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VIII.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF PROFESSOR BRIGGS.

IN the year 1850, Dean Stanley published an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which he said that the Church of England was "by the very condition of its being neither High nor Low, but Broad." By this term he meant simply to denote the comprehensiveness of the Church as embracing all the different sides of spiritual truth. But the phrase soon came to be used as denoting a succession of teachers who differed alike from the Evangelical school of Simeon and Milner, and from the Anglo-Catholic revival known as Tractarianism, and were sometimes called Liberals. They did not form a school,* nor did they have any central rallying point, yet though each stood for himself alone, their combined influence gave a theological trend that was distinctly marked, and very far-reaching. It might not be easy to formulate Broad Church principles into a system, yet their general character can be easily inferred from the men who are usually considered to be the representatives of the tendency.

First among these is FREDERICK D. MAURICE (1805-1872), who, from a Unitarian, became a Churchman, and who, as chaplain and professor, exerted a wide influence, not only by his books which had a winning eloquence, but still more by his personal intercourse, which was particularly kind and gracious. There was a vagueness in many of his views which prevents one from classifying him with precision, yet the general character may be deduced from one position: "Every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is that he will not own the truth—he will not act as if it were true that except he were joined to Christ he could not think, breathe, live a single hour." No regeneration is required, for "man, as man, is the child of God. He does not need to become a child of God, he needs only to recognize the fact that he already is such." CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-1875), the well-known rector of Erushaw, was greatly influenced by Maurice. Although an earnest and most successful parish worker,

* In a volume just issued from the press, the Rev. H. R. Haweis says: "We are sometimes twitted with 'the Broad Church have no Party.' That is our glory and our strength. *Principles*, not *Parties*, should be written on the Broad Church banner. The love of truth belongs to no party; the study of history, is monopolized by no sect."

Kingsley never became well grounded in theology.* His great contention was that the world is God's world and not the devil's, and that manliness is compatible with godliness, but he urged these in such a way as to throw into the shade the divine majesty and justice, to emphasize Christ's example more than His sacrifice, and to give prominence to those things which led many to speak of him as advocating "muscular Christianity." His views were set forth in sermons, poems and novels, and became widely known. Different from these two, yet like them in general tendency, was F. W. ROBERTSON, of Brighton (1816-1853), who was trained in the strictest Evangelical school and yet gradually veered round, giving up one point after another till he reached the conclusion that the only sure thing was, "It is right to do right." He was a man of very bright mind, forcible speech, and a generous nature. He was able to illumine any subject he touched, to reach the profoundest depths of the spiritual life, and to set forth truth with the freshness of creative genius. But his abilities all tended to attract followers to his views of baptism and the atonement, and his advanced Liberalism. His admirable personal traits lent their attractiveness to his crude and shifting theology. Scarcely any of his sermons were published until after his death, but their circulation has been enormous, not only in Great Britain but throughout the English-speaking world, and nowhere more general and continuous than in our own country. Even more influential than he was the late DEAN STANLEY (1815-1885), remarkable for his mastery of English prose, his historic imagination, and the vivid pictures he drew of Biblical events and of the rise and growth of Christian institutions. His doctrinal views widely diverged from the consensus of Protestantism. He seems to have held only to a modal trinity. Infant baptism, instead of being a proof of depravity, was a recognition of the good in human nature; the atonement of Christ expressed merely His sublime self-sacrifice; the enthusiasm of humanity was substituted for the operations of the Holy Spirit; the eternity of future punishment was denied; and the love of God was urged as if it swallowed up His justice.

Now the opinions of these men and their followers were never organized into a system, nor did they constitute a school, but they created a trend or tendency which left its mark very distinctly upon the Anglican Church. There came to be an impatience of dogma, a disregard of traditional authority, an endeavor to omit or obscure the supernatural element of religion, a constant exaltation of the ethics of the Gospel at the expense of its doctrines, and a depreciation of all creeds as the remnants of a worn-out scholasticism or of exploded philosophies. These views gained a large following in England, and to some extent in the Episcopal Church in this country. They were widely circulated in volumes, essays, reviews, poetry and

* Only ten years before his death he was still seeking instruction from Maurice on such a fundamental truth as the Trinity.

fiction; and as they had a certain attraction in their profession of freeing the spirit from the bondage of the letter, of rescuing Scripture from the yoke of tradition, and of cherishing an enlarged spirit of comprehensiveness, they diffused themselves quite extensively in various communions. The degree to which they had spread in the Presbyterian Church was not suspected by any one until the question of revising the Standards was introduced. Then the discussions in many Presbyteries showed that the views of Broad Church theology had penetrated into unexpected quarters. One instance will suffice. The majority of a committee appointed by one Presbytery on the subject reported in favor of a revision, "in such form as to bring the Creed into more complete harmony with the Word of God, and likewise abreast of the spirit of the age, by eliminating from it the harsh, repellent, and un-Scriptural dogmas, as stated in the third chapter of the Confession, of God's predestination of all of the non-elect children of men to everlasting torments, and by substituting a declaration of God's abundant provision for the salvation of all men." The loose talk, the extravagant assertions of many of the participants in these discussions can be accounted for only by the spread of the so-called Broad Church movement, pervading the atmosphere and insensibly modifying the views even of those who had been trained under much sounder influences. The moral fibre of the soul became perceptibly weaker. The unchanging authority of the law, the dreadful guilt of sin and its tremendous penalty, and the absolute sovereignty of grace were kept in the background, while the universal fatherhood of God, the importance of character, the ethics of the Gospel, and especially its humanitarian side, were dwelt upon with emphasis.

These things have been apparent for some time, but it is only within the present year that the so-called Broad Churchism has manifested itself in the Chair of a Theological Seminary. The Inaugural Address of Prof. Briggs is a startling evidence of the degree to which the favorite speculations of the present age have affected the tone of theological education. The formal subject of the Address is The Authority of Holy Scripture, to which due homage is paid, but immediately we are told that there are three fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the Church and the Reason, and although it is nowhere said that these are equipollent, this is the plain implication of the whole discussion. Yet it ought to be stated that subsequently Dr. Briggs distinctly stated that he did not coördinate these sources as equal. Still he represents them as so many independent ways of finding God. Newman is cited as one who found God through the Church, Martineau as one who found Him "enthroned in his soul," and Spurgeon as one who built "his faith and life on the divine authority contained in the Scriptures;" and we are told that the average opinion of the Christian world would not assign the last mentioned a higher place in the kingdom of God than Martineau or Newman. That is to say, an Evangel-

ical believer, who has been the means of the conversion of very many thousands, is no more acceptable to God than a pervert to Romanism, or a pronounced Unitarian who denies the genuineness of all the New Testament save six of Paul's epistles, and rejects native depravity, the incarnation, vicarious redemption and Christ's second coming for judgment as the growth of a mythical literature. "Each in his own way found God and rested on divine authority." Has the learned Professor forgotten the assurance of James (ii. 19) in respect to the demons, that they also have found God, *i. e.*, "believe and shudder?" The novelty of Dr. Briggs' position is, we suppose, unquestionable, no accredited author among the Reformed having ever put the Scripture even apparently or inferentially upon the same plane with reason and the Church as a means of arriving at the knowledge of God. The reason, in its best form, being that of a fallen being, cannot possibly reach ultimate truth, or determine the existence of one or more persons in the Godhead, the possibility of the incarnation, or the fact or the method of the forgiveness of sin. And the Church being composed of imperfectly sanctified men cannot be a sufficient guide. It is, indeed, indefectible finally, the promise of God and the power of the Holy Ghost giving assurance that faith shall not utterly fail, but this is quite consistent with the fact that at times the great body of believers has gone very far astray, and that even now the Romanist and the Protestant sections differ widely on very important points. How, then, is it possible to put these three sources of authority on the same level? The answer suggested by the address is that religion consists in the recognition of God and dependence upon divine authority. On this basis comprehension is easy, only one wonders how Mohammed came to be excluded or omitted. The Koran is full of references to the divine Being, and everything is traced up to His will. Theism is the most pronounced feature of the Moslem faith, and if this entitles its sincere holders to a place in the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven, the false prophet and his followers cannot consistently be shut out. Indeed, it is not easy to see how any can be excluded save railing infidels or determined agnostics. Such liberalism, or comprehensiveness as it may be called, will, of course, find many admirers among the worldly-minded or unspiritual and among those whose religion is a philosophy, but it repels devout students of the Word. Charity is a lovely Christian grace, but its mantle may be stretched till it tears. A prophet of old pronounced a woe upon them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness (Is. v. 20).

But the author of the Address is not content with indirectly degrading the Bible by lowering its claims to an equality with the voice of reason and the Church, but proceeds directly to assail the Book and its authority. This is done with more ingenuity than ingenuousness by representing it as barricaded by formidable breastworks which "the scholastics and ecclesiastics of Protestantism" have

erected in order to keep men from access to the living waters, in this showing themselves faithful followers of the post-Biblical Jews who made a fence about the law, and so enclosed it with interpretations and applications that ultimately the commandments of men took its place. So successful have been these modern scholastics that the learner is required to force his way and "storm the barriers of ecclesiasticism." This sounds very formidable, but when we come to learn what these barriers are, we become suddenly enlightened. The first one is superstition in the form of Bibliolatry, a very singular charge to come from a professor of Biblical theology. The meaning of this accusation is not explained, for it can hardly be limited to the few who use the book as a kind of *Sortes Vergilianæ*. The reference must be to those who regard the Book as holy, because of its author, its contents and its character; but to denounce this as superstitious* is to use words without meaning. But how is this a barrier? All Protestants (save those whom Dr. Briggs represents) consider the Book to be holy, but at the same time insist upon the right and the duty of all men to search the Scriptures so that their faith may not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. All the rhetoric in the world cannot transform this position into a frowning battlement as repellant as the fortifications of Strasburg. Another "barrier" is the dogma of verbal inspiration. This dogma is generally held among the Reformed as contained in the utterance: "The Bible is God's Word written by man," the twofold authorship extending to every part of the volume. The human writers were so guided that what they wrote has infallible truth and divine authority. It is true that the Scripture faithfully translated into another language has a powerful voice, but this is because the primitive text bears so plainly the divine signature. Dr. Briggs says of the claim that the Scriptures are verbally inspired, that it "is not found in the Bible itself or in any of the creeds of Christendom." Yet by the confession of Dr. Ladd it "has doubtless been, on the whole, most generally prevalent" in the Christian Church; and it is certain that the advocates of plenary inspiration build more upon the assertions of the Word itself than upon any other ground. Take, for example, the utterance of the apostle (1 Cor. ii. 13): "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." But how does this come to be a barrier? Surely it is easier for a plain man to get the sense of Scripture if he holds it all to be simply the Word of God than if in each case he must "force his way through the language and the letter, the grammar and the style, to the inner

* Prof. H. B. Smith on this point was of a very different opinion. Hear him: "Light and life come from the ministry of the Word—its hallowed sayings are our stay when all other support fails; our rock amid the billows; the songs of our pilgrimage; the pledge of our final rest. Such implicit faith may be stigmatized as Bibliolatry; but where else can we go to find the words of eternal life? Bibliolatry clings to the letter; spirituality, in the letter, finds the spirit, and dares not disown the letter which guided to the spirit."

substance of the thought." It is Prof. Briggs who constructs a *chevaux-de-frise* around the Bible, and not the traditional Church view. The latter leaves things so plain that the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein, but the former requires men to approach the book with a catapult, if not a siege train.

A third "barrier" is found in the *authenticity of the Scriptures*. All the evidence on this point which has been carefully sifted and established by the toil of scholars in past centuries is scornfully scouted as "floating traditions," and the argument founded on it is held to be reasoning in a circle. But to what purpose is such empty rhetoric? According to the usual methods men are invited to determine the authenticity of the sacred writings just as they do that of any other ancient writings. No fence is erected around them, but the acknowledged principles of historical criticism are applied, and the result is satisfactory. Having ascertained that these writings are what they profess to be, the record of a divine revelation, faith rests upon the testimony of Him whom they disclose. But this does not satisfy Dr. Briggs. He says that the "Higher Criticism has forced its way into the Bible itself and brought us face to face with the holy contents, so that we may see and know whether they are divine or not;" or, as he elsewhere declares, it is by *divina fides* that we know the Bible to be the Word of God. But what a mighty barrier he thus erects across the path of sinful man! The only way for him to find out the truth about the Bible is to believe with a true faith what it says. And the author of this wretched sophism charges other folks with reasoning in a circle! The mystical, unsound and revolutionary character of Dr. Briggs' theory has been abundantly shown elsewhere.* It is enough to remark that in his effort to "remove obstructions that have barred the way of literary men from the Bible," he has put an impassable obstacle in their way, and shifted the authenticity of Scripture from its natural, reasonable and adequate basis to a vague mysticism, as unreal and flighty as any Phrygian Montanism. He tells us, moreover, that it is "the certain result of the Higher Criticism that a Moses did not write the Pentateuch," nor did Isaiah "half of the book that bears his name," nor Solomon the Song of Songs; and David wrote only a few of the Psalms. This is a fair specimen of the confident, not to say arrogant, tone that pervades the Address. Extremely questionable conclusions, resting upon tenuous arguments, and controverted by scholars as able as those who put them forth, are gravely announced as "certain."

The fourth "barrier" is Inerrancy. Dr. Briggs says that this claim drives men from the Bible, whereas, in fact, where it repels one it attracts a hundred. Men like something on which they can depend, whereas to tell them that "there are errors in Scripture that no one has been able to explain away," undermines confidence. How are they to distinguish the truth from the error? Under the pretext of

* Dr. McPheeters in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, January, 1891.

demolishing a barrier, Dr. Briggs has constructed one of very serious character. He puts a dangerous weapon into the hands of the adversaries of the Gospel. And that without any reason. He indeed says, "The Bible nowhere makes this claim;" but for ages the contrary has been the common opinion of believers. Our Lord said, "The Scripture cannot be broken;" and the Apostle Paul said, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16), where the connection plainly shows that the writer was referring to the entire Old Testament. This assertion, and the kindred one of the Apostle Peter (2 Pet. i. 21), and the method in which appeal is made by the writers of the New Testament to the authority of the Old, are wholly inconsistent with the Professor's views, which are wonderfully lax and vague. It is not easy to see how any old-fashioned believer can accept his theory for a moment. He would limit inspiration "to the essential contents of the Bible, to its religion, faith and morals," while all else is remitted to the category of "circumstantials." Has the Professor ever heard the maxim, *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*? Is it any more difficult to guard from error in historical or geographical details than it is in doctrines? And if it once be admitted that there are errors in the Bible, is it not open to any inquirer when confronted with a distinct Scripture utterance to insist that such utterance is one of the mistakes of the sacred penmen? No doubt Prof. Briggs would vehemently and sincerely deny the justice of any such course, but it is none the less certain that it would be taken, and that the faith of many in the divine Word would be utterly dissipated. It should be added here that Dr. Briggs distinctly affirmed to the directors of the Seminary his belief that "the Bible is inerrant in all matters concerning faith and practice, and in everything in which it is a revelation from God or a vehicle of divine truth, and that there are no errors which disturb its infallibility in these matters, or in its records of the historic events and institutions with which they are inseparably connected." Still the Address remains, and to all appearance is not retracted.

A fifth "barrier" imagined by the author is the claim that miracles violate the laws of nature, a claim which estranges men of science. But of late years this form of defining a miracle has been generally abandoned, and therefore the presenting of it now is an anachronism. Still it really appears as if the evidential value of miracles as immediate acts of divine power were surrendered by Dr. Briggs, who says that nothing would be lost could we explain the miracles of Jesus from His use of mind-cure, or hypnotism, or any other occult power. But this runs counter to the universal convictions of the race as expressed by Nicodemus, when he said to the Master, "No man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him;" and it sets aside the declaration of the Lord Jesus Himself, "though ye believe

not me, believe the works" (Jno. x. 38). The presence of the supernatural is the great fact in Scripture, and this is the gravamen of scientific unbelievers. Prof. Briggs is playing into their hands when he reduces mighty works to a category of nature, and makes them signs of loving purpose and tenderness and grace, but not of divine power. He destroys what has always been a buttress of the faith, and at a fearful cost gains a suffrage which, when thus gained, is of no account. It is the presence of God in nature and over nature to which unbelieving scientists object. To them, immediate, divine causation is a barrier, but it is one due, not to the invention of theologians, but to the will of God and the necessities of the case. Without this, religion is impossible, and revelation lacks its strongest support. Prof. Briggs may give it up, and suppose that he has obviated the difficulties of modern science, but still that which Peter said at Pentecost, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him," will stand forever as the expression of the testimony by which Jesus is accredited as the Son of God, the promised Saviour of men. Attacks upon the miracles from within the Church have often been made during the present century, but they have not succeeded in persuading the advocates of the truth to give up their evidential value. Nor will Prof. Briggs have any greater success.

The sixth and last "barrier" is found in the claim that prophecy is minutely fulfilled. Now, it is very true that many predictions have been wrongly interpreted, and that often a fulfillment has been supposed where it did not exist. But how few and feeble are these compared with the great body of foretellings which occur in Scripture in regard to the Messiah, the Jews, Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt and Tyre, etc., and which form a sure basis of faith? Dr. Briggs quotes from Kuenen some very strong, nay, extravagant, expressions in regard to the failure of prophecies, but says nothing in reference to the other and very different class we have just referred to. The whole passage leaves the painful impression that the author has yielded to the Broad Church notion that the predictive element in prophecy does not exist; that the Scripture seers were only men of elevated genius and quickened apprehensions; and that their utterances were simply a far-seeing forecast of what might in the ordinary course of Providence be expected to occur. We do not charge this upon Dr. Briggs, but only hold that what he says and what he omits to say are best accounted for on this supposition. But he finds space to refer at length to Jonah as a case of unfulfilled prophecy; yet on what possible ground can the embassy of Jonah be explained save upon the notion that he was the bearer of a conditional threat? One singular remark is that the last verse of the Book of Jonah contains a gospel "of heathen salvation, unnoticed save by Zwingli and a few Anabaptists and heretics" and Dr. Briggs. That is, because God sent a prophet to Nineveh, and upon the repentance of the people spared them, therefore He will spare the heathen

world to whom no prophet comes, and who, for that reason, do not repent. We submit that no book of logic contains a clearer example of *non sequitur*. Nor does such an example of Biblical theology warrant any high hopes of what is to come from the new chair established in Union Theological Seminary.

Having finished his discussion of "the barriers," the author, in the most amusing manner, represents himself as having cleared the way so that "no man hereafter may be kept from the Bible," and then proceeds to speak of two hosts, "one, the defenders of traditionalism, trembling for the ark of God; the other, the critics, a victorious army, determined to capture all its sacred treasures." The former he calls "self-constituted defenders," but is he not equally a self-constituted assailant? Does he hold a brief from heaven to attack and abuse what generation after generation of the godly have held dear and sacred? He claims that criticism has broken up a monopoly of the Word of God, so that now "it is open to all mankind without conditions." Was there ever a more preposterous assertion? What freedom exists now that did not exist a hundred years ago? It is true that Churches still require, nor is it likely that they will ever cease to require, their ministers and their theological professors to subscribe a specific creed; but no man is compelled to serve in either capacity. If he dislikes the creed he can refuse to accept the position, or having accepted he can resign. The one thing which he cannot do with any degree of honor or honesty is to hold the position and then attack the creed, to the defense of which it is committed. The adherents of the old views are not trembling for the ark of God, for they have seen that ark often captured by foes or betrayed by professed friends, yet in the end it was victorious; but they do tremble for the audacious men who, upon the pretext of removing humanly made obstacles, undermine the foundations of faith; they tremble for the young and unthinking who may be fatally misled by the pretensions so arrogantly and scornfully put forth. It is easy to sow doubt and suspicion of the authority of Scripture, but it is hard, very hard, to remove these noxious weeds from the soil where they have once taken root. The worst injury that can be done to any man is to impair his confidence in that Word which is a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. Just at this point begins a course which often leads to the utter wreck of the soul. Hence the alarm which Dr. Briggs' incautious utterances have created. They will go where no refutation will follow them, and will lead to results from which we are sure he himself would turn away in dismay and horror.

Part III of the Address is devoted to Biblical Theology, and begins with a very clever synopsis of the theophanies and institutions of the Old Testament. In treating of God we are told that Israel learned only by degrees that God was the God of all the earth, whereas this truth runs through the narrative from beginning to end, nor is anything more sophistical than the argumentation by which Kuenen

and others seek to show that ethical monotheism did not become dominant in Israel until the eighth century B.C. Dr. Briggs calls mercy "the favorite attribute of the Old Testament," but he does not prove it, nor can he. Justice is and must be just as dear to God as love. Any failure in either would argue imperfection. The author quotes passage after passage to show the divine mercy, but omits to quote the expressions of God's righteousness. He says, "the greatest of the theophanies granted to Moses was in order to reveal God as the gracious, compassionate, the long-suffering, abounding in mercy and faithfulness" (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7); but he omits to give the rest of the passage, which is essential to the full comprehension of its meaning, "And that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children." And so with his other Scripture references. In them or hard by them are equally strong statements of God's punitive rectitude. And yet, Dr. Briggs, after citing passages of only one class, goes on to berate men for not pursuing his superficial, one-sided course. It is a curious Biblical theology which takes no notice of God's manifestation of His character in the Deluge, the plagues of Egypt, the extermination of the Canaanites, the repeated overthrows of Jerusalem. We contend, despite all the Professor's warmth and eloquence, that the old theologians give a far more correct and Scriptural and winning account of God than he does. Like Queen Elizabeth, he would have the picture painted without shadow. It is the background of Jehovah's absolute righteousness on which alone can a true portrait be made of His tenderness and love. The Professor seems to think he has made a discovery, when really he has only been aping the partial and misleading statements that sciolists have been in the habit of making from the beginning. Neglecting to emphasize the divine holiness, he runs the fearful risk of degrading God's wondrous grace into mere good nature without any ethical element.

In treating of the Doctrine of Man, it is said that "Jew and Christian alike exaggerate the original innocency." What a monstrous assertion! We are told in Genesis that God created man in His own image, and then that he "saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." Can it be possible to exaggerate innocence so described? But the trouble with the Professor is that this view "conflicts with ethical and religious philosophy." Suppose it does; are we to surrender the plain statements of Scripture at the demand of philosophy? and is this the Biblical Theology which Union Seminary proposes to teach? In the pages that follow there is a very careless use of language. "Redemption," it is said, "comprehends the whole nature of man, his whole life and the entire race." There is a sense in which this is true, the sense, no doubt, held by the revered Henry B. Smith, whose words are quoted in a foot-note. Every member of the race is affected by the redemptive economy, and to every man to whom the Gospel comes its offers are sincerely

addressed. Nor does any theologian that we know of hold that only a minority of the race will be finally saved. The general opinion is that only a very small minority will be lost. But the language of the Address, being without limitation or qualification, seems to us well adapted to mislead. Under the next head we are told, as if it were a novelty, that redemption "comprehends the whole process of grace." We have yet to see any accredited system of theology among the Reformed that holds a different view. This is not the case with the next point the Professor makes, the extension of the process of redemption to the middle state. It is asserted with unspeakable hardihood that "progressive sanctification after death is the doctrine of the Bible and the Church" (p. 54). We assert, on the contrary, that there is not a word in all Scripture in favor of this view, but much against it. And it is directly in the face of the Confession of Faith (xxxii. 1), which says that at death the souls of the righteous are "made perfect in holiness." Nearly all Protestants agree that there is a private judgment after death, and to the believer an immediate and transforming vision of Christ, but Dr. Briggs tells us that these are "conceits derived from the ethnic religions," which is certainly not the case. The truth is that they seem inconsistent with his philosophy, and therefore are surrendered. That these views "cut the nerves of Christian activity, and striving after sanctification" is a grievous misstatement, one that is contradicted by all the experience of saints for many generations. In the concluding article of this part, Dr. Briggs teaches election, but an election of love (does anybody teach an election of hate?); and distinctly affirms that some will be unredeemed and lost, but assigns as one of the causes of this fact, their "descending into such depths of demoniacal depravity in the middle state,"—from which it would seem that their case is not decided in this world, but, in part at least, depends upon what they do between death and judgment, which is so near the doctrine of a second probation (which the Professor distinctly disavows) that the words should not have been written. Indeed, this is a just complaint against the whole inaugural, that it skirts the dividing line between truth and error so nearly, that often it is difficult to see just where the author stands and how his words are to be understood.

The Address begins the statement of Biblical Ethics by calling it "the fruitage of theology, the test of all the rest," which is certainly a novelty, though it agrees with the Broad Church character of the author's other notions. He thinks the people of Israel have been depreciated as remarkable for unfaithfulness and apostasy, while he maintains that they were "faithful in the main, ever advancing," herein differing from the protomartyr Stephen, who said to the representatives of the nation, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts vii. 51). But the most singular thing in this part

of the Address is the agreement with the erratic Count Tolstoi in taking literally the precepts given in the Sermon on the Mount. All sane interpreters of all schools, from the beginning, concur in the opinion that Christ's words must be interpreted by common sense and His own conduct (John xviii. 22) and that of Paul (Acts xxiii. 3), but Dr. Briggs says that "we bury the sublime ideal in a fictitious and temporary explanation." Then, of course, all war, all resistance of violence, all refusal to give or lend whatever is asked, is sinful, and society is reduced to chaos. What are we to think of such a travesty of our Lord's teaching? In regard to the Messiah, Dr. Briggs says that very much is yet to be learned, since His descent *ad Inferos*, His resurrection, enthronement, reign of grace and second advent have been "neglected." One might well ask what has been the extent of the Professor's reading that he makes such a charge. But he encourages us with the thought of the new light that is to break forth upon the Christian world under "the inductive study of the Word," such light as is to make all past attainments of the Church seem "a small theology." The toil of eighteen centuries, the labors of the Fathers, the Schoolmen and the Reformers, the results of long controversies, the creeds born in the fires of persecution, all, all are to be eclipsed by the illumination that comes from the new method set forth in this Address. Persons who have seen two generations pass away may be excused for recalling similar high-sounding promises accompanied by a great flourish of trumpets, which, however, ended in shame and confusion of face.

The Address concludes with some remarks upon the Harmony of the Sources of Divine Authority, Reason, the Church and the Bible. These, he insists, if we take away human conceits and follies, are always have been and always will be, harmonious. All are needful, and none can be safely ignored. Yet, according to the Professor's own examples given in the opening of his Address, the harmony is secured only by the sacrifice of very important truth. Mr. Spurgeon may be taken as a representative of what is called the Evangelical school, but Cardinal Newman, who regarded the Church as the seat of authority, rejected what Mr. Spurgeon considered as the heart of his system, while Dr. Martineau, following what he supposed to be the guidance of Reason, denounced what both the others held to be vital. This surely does not look like that happy reconciliation on the threshold of which Prof. Briggs thinks that we are. Nor is it reasonable to expect it. Of course every intelligent believer feels quite sure that his faith is entirely rational, but this is quite a different proposition from one that affirms that the human Reason, "trained and strained to the uttermost, and rising to the height of its energies," can of itself reach ultimate and fundamental truth in religion. If it could, where would be the need for a revelation? Or, are we, in the face of the Church of all ages, to confound the distinction between natural religion and revealed, and maintain, with one of the early English deists, that the Gospel is simply a republication of the Law of Nature? Dr. Briggs

says that he "rejoices at the age of Rationalism," which is very singular language in the mouth of a Christian teacher, for Rationalism is always understood to stand opposed to Supernaturalism, and to deny the essential facts of the Christian faith. He would doubtless say that he intends by the term only the sober, careful use of reason in its appropriate sphere. But this is not what many readers would get from his language, and that he should allow himself to speak in such ambiguous terms is a serious drawback upon his claims as a religious teacher.

No one who has any personal acquaintance with the author of this Inaugural Address will for one moment doubt his entire sincerity and good faith. He firmly believes in the truth of the positions he has laid down and in their entire harmony with the Westminster Standards. Where others see a wide chasm between his views and that of the Confession or Catechisms he sees none at all, and expresses himself accordingly. Nor is this greatly to be wondered at. It is not uncommon for men in any branch of science to fix their gaze so earnestly upon one side of a truth as to forget that there is any other. This occurs with especial frequency in cases where the matter in hand is theological, where there is an unusually wide range of thought and inquiry. The Professor thinks he has been called to perform a sort of iconoclastic work, cutting down everything that is dead and harmful, and removing every incumbrance out of the way for a new life. But he has said nothing that has not been said before, only in previous cases it was said by those who stand outside the evangelical pale. He has simply fallen a prey to the *Zeitgeist*. He has been borne along by the tide which has been steadily rising for half a century. He has yielded to the movement which seeks to relax the demands of the Christian faith, to do away the offense of the cross and to win men by paring off the sharp points of dogma. Standing inside the Church and holding a prominent position in a seminary of high character, he has borrowed the thoughts and the language of known errorists, and made a great stir by reproducing them after a fashion of his own. They are paraded as the result of a fresh and independent study of the divine Word, from which great things are justly to be expected.

Now it is very true that the Scriptures are inexhaustible and that every generation will draw fresh streams from this overflowing fountain, but surely it is presumption to expect "a different conception in every department of theology" from the inductive studies carried on at the end of the nineteenth century. Have the toils of all the students of past ages been so fruitless? Has God given over his Church to be the sport of caprice? Has nothing been settled during eighteen centuries? Is the amazing consensus of the Churches of the Reformation to be counted for naught? But in truth, as has been said, the Professor has discovered nothing. What he considers new truths are simply old errors. The only real novelty is his fiction of progressive sanctification in the middle state, which is by no means

to be interpreted as meaning what all believers have held from the beginning, that is, the constant growth of the soul into the likeness of its Maker, a process which has and can have no end either before or after the final consummation. What the Professor says and means is the prolongation beyond the grave of the efforts and struggles and pains by which the soul here wages the spiritual conflict, seeking day by day to die unto sin and live unto holiness, it being "unethical" to suppose that this conflict can be ended at once as soon as the soul leaves the body. This is a new doctrine, the only parallel to which can be found in the Purgatory of the Greek and Roman Churches, the underlying basis of which is that as some men when they die are not good enough to go to heaven and yet not bad enough to be sent to perdition, they enter an intermediate stage in which they may gradually, by the use of various means, be freed from the soil and dominion of sin, and made meet for the society of the blessed. It is a very thin partition that divides the doctrine of progressive sanctification in the middle state from the doctrine of Purgatorial preparation for heaven. The curious idea is advanced that the doctrine that the soul's destiny is decided at death "makes death a terror to the best of men." It was not so with Stephen (Acts vii. 59), nor with Paul (Phil. i. 23, 2 Cor. v. 8), nor do we find a hint of the kind in any Christian biography. On the contrary, the great comfort of the believer in the article of death is the thought that the days of mourning, struggle, temptation and weakness are over, that he has finished his course and fought the good fight to the end, and what remains is the joyful vision of Christ and His ever-blessed companionship. The felicitations, therefore, with which the Address closes, upon the prospect of a new and better age about to come upon us are wholly misplaced.

The foregoing is all based upon the printed Address of Prof. Briggs and the Additional Notes appended to the second edition. These have passed into history and will stand as the carefully prepared and deliberate opinions of the author. As such they are here reviewed, without passion but with deep interest, because of the importance of the subject. For it is claimed on one side that the reception of them is indispensable to the advance of theology, while we on the other hold them to be very perilous to evangelical truth. As to any later expression of views on the part of the Professor we have nothing to say. The proper authorities will decide what is to be done in the case. Our concern is only with the formal utterance of Broad Church principles in one of the high places of an orthodox Church. This ought not to pass without comment. The duty of Christian rebuke is imperative, however unpleasant. Hence we have done what in us lies to hinder any from "being carried away by divers and strange teachings."

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS.



