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INSPIRATION AND BIBLICAL CRITICISM.*

THE subject suggested to me, as I understand it, is, How far is the doctrine of Inspiration and the Divine authority of Holy Scripture affected by modern Biblical criticism? Are the ascertained results, not the theories and hypotheses, of a valid, not of a fanciful and speculative criticism, such as to make it necessary in any degree to modify traditional views of the Bible as the Word of God? And if so, how far, within what limits, according to what principles, is such modification to be admitted?

That there is ground for such an inquiry cannot, I think, be denied. A revolution is taking place in the history of theology, and the Bible cannot but be affected by it. Not only are men's views and opinion changing, but their very standpoint is so rapidly being altered, that men with twenty-five or fifty years between them hardly understand one another's language, or mental attitude. The advance of scientific knowledge, of historical, geographical, archæological discovery; the establishment of the science of textual criticism: the labor and concentrated attention bestowed upon Biblical literature—these and other causes have almost metamorphosed Bible study, so that the commentators of half a century ago have become in some respects antiquated, and problems press upon the reverent

* A paper read at the London Wesleyan Ministers' Meeting, 16th March, 1891.