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RALEIGH CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

EDITORIAL.

AS TO THE "HIGHER CRITICISM."

A correspondent asks us to explain in the columns of the ADVOCATE the term "Higher Criticism" as applied to religion and the Bible. We do not profess to be an authority on this subject; yet we give our views for what they are worth, and we think that we are correct. In the outset, we would say that the term can be legitimately applied only to the Bible. It has no direct connection with what is called religion. The term "criticism" as applied to the Bible is regarded with suspicion by some. Yet there is no reason for this. It has a right to a place in the vocabulary and thought of the Christian world. There is a "textual criticism" which lies at the very basis as all true Bible study. This implies a search through the various manuscripts and versions for the authenticity and correctness of the Bible text. The search never goes outside the Bible. Its evidence is altogether eternal. In this kind of criticism the main questions asked with reference to a text are: Has it a right to the place it occupies? Is it true?

"Higher Criticism" raises no question as to the correctness or truth of a text, but makes an examination of the origin and genuineness, as far as authorship is concerned, of the books of the Bible. It looks for external as well as internal evidence. It asks the questions: When was it written? Who is the author?

It is a common idea that the "Higher Criticism" is dangerous for the seeker for truth. We do not see why it should be. The one who in the right way indulges in "Higher Criticism" is as safe as he who indulges in "Textual Criticism." Both kinds are legitimate and are necessary to the fullest understanding of the Bible. The "Higher Criticism" of some is colored and molded by the hand of irreverence and unworthy nature. In this case, it becomes abnormally destructive and loses its right to the name. In this way the term has become opprobrious to the "orthodox."

The Christian Church should have the faith to believe and teach that the Bible has nothing to fear from the criticism of an earnest and sincere searcher for truth. Truth can never hurt the Bible nor weaken faith. The danger lies in not giving full time or a full heart to the search. If we give superficial study, and from inadequate data, jump to conclusions covered by a cold and worldly heart, as in the case of certain German critics who change their theories every four or five years, we may feel certain that our embarking on the dark and stormy sea of Doubt and what is worse, is only a question of time. Let our souls only be filled, and we may wander through the universe of thought to find that every truth illumines the sacred page and lights us to the eternal Throne.

is a fixture in the world's life. It rests on rock-ribbed foundations. No impact of destructive thought, though washing back into the fury of the storm our little boats, can weaken the Book of the Ages. As has been well said: "Men's theories about it may change; men's theories about the starry firmament have often changed since creation. But Sirius is just as bright to-day as when Adam walked in Eden, and Orion's belt and Cassiopeia's chair have lost none of their lustre since Abraham watched them from the Mesopotamian hills. Let us study this unchanging book, closely, exhaustively, prayerfully."

THE NORTH CAROLINA PRESS CONVENTION.

The late President of the North Carolina Press Association spoke truly when he said: "We teach more people than all our colleges, universities, and free schools combined. If opportunity brings responsibility, surely ours is a responsible position. Then brethren, let us go about our work in the fear of God and filled with love for our fellow man." Having felt the force of these truths before they were framed in words, we have ever had a high respect for an association of editors. We joined the North Carolina Press Association as soon as we mounted the tripod. We felt that we could be professionally benefitted and that we could morally and in other ways help to benefit others.

Not until last week was it our privilege to attend an annual meeting of the Association. We went, looked, considered, studied, and came to the conclusion that we had in nowise magnified the importance of the body. The Association is made up, in the main, of an able body of men. They know how to grapple with the great questions of the day and to publicly express their views with the force of one who is more used to the platform. We heard several debates that were not only entertaining but highly instructive. The general desire to avoid wounding the feelings of those of other views was very apparent. Several measures of importance were considered and materialized.

The next meeting will be held in Hendersonville. Before adjournment, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

President—D. J. Whichard, of the Greenville Reflector.

First Vice President—T. N. Ivey, of the North Carolina Christian Advocate, Raleigh.

Second Vice President—Benjamin Bell, of the Wilmington Messenger.

Third Vice President—H. S. Blair, of the Lenoir Topic.

Secretary and Treasurer—J. B. Sherill, of the Concord Times.

Historian—W. F. Marshall, of the Gastonia Gazette.

Orator, E. J. Hale, of the Fayetteville Observer.

Poet—J. A. Robinson, of the Durham Sun.

Delegates to the National Convention—H. A. London, of the Pittsboro Record; J. B. Whitaker, Winston Sentinel; R. M. Furman, Raleigh Post; J. B. Sherill, Concord Times; C. L. Abernethy, Beaufort Herald.

The Association held its meeting this year at Carolina Beach. Perhaps the attractions of this sea-side resort had much to do in making the attendance unprecedentedly large. The hotel and the cottages were overrun. The wives, children, and sweethearts of the "brethren of the quill" were there in abundance. Capt. R. A. Jenkins and his two sons are good hotelists, and in spite of the crowding impressed all with the fact that they were doing their best. Those wishing to go to a seaside resort will do well to consider Carolina Beach. The beach is the best on the coast, the cuisine is excellent and other accommodations equal to those found at other first class summer resorts.

Capt. Harper owner of the steamer Wilmington showed the Association great kindness in giving free transportation be-

tween Southport and Wilmington. He will be gratefully remembered by many.

The Press of Wilmington by its kindness placed us under many obligations. The Association owes much to the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, represented by Mr. William E. Worth, the Wilmington Merchants Association, represented by Mr. P. Heinsberger, the Wilmington Street Car Co., the Seacost R. R., Sedgely Hall and Hanover Clubs and the several railroads.

THE LIFE WE LEAVE BEHIND.

Why do I strive to live what is called the Christian life? To this question many—perhaps the majority of those laying claim to this life, will answer: "That I may prepare myself for the life which is to come." This answer is legitimate as far as it goes. Our life "in the flesh" certainly determines the future life. We will be in the Great Beyond what we develop into within the short period of our earthly days. The eschatological view of religion and the motives involved are truly sanctioned by Holy Writ, and the laws of the spiritual constitution.

A smaller class than the one mentioned will give this answer to the question: "That I may make my experience in the flesh a blessing to myself and to my fellow-man." This is a good partial answer. We are taught by the Divine Oracles to regard the Present as well as the Future, and to look not only at the welfare of self but at that of others. We serve Christ by serving our brethren. "Whosoever would be great among you, let him be your servant." It is perfectly legitimate for one who would lead the Christian life to strive for that experience which is a foregleam of that which the soul expects to enjoy in Paradise. If this be selfishness, it is that which God himself allows and consecrates.

Very few live the religious life with reference to the life that is left behind when the spirit leaves its tabernacle of clay. When the "life that now is" is what it should be, the life that will be left behind will in nowise suffer in its character and results. Yet there is a great advantage to the Christian in realizing that in sweeping into the life above, he leaves below, in a certain sense, a life as rich and significant. Such a realization would expand our spiritual horizon, practicalize our religion, and make our lives a lasting boon to the passing generations.

THAT "CONSCIENCE EXCURSION."

If there was ever such a thing before, we have not heard of it. But it is a good thing, and we endorse it—and the excursionists. We honor the Seaboard Air Line which has made such a thing possible. "Well, what is it?" you say. We will explain. The above-named road and its worthy competitor, the Southern, both of which have done so much for the material prosperity of North Carolina, have been granting exceedingly low "week end" rates to certain places. Of course the utilization of these rates made it necessary for some, not to all, to break the Fourth Commandment. It seems that there is a large contingent who realize that the aforesaid commandment is still in force. These want low rates without stealing God's day. The "conscience excursion"—an excursion in the middle of the week with the same low rates—is the answer to this demand. We are glad that a railroad by low rates has made it possible for the brother of slender purse to receive the benefit of an excursion to these places. But do you know what makes us fairly overflow with gladness? It is the fact that we have quite a number of people who will not break the Fourth Commandment even to take advantage of low excursion rates. Like the only original Abou Ben Adhem, "may their tribe increase."

A SUGGESTION.

To do the best work in all departments the Sunday school, which is the church at work, should be as well equipped as any other part of religious work. Our attention has been called to the incompleteness of our Sunday school statistics. Upon reference to our Conference journal, we find that only a short, synoptical report is made—giving only the number of schools, teachers, scholars, and amount raised for the support of these schools. We think these reports should be more elaborate, and not only give the name of each school, but append to this report a directory of all the Sunday school superintendents in the bounds of the North Carolina Conference with the postoffice of each one. The expense attending this work would add very little to the cost of the Conference journal, and would be a great benefit to the Presiding Elders and preachers in charge, on the several stations and circuits, in letting them know who preside over the Sabbath schools in our Conference. Other denominations have adopted a plan of arranging a list of Sunday school superintendents, and they find it very convenient as reference. Why should not our church in North Carolina have as elaborate and perfect journals as any other church?

OUR CHURCH LITERATURE.

We hear of great complaint from the churches and Sunday schools in parts of the North Carolina Conference, on account of the great delay in getting the Sunday school and church literature from our Publishing House at Nashville. In this section of the State orders have been sent for school literature, and three weeks elapsed before the orders were filled. This should not be. If our Publishing House is so busy that the orders cannot be filled as soon as received, the committee or trustees who have the management of the Publishing House, should establish branch houses in the capital of each State, and furnish all the books and other stationery which the trade might demand. As it is there is great delay, and great cause for complaint, especially by Sunday schools in the seemingly unnecessary delay in filling the orders sent. We hope this matter will be attended to at the very earliest moment.

Sleepy Man's Speech.

IT HAD AN ELECTRIFYING EFFECT ON THE JURY AND BROUGHT A VERDICT FOR THE PLAINTIFF.

When newspaper writers in Washington are "shy" of good stories they have only to look into the career of Hon. George Vest, Senator from the great State of Missouri. There the fund of good material is apparently inexhaustible. Walter Wellman has been taking a turn at Vest, and finds a new story that is worth repeating.

The scene is located in Missouri, of course, and the preliminaries tell how Vest was employed by a man whose dog had been shot by a neighbor. Other eminent counsel attended to all the preliminaries of the fight, while Vest was there, his head sunk down between his shoulders, and apparently asleep. Finally his associate nudged him and told him that he must make the concluding speech. He demurred, but seeing he must do something to earn the fee which had been paid him, rose and after gazing earnestly at the jury for some minutes, began a speech of which this is a stenographic copy:

"Gentlemen of the Jury:—The best friend a man has in this world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name, may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has he may lose. It flies away with him, perhaps when he needs it most. A man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees to do us honor when success is with us may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads. The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that

never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog.

"Gentlemen of the jury," the Senator continued, "a man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he will be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces he is as constant in his love as the sun in his journey through the heavens. If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard against danger, to fight against his enemies, and when the last scene of all comes, and death takes the master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his graveside will be the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death."

What followed the veracious Wellman describes in this way:

"Then Vest sat down. This remarkable speech he had delivered in a low voice, without a gesture. No reference had he uttered about the evidence. When he finished judge and jury were seen to have tears in their eyes. The jury filed out and in a minute or two returned to the court room. The plaintiff had asked for \$200 damages. The verdict gave him \$500, and several of the jurymen wanted to hang the defendant."—*St. Louis Globe Democrat.*

Sorrow for Sin.

We are all sinners, but we do not all feel the force of the awful fact. When one is convinced that he is a sinner, and has a clear view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, he feels deeply the need of a divine Saviour. Sin is the worst thing in the world. It is far worse than any temporal calamity, physical disease, or mental infirmity. Poverty, leprosy, blindness and ignorance are not to be compared with sin; for these only touch the body and the intellectual faculties, while sin touches and tarnishes the very center of our being. Poets have exhausted the resources of art and imagination in their effort to portray sin in its effects on manhood and happiness, but they have not been able to do justice to the subject. The sacred writers, aided by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, have attempted to tell us something of the character and consequences of sin, but human language is not adequate to the task. Sin alienates the soul from God, despoils it of the adornment of innocence and virtue, and plunges it into the bottomless pit prepared for the devil and his angels. Sin is a blot on the soul so deep, so dark, so foul that nothing less than the blood of the only-begotten Son of God can wash the dismal stain away.

The man who sees sin in its true character is seized with a feeling of horror. Fear, remorse, shame, guilt and sorrow overwhelm his soul. In some cases the awakened sinner cannot so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but, smiting on his breast, he cries, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." On the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the gospel to a great multitude in Jerusalem, some of whom had participated in the murder of the Prince of Life, they were cut to the heart, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is not claimed that everyone must experience this deep sorrow and agony of spirit before he can become a Christian. Doubtless there are many good men, true and loyal to Christ, who never passed through this darkness. But it is perfectly natural and rational that a sinner should have this unhappy experience when the Spirit of God opens his eyes to the truth of his real state. It would be far better for many if they had some such experience. It is to be feared that many come into the church without any real sense of their sinful lives and hearts, and also without a deep desire to flee the wrath to come. It is probable that many professors of religion do not believe that there is any wrath to come. Much of the teaching of the Christian pulpit of this day tends to comfort men in their sins. It causes them to believe that sin is not a very serious thing, and that conversion is not absolutely necessary.