure, with its grand geological progress, the slow evolution of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and the ultimate appearance of man,—was the development of the human spirit in association with the human body.

Thus modern science opens to faith the larger view that evolution itself is rational; that nature is saturated with thought; that natural processes and laws are all coordinated in one living Intelligence and Power; that the Creator is not an absent artificer, but is immanent in, as well as lord of, the creation. We learn that evolution itself "makes for righteousness," that

biology is a growing prophecy of more life and richer. With scientific prescience we may say of nature as one progressive and ordered whole, as the Christian apostle said of it, that the "earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God." Paley's "Evidences" are indeed dead, but only to rise again in a glorified form; we need not believe less in purpose as we have reason to believe more, with growing knowledge, that from the primordial atoms through the age-long ascent of life, and beyond our vision, the creation looks one way, makes one music, and all things tend to "one far-off divine event."

In much the same way as the older reasoning concerning design has been enlarged and ennobled by our natural science, the proof also from prophecy has been driven by the biblical critics from the narrowing littleness of details, and set in the largeness of vast spiritual processes and ends. So exalted and illumined in its relation to all history, prophecy does not lose any remarkable features of specific fulfillments which may stand the test of critical studies, while it gains in scope and dignity, and is invested with a more impressive power over reverent reason. Prophecy as a whole and in its general laws of spiritual movement and direction, like evolution, witnesses in the last analysis to a diviner element, a higher guidance in man's history, than mere naturalism can measure or weigh. Unless we are prepared to find thus the living One in nature as a whole, we shall not be apt to discover any special sign of his handiwork in particular objects of nature—in flower, or star, or even in the soul of man. But when once the higher Spirit is recognized as the life and source of all,—a "Something far more deeply interfused,"—then the living God may be felt and found in each living and lovely manifestation of truth and grace in nature. So when we have once apprehended the leading of God in the whole scope and purpose of the history of the chosen people, and in the Bible which proceeds from it, we need find little further difficulty in receiving the prophet's vision and hearing him speak the word of God.

Thus far we have been sketching in general outline some of the benefits which faith itself may hope to receive from the science of biblical criticism. These fruits of it should not be hidden from the people, as though they could be wholesome only to the scholars. A freer use of the sifted results of the higher criticism might relieve the minds of many devout readers of the Bible from perplexities and difficulties of many kinds which burden their understanding and use of the Old Testament. The newer criticism may afford the help of a higher and more serene position to some whose in-

herited trust in the Word of God has become entangled in questions of possible errors on some page of the Old Testament. It may afford breathing-space and relief to their confused and hard-pressed faith, like the relief which one finds when he is climbing up some mountain-side through the tangled forest, half wondering whether he is lost, and at length comes out to some clear spot of wide outlook, and knows just where he is.

Little use has as yet been made of the higher criticism in the average Sunday-school instruction; but it should be regarded as hazardous *not* to give to the young the benefit of the best biblical study and criticism. For the youth who are to be the believers or the unbelievers of the coming generation need even more than adults of settled beliefs the best that can be thought and said with regard to the Bible, its structure, its history, and its teachings. In some Sunday-schools where a wise constructive use of the freest methods of biblical study has been made, most hopeful results have been secured. The prophets have been made interesting to children. Skeptical theories have been disarmed of their power at some later period to subvert the earlier faith of childhood. Young persons who under careful training of the Church itself are quietly and reverently led to reach without shock or fear such views of the Bible and its inspiration as are commanding the best scholarship of the world, may be early saved from that peculiar peril to faith which accompanies a sudden disclosure of new and unadjusted knowledge. It will prove to be the most far-seeing wisdom, even in elementary biblical instruction, to imitate that apostle who once said in the presence of some very immature Christians, "Let me speak freely unto you of the patriarch David."

In discussing, as we have been doing, the higher criticism from the practical side, we have not dwelt upon the sociological importance of the revived study of the Old Testa-

ment. In this direction there lies indeed an almost unworked field. To the student of modern social problems, and to the preacher of "just relations between men," the social ethics of the prophets may prove a most valuable contribution. Passages could be selected from these sacred writings concerning the strain and peril of class privilege and monopolies, which, with but little note and comment, might be published as tracts for the times. To the student of politics, likewise, the restored Old Testament — the Old Testament in the light of the most critical and historical study of it — may prove an invaluable text-book. If a young man wishes to enter upon a political career of far-reaching power and light in this country, three studies may be especially commended to him — the study of American political history, of constitutional law, and of the social ethics of the Old Testament.

The signal and supreme benefit which the higher criticism may confer will be found to consist in the increased clearness in which it will enable us to distinguish from everything else in history the "Life which was from the beginning, and which was manifested," "the eternal Life which was with the Father, and which was manifested unto us." The very controversies which criticism provokes concerning the written word serve to set in authority above what has been written the Life that has been lived. In the New Testament the disciples, according to their Hebrew custom, would often say, "It is written:" "And that the Scripture might be fulfilled." We also may still say, It is written. But there is something beyond that for us to say — It is lived! And that the Life may be fulfilled! Our supernal authority is this, It has been lived! The Life is better than the word; the Christ more than the Scripture. If we are critical students of the word, we may become worshipful followers of the Life. The final and sure reason for our hope is not, It is written; but beyond that, — It is lived!

*Newman Smyth.*

## THE BALLAD OF A LITTLE FUN.

(NORTH GEORGIA SCOUTS.)

I RODE a horse, a dappled bay,  
Coal black his mane and tail,—  
A horse who never needed spur,  
Nor curb, nor martingale.

And by my side three others rode,  
Sun-tanned, long-haired, and grim,  
Wild men led on by Edmondson,  
Jim Polk, you've heard of him.

Behind us galloped, four by four,  
A swarthy, mottled band  
Of reckless fellows, chosen from  
The bravest in the land.

Whither away on that fair day?  
Oh, just a dash for fun,  
To speed our horses and keep up  
With Jim Polk Edmondson.