

THE LOWER CRITICISM OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT AS A PREPARATION FOR  
THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

Inaugural Address of the  
Rev. Robert Dick Wilson, Ph.D., D.D.,  
as Professor of Semitic Philology and  
Old Testament Criticism.

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INAUGURATION

OF

THE REV. PROFESSOR ROBERT DICK WILSON,  
PH.D., D.D.,

AS

PROFESSOR OF  
SEMITIC PHILOLOGY AND OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

IN

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 21, 1900

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE REV. ROBERT DICK WILSON, PH.D., D.D., was elected Professor of Semitic Philology and Biblical Criticism in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, New Jersey, at the Spring meeting of the Board of Directors, May 7, 1900. He was formally inducted into his chair on Friday, September 21, 1900, at 11 A. M. The order of exercises on this occasion was as follows, the Rev. George D. Baker, D.D., Vice-President of the Board of Directors, presiding:

### OPENING HYMN (St. Anne)

How glorious art thou, O our God!  
'Tis Thou and Thou alone  
Who dwellest in Thy people's praise,  
On Thine eternal throne.

From Charran and Chaldean Ur,  
The River's banks along,  
From Canaan's heights and Egypt's sands,  
Arose the constant song,—

From all the towns that stud the hills  
Of teeming Galilee,  
From marts of Greece and misty lands  
Beyond the Western Sea.

How many voices, diff'ring tongues,  
Harmonious, join to raise  
To Thee, O Rock of Israel,  
Accumulated praise!

Fain would we catch the accents strange,  
Fain train our ears to hear  
The notes that hymn Thee, through the years,  
O Israel's Hope and Fear!

'Twas thou didst teach thy sons of old  
Thy varied laud to sing,  
School Thou our hearts that we may too  
Our hallelujahs bring.

How glorious art Thou, O our God!  
How mighty past compare!  
Thou dwellest in Thy people's praise,—  
Accept the praise we bear.

*B. B. Warfield, D.D., LL.D.*

*Prefatory Note.*

## SCRIPTURAL READING

THE REV. GEORGE D. BAKER, D.D.

## PRAYER

THE REV. SAMUEL T. LOWRIE, D.D.

## SUBSCRIPTION TO THE PLEDGE BY THE PROFESSOR ELECT

## THE CHARGE TO THE PROFESSOR

THE REV. MARCUS A. BROWNSON, D.D.

## THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

*"The Lower Criticism of the Old Testament as a Preparation for the Higher Criticism."*

THE REV. PROFESSOR ROBERT DICK WILSON, Ph.D., D.D.

## CLOSING HYMN (Austrian Hymn)

Glory to Thee, Lord of Glory, for Thy saints at rest above,  
 Where the sky of heaven o'erarches heaven's great Paradise of love ;  
 There the Blessed reign and serve Thee, praise Thee all the eternal day,  
 Thee beholding in Thy beauty in that country far away.

Praise to Thee for all who trust Thee, through the night of toil and loss,  
 All who live, themselves denying, carrying every day the cross,  
 All the great Vine's genial branches, rich and living in their Root,  
 Bearing in the alien desert heavenly Eden's clustered fruit.

Praise to Thee for acts and sufferings ; for the conquests of the strong,  
 Youthful ardor, veteran courage, marching forward far and long ;  
 Praise to Thee in all for all things ; Thou art working all in all ;  
 Filled with Thee the faint are mighty, void of Thee the mighty fall.

All the grace of all Thy people, all their triumph in the strife,—  
 'Tis but Thou Redeemer, in them, moving in Thy glorious life :  
 Sing we till our praises mingle with the song before the throne,  
 Glory to the Lord of Glory for Himself in men made known.

*Handley C. G. Moule, D.D.*

## INTIMATIONS AND NOTICES

PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY

## DOXOLOGY AND BENEDICTION

PRAYER

BY

THE REV. SAMUEL T. LOWRIE, D.D.





## PRAYER.

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O Lord God, our hearts rejoice in Thee, because we rejoice in Thy salvation. For Thou art holy; for there is none beside Thee, neither is there any rock like our God. Thou art a God of knowledge, and by Thee actions are weighed. Thou makest poor and makest rich; Thou bringest low and liftest up; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them. Thou wilt keep the feet of Thy saints; for by strength shall no man prevail.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people, and hath raised up salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began. Thou hast remembered Thy holy covenant, to give knowledge of salvation unto Thy people in the remission of their sins; because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high shall visit us, to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet in the way of peace. Now unto the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only God, be honor and glory to ages of ages.

We supplicate, O God, on behalf of this Theological Seminary, that in everything it may be enriched in every word and in all knowledge in Christ Jesus, so as to come behind in no gift, and that while we wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it may be confirmed by Him unto the end. Let the spirit of the Lord be here as liberty, that all who come to be made sufficient ministers of the new covenant of the Spirit that giveth light, may,

with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, be transformed into the same image from glory to glory. Thou that saidst: Light shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

O God, who hast given unto us the sure word of prophecy that came by men who spake from God being moved by the Holy Ghost, cause the Directors of this Seminary to take heed thereto, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn and day star arise in our hearts. Make them diligent to have these things at every time called to remembrance, and enable them to set as teachers in this school of prophets men that have renounced the hidden things of shame, and that walk not in craftiness, nor handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

On behalf of the Professors and Instructors, we beseech Thee, O God, that as they have received the word, so Thou wouldst cause them to continue stedfastly in the apostles' teaching, and in fellowship and prayers. Cause them to know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth: and make them able teachers of the same, that the ministers trained by them may be men that strive not about words to the subverting of them that hear, but present themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, handling aright the word of God.

We beseech Thee, O God, for him who at this time is to be separated unto teaching the gospel of God, which Thou promisedst afore through the prophets in the Holy Scripture concerning Thy Son, who was born of the seed of David, who was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrec-

tion of the dead. Grant that when handling this word of prophecy he may not be ashamed of the gospel, but may set it forth as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And because at this time there are many teachers who are foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken, may the spirit of Christ, beginning from Moses and all the prophets, interpret to him in all the Old Testament scriptures the things concerning Christ. Make him able to teach the rising ministry that what was there written was written for their learning, that through comfort of the Scriptures they might have hope.

Be pleased, O God, to cause the whole body of students of divinity in this Seminary, and all that succeed them, to be of the same mind one with another according to Jesus Christ, that they may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Have mercy upon us according to Thy loving kindness, and forgive all our iniquities. Help us at this time to worship Thee acceptably. Approve and bless what we now do in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we would give all the glory, now and forever. Amen.



THE CHARGE

BY

THE REV. MARCUS A. BROWNSON, D.D.



## CHARGE.

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MY DEAR BROTHER:

Representing the Board of Directors of the Seminary, I am to speak a few words to you as a charge, upon your inauguration to the Chair of SEMITIC PHILOLOGY and OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM. How gladly I do this, you know full well. Our close fellowship during our student days, in another School of the Prophets, amid scenes too sweet and too sacred ever to be forgotten or set aside, causes me, at this hour, to rejoice greatly in the new honor which has come to you.

The Old Testament Scriptures, and the languages and the literatures throwing light upon the interpretation of them, have been your earnest, eager study, from the time of your entrance upon your Seminary course, on through your postgraduate course, and study abroad, and in your work as an Instructor and a Professor in your Theological *Alma Mater*, at Allegheny.

It is a congenial task to which you have been summoned here, and one for which, in the judgment of the Board of Directors, you have made particular and plenary preparation. The directors also feel assured that, in you, they shall have a teacher of the Old Testament whose criticism of the Scriptures will be unreservedly reverent, howsoever scrutinizing, and that all your research and teaching will be from the view-point of absolute and unconditional belief in the full and perfect inspiration of the entire Scriptures, and of a cordial and continuing acceptance of that system of faith and practice set forth in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Form of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church

in the United States of America. With these gratifying assurances, and with gladness and hope, they have committed this sacred trust to your hands.

I shall not presume to offer specific suggestions to you, concerning the method of your work in the classroom, or the measure of contributions to the literature of your department of theological thought which you may send forth from your pen. Your record as a Professor gives abundant hope of efficiency in instruction and of proficiency in production to enrich current theological literature. But I do desire to emphasize, and to charge you to keep ever before your mind in your work, the fundamental, and at the same time the ultimate, ideas of a Theological Seminary, the controlling conceptions of what a Theological Seminary—this Theological Seminary—really is, and to remind you what the Church expects of her theological teachers.

To many minds, a *Theological Seminary is a citadel for the defence of Bible truth*; and, in this view, Theological Professors are, for the most part, to give their time and efforts to the exegetical, historical, metaphysical, logical exposition and maintenance of the system of truth revealed in the Scriptures and illustrated in the development of the Church, and embodied in her creeds and confessions, in order that they may defend the truth of God revealed, *by sending forth defenders*, fully equipped to disarm and destroy error, thoroughly qualified to beat back each new attack upon what God hath given into the sacred keeping of His Church for the benefit of the world. This is certainly a true conception of what a Theological Seminary is, or ought to be. Full knowledge, exact information, perfect understanding of truth revealed and of error devised, so far as it is possible to know truth and error, are necessary to the intellectual furnishing of men who are to



speak officially of things divine. In our time, more than in any time preceding, ample scholarship is a prime requirement of the pulpit. The remark is too trite to be elaborated. Yet this must not be forgotten—that the man who preaches to intelligent people must *know*, must *know more* than his people know; must be able to enlarge, correct, clarify their knowledge of that which is spiritual and ethical. Makers of ministers must, therefore, give to their pupils, or, at the least, must show them where to find, and how to find, the knowledge that is the defence of the truth which they will declare. Teachers must awaken within their students the enthusiasm of scholarship, the intense thirst, the craving hunger for Biblical, spiritual knowledge which will require life-long portions of scholarly acquisitions to satisfy. Acquiring minds can best defend assured beliefs.

No Church in Christendom has made so much of Christian scholarship as our own, and none welcomes actual truth more gladly, and is more eager to have her coming ministry fully furnished with all known and knowable facts and doctrines written in the errorless Scriptures, or clearly deducible therefrom. Nor does any other branch of the Church of Christ desire her theological teachers, who are experts in doctrine—Superior Judges in the trial of theories and opinions concerning religious truth—; nor does any other branch of the Church of Christ desire her theological teachers to have larger liberty of investigation.

The Church, indeed, defines liberty. Liberty is the privilege to do what is right to be done—to teach what is known to be true. Liberty has its controlling laws. Great as is the human mind, and free as it undoubtedly is, it is not great enough, nor can it claim a freedom so irresponsible, to think or pronounce imperfect what God has declared to be “true and righteous altogether.”

Belief in a defective Bible is no part of intellectual freedom. And in the oft-uttered and strongly-emphasized declaration that the Bible, freed from the errors of transcribers and translators, and as it came from God, is without error, no restraint is put on reverent scholarship. It is not necessary to talk boastfully of "the faith that cannot be put into creeds," or of "the word of God behind the Bible," in order to assert one's independence of mind. Scholarship, the profoundest, the loftiest, the widest, the ripest, causing all languages and literatures, all precepts and principles, all faiths and philosophies, to pay tribute to the Lord God of truth and righteousness, is welcome in the Theological Schools of our Church.

Your own branch of theological science illustrates the regard of the Church for scholarship. So important is the study of the Old Testament, and of all that can throw light upon its contents, that two professors and one instructor, in this Seminary, are to continue to give their entire time to this subject. The division of the department into two chairs will be maintained.

No nobler scholars can be pointed out, in the history of the Christian Church of America, than those men of God who have preceded you, and your closest associate of the Faculty, in the Old Testament Department. The traditions of the Old Testament Department of this Seminary are without parallel in any Theological School of our land. Professor Davis has recently shown how Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander, with thirty languages at his command, created the Department of Oriental and Biblical Literature, and gave to it an international reputation; and how Dr. Green, in his "Unity of Genesis," gave the final answer, from a literary point of view, to the divisive criticism of the Pentateuch; and how, also, to him belongs the distinguished honor of having vindicated the scholarliness of conservative higher criticism that

believes the Bible to be absolutely and without qualification the veritable Word of God; and how, "more than any man's, during this last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, it was his to rally, steady and inspirit the Church under the shock of a sudden and mighty assault upon the trustworthiness of the Scriptures."

Such traditions must ever shape the study and influence the teaching of those who follow scholars so illustrious, and carry forward the great tasks begun by them, but limited in execution by the limitations of human life.

You will bring to bear upon the exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures your linguistic, achæological, historical, literary attainments. But the Scriptures will be the centre and source of your scholarly teaching.

You will ever see, and make your pupils see,

"A glory gild the sacred page  
Majestic as the sun."

It will be the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and the Bible is the double mirror that, to the seeing eye and to the face unveiled, reflects the form of the Redeemer. "We all with unveiled face *beholding* as in a mirror the glory of the Lord." This is the older and closer rendering of Paul's famous words, and the mirror, as the context teaches, is the Pentateuch, and "the Gospel of the Glory"—the older and the later Scriptures.

You doubtless remember with interest the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome, and the beautiful Aurora, painted upon the ceiling of its principal room, by Guido Reni. It would be difficult, wellnigh impossible, to see the full beauty of the picture without the aid of the mirror which brings it down before the eye in an easy and natural posture. But, with the mirror, one can see, at his leisure, and can examine minutely, the beautiful Apollo in his car of gold, drawn by his prancing steeds, and attended by

the shining hours, as the god of the day enters the eastern gate, flung open by Aurora's hand, to fill and flood the earth with sunshine, and to gild and redden the clouds of the morning, letting the glory of the celestial country in upon the land where mortals dwell.

So the mirror of the Scriptures, in the double picture by prediction and by history, to Spirit-taught souls, brings the glory of the Christ of God before our eyes, and we readily see what could not otherwise be seen—the image of the invisible God—not a reflection of a shadowy Christ, with genial and idyllic beauty, apt to fade away with changing moods of mind and in altered experiences of life; but the eternal Christ, “the same yesterday, to-day and forever.” And Him we see as often as we take the Book and the Spirit opens the seals thereof.

Whatever light, by means of your learning, may fall upon the mirror of the Scriptures, will be of inestimable value to your students and to all others to whom they in time shall preach.

*There is another conception of a Theological Seminary, equally important.* This is not exclusive of the one already named, but part and parcel of it. A Theological Seminary is a *School of Preachers* whose work shall largely be the popular and persuasive presentation of the Gospel, for acceptance—a *School of Pastors* whose work shall largely be ministering to sorrowful, darkened and sinful souls.

From this point of view, the makers of ministers must ever keep in mind the ultimate object and the use to be made of the instruction which they give to their students. The great majority of their students will preach and do the work of the pastor. Perhaps one in fifty, or one in a hundred, will become a technical scholar.

Seminary lectures should furnish the students with *preachable knowledge*. At least, side hints should be thrown out concerning the practical bearing of all theological truth and the use to be made of it in the pulpit. It is not the function of the Homiletic Chair alone to train *the preacher*—although it is the principal function of that Chair. The eight Chairs of the Seminary, and the adjunct instruction also, must all promote the training of *preachers*. Not seven-eighths of the teaching force for scholarship, pure and simple, and one-eighth for preaching, but scholarly preaching the aim of the one-eighth and the seven-eighths of the teaching force—this is the true conception. Scholarly students often stumble about, for a considerable time in post-seminary years, never having learned how to preach what they have acquired. Perhaps this is most largely due to the make-up of their own minds, but some unmaking of the man must be done before the true making of the minister can be accomplished, and every part of the man's mind must be touched and influenced during his student days. All his learning should fashion his mind toward his distinctive work, so that there will be no loss of truth as it flows through the channel of his thoughts and utterances to other minds. Masters in Biblical knowledge must help beginners toward the best use of what they acquire in the classroom and in the study. A few simple suggestions concerning the part a particular piece of prophecy, or bit of history, a doctrine, a fact, may have in a sermon, will give immense interest to the knowledge that has been, or is about to be, imparted from the professor's chair. Scholarship can well afford to pause for a moment's thought concerning practical good to be accomplished.

No Chair, save the Homiletic, is more closely related to the preacher's immediate work than the two Old

Testament Chairs. The prophetic office was essentially pulpit ministration. Not from Apostolic days only, but from Prophetic days—and from the earliest of Prophetic days—“it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” The Church needs, and the world desires, more than ever before, scholarly preachers. Scholarship consecrated to God’s service, and anointed with heavenly unction, is the strength of the pulpit. But the scholarship of a preacher that does not put power into his *preaching* is, comparatively, of little practical use to the great Master of men.

The Princeton professor will influence and mould the public most largely through Princeton preachers.

I am sure I do not overstate the importance of this conception of the work of the entire Theological Faculty. The design of the Seminary is published each year in the annual catalogue. And in this design and aim of the Seminary, as every one familiar with it knows full well, the preacher’s actual work is made preëminent by *strong statement, full expression, repetition, and the use of italics.*

*A third idea is also to be cherished.*

Scholarship, — scholarship undergirding and equipping *the preacher* for his work,—is impotent to accomplish spiritual ends without the *touch of Divine power.* The Theological Professor must seek to bring his students into harmony with the mind of the Spirit, and into complete surrender to the service of the Lord and Master. Influence by character, example, prayer or exhortation is often the mightiest power that goes forth from professor to student. And when the man of learning humbly acknowledges his entire dependence, for the understanding of heavenly mysteries, and for the ability to do the will of God, upon the promised and bestowed help of the Spirit of God, he impresses his students with the



necessity for their constant contact with the source of all spiritual knowledge and all spiritual power, as this essential, vital relation could not otherwise be set forth.

In that most beautiful building of our Country, containing a vast multitude of treasures of world-wide and age-long learning—the Library of Congress at Washington—the entire scheme of interior decoration, which is so elaborate, culminates in the rotunda and in the ceiling of the lantern of the lofty dome. Below the lantern, the collar of the dome is decorated with twelve colossal figures representing the twelve countries which have contributed most to the development of our present day civilization—Egypt typifying Written Records; Judea, Religion; Greece, Philosophy; Rome, Administration; Islam, Physics; The Middle Ages, Modern Languages; Italy, the Fine Arts; Germany, the Art of Printing; Spain, Discovery; England, Literature; France, Emancipation; and America, Science. The ceiling of the lantern is sky and air, against which, as a background, floats a beautiful female figure, representing the Human Understanding, lifting her veil and looking upward, beyond all the books beneath, away from all the intellectual accomplishments of the race, to the infinite, the eternal world, whence all true enlightenment must come. It is a confession in art that learning and labor, with all their marvellous achievements, have not satisfied, and cannot satisfy, the immortal spirit of man, still eager to know, to attain.

Is not this the very confession that the servant of the Lord humbly and gladly makes at the beginning of his work? And will it not be, with this thought uppermost in your mind and most deeply written in your heart, that you will assume the sacred task committed to your hands, to-day? Ever acknowledging your dependence upon the God of truth, you will, by precept and

example, teach your students steadfastly to seek the same sure source of that wisdom which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance and without hypocrisy," because it is "*the wisdom from above.*"

May the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost be upon you, in body, soul and spirit, and may your work for your Lord and Master, and for His Holy Church, stand the test both of this present time and of eternity!



THE LOWER CRITICISM OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT AS A PREPARATION FOR  
THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

THE REV. ROBERT DICK WILSON, PH.D., D.D.



## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Let me thank you for the great honor which you have conferred upon me in calling me to take a part in the succession to the labors of those illustrious men who, in their day, made the name of Princeton known and revered throughout the world, and whose memory still is blessed. May the portion of their mantle which has fallen upon me, cause me to be filled with the same spirit which was in them, and make me worthy of a place among my learned and distinguished confrères in the present faculty of this mother of Presbyterian Seminaries.

It gives me especial pleasure and comfort, in leaving a city which for nearly a quarter of a century has been my home, to see among you here so many of the old familiar faces of those who in College and Seminary were my professors or fellow students, and to receive a charge from one whom I have always deemed one of the dearest of my Seminary friends.

Will you pardon me for expressing the hope that those of you who have known me for so many years and yet have esteemed me fitted for this place, may never be disappointed in your choice.

Before discussing the subject which I have chosen for my inaugural address, a few definitions may be necessary. By Lower Criticism I mean grammar, lexicography and textual criticism; by Higher Criticism, any literary criticism of the text or any systematic statements of truth, which may be derived from the purest possible

text, in strict accordance with the rules of grammar and the most probable results of lexicography. Following these definitions, we restate the theme of our discourse as follows: A thorough knowledge of the principles of grammar, lexicography and textual criticism is necessary as a preparation for the critical study of the Scriptures along any line of thought, literary, historical or theological.

Before passing to the discussion of our subject, let us remark that the three branches of Lower Criticism are not mutually exclusive nor logically distinct. Indeed, there is a sense in which both lexicography and textual criticism may be looked upon as parts of grammar, while on the other hand, no part of grammar or lexicography can be considered without reference to the criticism of the text.

After these preliminary remarks by way of definition and limitation, I proceed to the discussion of the kind and amount of lower criticism which are demanded by the times, and which it shall be the endeavor of the incumbent of the Chair of Semitic Philology and Old Testament Criticism to impart. The first department of Lower Criticism is that which is commonly called grammar. For convenience of treatment Hebrew Grammar may be divided into three parts, Phonics, Graphics and Morphics, or sounds, signs and forms. The study of sounds, in their relation to Higher Criticism, is important only because of its bearing upon the derivation and the variations of the forms of words, and upon the errors of text arising from the confusion of consonants of similar sound. The study of Graphics, especially in MSS. and in palaeography, is necessary in order to understand the transmission of the text, and in particular the variations arising from mistakes in reading letters which, at some time, have been similar in form. And when we come to the first part of Morphics, which is commonly called etymology, it is not sufficient to study the forms

of words as they are embodied in the traditional punctuation of the Massorettes. The origin of the sounds back of the written forms, the inflection and meaning of the forms, the ability to change forms in accordance with the demands of exegesis, this must be thoroughly learned before one is prepared to advance with steady tread by the paths of syntax and textual criticism to the higher regions of history, theology and literary criticism. But if the origin, inflection and meaning of single words is indispensable, what shall we say of the more complex forms of syntax? You will agree with me, that this is one of the most difficult tasks in the learning of any language. You will agree with me, further, in my belief that no part of a theological education was formerly more neglected than the study of Hebrew Syntax. In fact, it was scarcely taught at all in our theological seminaries a generation ago. If you will look at an old Hebrew grammar, you will find that very little space is given to it. One was expected to know it by intuition, or to pick it up. The advance in the importance attributed to a special knowledge of Hebrew syntax, may be gauged by comparing the different editions of Gesenius' Grammar which have appeared in the last fifty years, or the translation of Conant with the last editions of the English version of Kautzsch's Gesenius. We are convinced that the reason why so many of our ministers have neglected the independent exegesis of the Old Testament, has been that they were ignorant of syntax. Certainly no one acquainted with the subject would suppose for an instant that a knowledge of that difficult and varied instrument for the expression of thought, the Semitic verb, could be gained otherwise than by thorough and protracted study. The Hebrew imperfect is as varied in its usage as the Greek Aorist, the Hebrew genitive and article as the Greek, and the exegete who

attempts to expound the Old Testament, without being master of these, is just as insensible to the requirements of the case as is he who would try in like ignorance to expound the Greek of the New.

The second division of Lower Criticism is lexicography, the science or art of determining the meaning of words. By most students of the Old Testament, this department of research is given over entirely to the dictionary makers. What appears in a standard current dictionary is considered final and decisive. I remember that when I was in the Seminary two great theologians carried on an important discussion, which depended upon the meaning of a single word, and neither of them thought it necessary to appeal to other authorities than the English edition of Gesenius. Who was Gesenius, that our Presbyterian ministers and professors should appeal to his dictionary as the final court in linguistic matters? Should a rationalist of his type, whose opinions in Higher Criticism would be rejected as untenable, shall the work of such a man be accepted as the standard in the field of lexicography? Do a man's views of God not enter into his definition of miracles and prophecy and holiness and sin? Those of you who are conversant with Gesenius' dictionary will remember the frequently recurring note: See my Commentary on Isaiah, in loco; and there we find the discussion of the reasons for defining the word as it is given in the dictionary. In short, a dictionary is but the dicta of the writer on the words defined. The exegete should be prepared to go back of the dictionary so as to examine the reasons for the definition. As my learned colleague, in his masterly review of the meaning of the word *θεόπνευστος* (inspired), so every searcher after truth should, so far as possible, be prepared to search out the meaning of any disputed term and to thoroughly investigate his premises before arriving at a

conclusion. But it is a pertinent question here to ask, whether this is ever in the range of possibility for the ordinary theological student? To which I answer: Yes; in large part.

Every theological student learns enough Hebrew to use a concordance. Now, a concordance of a language like the ancient Hebrew, whose entire literature is found in a single book, gives a comprehensive survey of the usage of a given word. If the construction in which the word occurs is always exactly the same, little information can be gained in this way; but if the word is of frequent occurrence, and is found in several or many different connections, a tolerably accurate definition of most words may be made without further help than a concordance. If there is profit in using Cruden's and Young's concordances in the explication of a text, much more might one argue the utility of using those in the original languages in which the Word of God was written, as "The final appeal in all questions of faith and practice." The Greek and Hebrew concordances are the airbrakes on hasty conclusions, the safety-valves of the Church against the rash judgments of professional dictators or ignorant enthusiasts.

A second aid which the ordinary student may find in determining the meaning of words, is that to be derived from the meaning of forms. If it be true that forms have meaning, then a knowledge of the usual meaning of these forms will enable the student to demand that the lexicon shall give a sufficient reason for any departure from the customary meaning of a form.

A third aid which the ordinary student can use in the control of the dictionary is to be found in the ancient versions into Greek and Latin. These versions are fortunately within the reach of all, and their daily use in the interpretation of the original is to be most highly com-



mended. It will not merely keep up and increase a knowledge of those languages upon which so much time has been expended, but it will certainly call attention to matters of grammar and exegesis which would otherwise be entirely overlooked. But as to the point in question, it will be immediately perceived that when there is a difference between one or more of the ancient versions and the lexicon as to the meaning of a word, that there is a subject worthy of the investigation of the exegete. To my mind no better method for mastering the ancient Hebrew, and at the same time for retaining and perfecting our knowledge of the classics, can be found than the study of the ancient versions in connection with the original text, discovering and seeking to explain every slightest variation of thought or expression. As tests of dictionaries and suggesters of new ideas they are invaluable and unsurpassed. While ordinary students must remain satisfied with the study of the Greek and Latin versions, the extraordinary student will acquire Syriac and Aramaic in order to make use of the other great primary versions, that he may derive a full benefit from these great masterpieces of interpretation of the word of God which have been handed down from antiquity.

A fourth aid in the control of lexicons is not open to the ordinary student. It is that to be derived from the cognate languages. Its value in correcting the errors of citation and logic on the part of lexicographers can scarcely be overestimated. I shall never forget the shock which went through my frame when upon looking at an Arabic dictionary in confirmation of a statement made by that imperial scholar, Ewald, with regard to the meaning of a word, I found the facts to be the very opposite to that which he had stated to be the case. It caused a revolution in my methods; I have never since accepted the references to the cognate languages in the commentaries



and dictionaries without first making an investigation for myself, and even then often with the admission to myself that the inductions of meanings in the dictionaries at hand may be incomplete or misunderstood. Some of the commentaries and lexicons cannot be comprehended without a partial knowledge of Arabic and Syriac at least. Would that every one who had the opportunity of perfecting himself in the use of all the means which God has given us for ascertaining with as much fulness as possible the meaning of every word which the Holy Scriptures contain would avail himself of the advantages which this institution may afford of learning these sister tongues of the inspired.

The third department of Lower Criticism is Textual Criticism, the purpose of which is to discover the original text. One would suppose that the first endeavor of all students of the Bible would be to discover the very words which were written through the inspiration of God. It is only lately, however, that any critical apparatus, approximating in any suitable degree what it should be, has been prepared. The publication of the Polychrome edition of the Hebrew bible and the amount of textual changes suggested in many of the latest commentaries, such as Klostermann's, and in religious magazines, like the Expository Times, have rendered it necessary for the intelligent and conscientious reader to gain as good as possible a knowledge of the correct principles of Old Testament textual criticism. While Old Testament books are costly, every man can have at least one polyglot which will give most of the data upon which the conclusions of the critics are based. As to the methods of textual criticism, this is neither the time nor the place to enter into a full statement of what they are. Let it suffice to say that they should be objective rather than subjective. The purpose of the critic should be to find out what the author said,

not what he would like him to have said, nor what he thinks he ought to have said. Such a method, moreover, must be scientific, *i. e.*, it must seek to secure a complete induction of the facts without selection or exclusion, because of preconceived opinions or tendency theories of any kind whatsoever. What the men of God wrote, that is the task of the critic to discover and to pass on to the exegete, the historian and the theologian, that they may have correct premises on which to base the conclusions in their commentaries, histories and theologies.

Here let me guard against two common misconceptions. One is the supposition that the Hebrew original of the Old Testament has been so preserved as to render all revision objectless. No one can hold such a theory in view of the evidences of the Hebrew MSS. and the parallel passages alone. No more will any one who accepts the evidences of the New Testament quotations in their bearing upon the text of the Old, and who recognizes the need for a revision of the New Testament, have a *locus standi* in defending the impeccability of the text of the Old.

The other error is that the ancient translators or the later revisers of their versions were so characterized by prejudices and tendencies that their translations were intentionally inaccurate and biased from the start, so as to render them largely useless in enabling us to re-establish any original Hebrew text. In answer to this it may be said that (except in isolated instances and books) no sufficient proof of these intentional variations from the original has as yet been produced. My own conviction is (and this is a conviction based upon a more or less extensive study of all the versions), that all of them, primary and secondary, by whomsoever made, bear undeniable evidence of having been designed to be faithful to their original. Had we the original texts of the versions, we could doubtless, with the aid of the Hebrew *textus receptus*,

reconstruct in most instances the originals from which they were translated. As it is, the first question to be asked when we find a variation in a version is, why this variation? Was the original of it different from the *textus receptus*? Did the translators misunderstand the original? Do we misunderstand either the original or the translation, or is either one or other text corrupt? It will be seen that before one is fitted to answer these questions with anything like accuracy, he must be acquainted with all the departments of grammar and lexicography mentioned above. Phonics, palaeography, the concordances, versions and cognates will all contribute their portion toward the settlement of every question of text. The failure to use any one of these factors may cause an error in the result.

Such, then, are the three great divisions of Lower Criticism—text, grammar, lexicon—and knowledge of all three is indispensable to any one who will rightly divide the Word of Truth. A correct view of the possibilities and attainments of textual criticism, a thorough knowledge of all the parts of grammar, an intelligent control of lexicography—these must be the possession of him who would understand the biblical literature of the day; these give the logical premises for all conclusions based upon the Word of God. These are the foundations upon which are to be built the stately structure of literary criticism, history and theology.

We shall seek to lay the foundations deep and broad and firm in the minds of our students, that all men may admire the uprightness and strength and beauty of the superstructures which they shall build.

You will all have noticed that throughout this discourse I have emphasized the study of the cognates, and of the primary versions, at least, for those who would fully master the details of Lower Criticism. Only after


having learned these will they be fully furnished for the more attractive but not more important work of Higher Criticism. Not forgetting that the primary object of the Theological Seminary is to train men for the Gospel ministry, I should like to see Princeton, and I think that the Church would like to see Princeton, offer to young men of the Presbyterian faith facilities for the acquisition of any branch of knowledge that will help them to discover and defend, in its full meaning, every word of God. It shall be my aim and ambition, with the hoped for hearty aid of the faculty and directors of this institution, and of our *Alma Mater* across the way, to present to every student the opportunity of acquiring any language which, as cognate to the Hebrew, throws light upon its grammar and lexicon, or any language in which a version of the Bible was made before the Sixth Century, A. D. Some of my fellow professors have kindly offered to assist in this plan, which is only an extension of what has hitherto been offered. With the assistance which the University can render, and which we are happy to believe it will be glad to render, we hope that soon it will not be necessary for any of our students to go abroad to perfect themselves in any branch of theological science.

In my plans for the offering of increased facilities for the more thorough understanding of the Old Testament, I have projected a number of works and series of works which seem necessary to fill out the *apparatus criticus*. In the completing of these works, I shall invoke the assistance of the students whom I expect to train, the advice of my fellow professors, and, when needed, the financial aid of the friends of this Seminary.

And may God grant His grace and His strength that all our labors may be well done and fully done, to the increase of knowledge and faith, to the honor of His Word and the glory of His name.



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