

**SIX LECTURES ON THE
HIGHER CRITICISM UPON
THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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Six Lectures on the Higher Criticism upon the Old Testament by W. B. Boyce

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UPON
THE OLD TESTAMENT,

BY
W. B. BOYCE,

(Wesleyan Minister.)

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NOTICE TO THE READER.

These Lectures were read in York-street Chapel on sundry Monday evenings from the 10th June to 30th December, 1878: after which they appeared in the *Weekly Advocate*, by which means about 3000 copies were circulated chiefly in the Colony of New South Wales. It is to be hoped this exposition of the theories of the "Higher Criticism," comprising in detail the leading critical speculations on the Old Testament of the most learned scholars of the past and present age, may help to settle the minds of some who have been disturbed by a vague impression of the existence of errors and discrepancies discovered by Continental scholarship, which are absolutely irreconcilable with the cherished traditional belief of the Christian churches. These supposed errors and discrepancies when fully stated no longer terrify. Turning from the extravagant and contradictory assertions of the Sceptical Critics, the thoughtful Christian will gladly recognize as the only sure foundation of all religious trust, the teachings which come backed with the authority of the old formula "*Thus saith the Lord.*"

The friends, to whose kindness the writer is greatly indebted for their readiness to undertake the disagreeable task of reading in public each evening for the space of one hour and a half or more, are the Rev. Dr. Kelynaek, the Rev. George Martin, and the Rev. George Woolnough, M.A. To these gentlemen and to the Hon. Sir George Wigram Allen, M.L.C., A. Moffitt, Esq., M.D., the Rev. George Woolnough, M.A., and the Rev. Benjamin Chapman who presided during the delivery of the Lectures, the thanks of the Lecturer are respectfully tendered.

The only apology to be made for the numerous errors of the Press, which require so very lengthened an ERRATA, is that the Lectures were printed before they were read, and that the few copies now privately circulated were re-printed at once from the original strips fresh from the compositors' galleys. The readers had better make the corrections at once, before perusal, otherwise the errors are likely to remain uncorrected, and in some cases the meaning of the writer will be very imperfectly represented.

In conclusion a few words may be permitted on the relation of these Lectures to the Evidences of Revealed Religion. Our fathers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appealed mainly to what are now called the External Evidences, much in this fashion—"A revelation from Heaven has been received as such by the Patriarchs and Israelitish people, because attested by miracles—the proof of this acceptance, and on these grounds is recorded in a series of books, the genuineness and authenticity of which are received by us on the faith of the testimony given by our Lord and His Apostles to the Jewish Canon, as recorded in the Gospels and Epistles in the New Testament. We receive the New Testament on the unwavering testimony of the Christian Church, conveyed in a series of accumulated proofs which cannot be set aside, except by a mode of reasoning which implies universal scepticism."—So our great writers of that day reasoned; they relied upon the testimony of credible witnesses; and so must we also in this last quarter of the nineteenth century: these Lectures are an attempt to show the importance of testimony in reference to the Critical controversies on the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

But it may be said, that surely the wider and continually enlarging mental horizon, and the consequent higher standing point of the culture of our day, have changed altogether the position of the controversy. It is obvious, that owing to the more extensive fields opened to investigation, together with the more varied learning and more minute research of the present century, our science, our philosophy, and our literature have already been revolutionized. Why then should we be satisfied with the proofs and evidences accepted by the men of the seventeenth and following century, who were placed in a less favourable position than we are for the thorough enquiry which the subject demands? Admitting the truth in these remarks, so far as they apply to the metaphysical and philosophical reasonings of the apologists of that period, and to much of its criticism, we still object to their relevancy in reference to well attested *facts*: these can only be affected by a disproof of the testimony on which they rest. There have been and yet may be many defences, reasons and arguments put forth in proof of Revelation, which may not stand the test of

criticism; but the great *facts*, the historical basis of revealed religion remain unaffected, especially that *one fact*, which stands alone, the greatest of all facts, the perfect character of Jesus Christ. Sceptics must disprove the record of the life, character, death and resurrection of Christ; short of this, all their arguments carry no conviction to the believers in Christianity.

We admit that this historical evidence represents no more than the highest degree of probability, which we term a moral certainty: and that this is not exactly equivalent to the absolute proof afforded by mathematical demonstration. But as this species of proof is confined to the sphere of pure mathematics, and as on all other subjects mankind are satisfied to take probability as "the very guide of life," we must acquiesce in the only proof of which *the facts* of revelation are susceptible. To ask for more is unreasonable. The evidences are sufficient for all who sincerely desire to combat unbelief, but there is full scope for the cavils of those who have no wish to believe, or who cultivate doubt as an intellectual grace or as a necessary result of a scientific research. This class would not be "*persuaded though one rose from the dead.*" (Luke xvi. 31.) They would regard a miracle as simply a new aspect of nature. To this class of doubters, we may use the remonstrance addressed by Zophar more than 3000 years ago: "*Canst thou by searching find out God.*" (Job xi. 7.) This knowledge is not the reward of research, for it does not admit of scientific proof. It is the revelation of a Spiritual fact, which at once commends itself to the Spiritual nature of man which is desirous of discovering not a philosophical abstraction, but of realising a *personal God*. These spiritual yearnings are graphically expressed in the language of the Psalmist, "*My soul thirsteth for God, for the LIVING God. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the LIVING God.*" (Psalms 52 & 84.) No question affecting man's faith and duty as a spiritual, rational and moral agent can be settled by an infallible logic. It is determined mainly by the ruling sympathies. The decision is with the *will*, the responsible *will*. No sincere enquirer is left without Divine help. Our Saviour gives us the law of this Spiritual administration.—"*If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*" (John vii. 17.)



ERRATA.

LECTURE I.

Page	1	lines	4, for <i>Testament</i> read <i>Testaments</i> .
"	"	"	the last, leave out <i>which though</i> .
"	"	"	1, place <i>which</i> before <i>imply</i> .
"	"	"	29, for <i>whence</i> read <i>whom</i> .
"	"	"	21, for <i>add</i> read <i>added</i> .
"	"	"	29, for <i>close of first</i> read <i>close of the first</i> .
"	"	"	19, for <i>might consider</i> read <i>might have considered</i> .
"	"	"	21, for <i>independent</i> read <i>independently</i> .
"	"	"	7, leave out <i>which no one can deny</i> .
"	"	"	20, for <i>or</i> read <i>nor</i> .
"	"	"	8, for <i>the most</i> read <i>some</i> .
"	"	"	22, for <i>comment</i> read <i>commentary</i> .
"	"	"	36, for <i>for B. C. 364</i> , read <i>from B. C. 364</i> .
"	"	"	7, for <i>Jocett</i> read <i>Jocist</i> .
"	"	"	11, for <i>argument pronounced</i> read <i>arguments produced</i> .
"	"	"	35, for <i>notice such</i> read <i>notices such or such</i> .
"	"	"	6, for <i>referred</i> read <i>referred</i> .
"	"	"	7, for <i>Law of Plata</i> read <i>Laws of Plata</i> .
"	"	"	10, for <i>arises</i> read <i>arising</i> .
"	"	"	36, for <i>Phoenician</i> read <i>Phoenician</i> .
"	"	"	27, for <i>Olympic</i> read <i>Olympiad</i> .
"	"	"	37, for <i>Caesarius</i> read <i>Caesarius</i> .
"	"	"	38, for <i>Kopp</i> read <i>Koppa</i> .
"	"	"	1, for <i>Wolf</i> read <i>Wolf</i> .
"	"	"	9, for <i>Colonus</i> read <i>Colosus</i> .
"	"	"	11, for <i>similar</i> read <i>similar</i> .
"	"	"	16, for <i>Conservationism</i> read <i>Conservation</i> .
"	"	"	30, for <i>Septuagint (twice)</i> read <i>Septuagint</i> .
"	"	"	3, for <i>B. W. Westcott</i> read <i>B. F. Westcott</i> .
"	"	"	34, for <i>6 which</i> read <i>5 of which</i> .
"	"	"	4, for <i>page or two</i> read <i>page or so</i> .
"	"	"	4, for <i>connecting by</i> read <i>connecting the two by</i> .
"	"	"	31, for <i>order to this</i> read <i>order to effect this</i> .
"	"	"	34, after <i>as one</i> , add <i>so also Jeremiah and the Lamentations</i> .
"	"	"	11, for <i>occasion be</i> read <i>occasion arise be</i> .
"	"	"	12, for <i>give</i> read <i>gives</i> .
"	"	"	24, for <i>424 B. B.</i> read <i>425 B. C.</i>
"	"	"	30, for <i>being not</i> read <i>not being</i> .
"	"	"	31, for <i>not considered</i> read <i>not being considered</i> .
"	"	"	4, for <i>is the</i> read <i>on the</i> .
"	"	"	6, for <i>place</i> read <i>insertion</i> .
"	"	"	27, for <i>glossary of</i> read <i>gloss on</i> .
"	"	"	5, for <i>or</i> read <i>on</i> .
"	"	"	13, for <i>Theodosian</i> read <i>Theodotion</i> .
"	"	"	23, for <i>and many</i> read <i>but many</i> .
"	"	"	19, for <i>Ass</i> read <i>Ass</i> .