

think this method of Criticism trenches on the great issue of Revelation : it has not been invented for, and it is not solely used upon the Old Testament : it is something some of us have often to use upon other books. I know it gives to many devout minds, in the case of the Old Testament, a nobler view of God's dealings with the ancient world, and the preparation for the Christ who was to come in the fullness of the time. It is true it does change a view of the Old Testament which scholars of the past were contented with. It might be easier to rest content with their results, but God has given us the power to study and the right to know. We must face the responsibility of our opportunities. What, let me ask, if this after all be the true history of the Old Testament, and we, because we are afraid, let it lie hidden from our eyes. That would indeed be a disaster to our faith and a danger to ourselves. Let us know the truth, and the truth which is of God will surely teach us, when it deals with his work, something more about Himself.

For this reason I should not be afraid of criticism just because it did not quite agree with what people thought of old, or because they may think a little differently to-morrow. There is no finality in criticism or in knowledge. It is a question of methods—and I believe that the application of ordinary historic criticism to the books of the Old Testament is bound to give us a deeper knowledge of God's dealings with the world and therefore a fuller knowledge of Himself. At any rate I feel sure that if we may not use with the records and literature of the Jews the same methods that we use with the literature of Greece or Egypt or Rome, we must be content to know less of the true history of the Jews than of the other people, and yet their history is that which above all others is most vital for the world and ourselves. To bar criticism, to deny to reason and scholarship their use of God's own methods is to my mind a distrust of God and a forfeiture of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.