

I must confess that the great multitude of critics belong to one or the other of these two sub-classes of what I call rationalistic criticism. There is, however, here and there a disciple of another school, a school hardly yet organized, still largely ideal, which for convenience I will call the rational school. It is the method and spirit of this school which I would contrast with those of the rationalistic.

1. The rational criticism will be *scientific* in spirit. To be scientific is to have as one's aim the "acquisition of accurate and systematic knowledge of principles by observation and deduction." We remember that deduction includes the three steps of induction, reasoning and verification. The scientific spirit will lead the critic, if it be permitted to lead him, first, to observe and then to formulate conclusions which, after reflection and verification, shall be perfected. Let us apply this to a particular case, the first eleven or twelve chapters of Genesis. The origin of these chapters is not entirely clear. They present certain statements; they were intended to subserve a certain purpose. Some of us have believed these chapters to have had a supernatural origin; others have thought them merely human productions. In both cases the belief has existed largely apart from any thorough study of the subject? What, now, will the scientific spirit suggest? (1) An examination of each story in the strongest light it is possible to find, with a comparison of everything from which there is reasonable hope of securing help. (2) A marshalling of all the evidence which seems to indicate human origin. (3) A marshalling on the other hand of all the evidence which points towards a divine origin. (4) A comparison of this material, with an effort to find a theory which shall include all the facts. (5) If heretofore we have only seen the human element, have doubted the existence of the divine, and if, now, the facts warrant it, we must recognize here the hand of God; while (6) if heretofore we have seen only a divine element, have not appreciated the human, we must, if the facts warrant it, now acknowledge the full force of the human element; and in either case (7) hold our conclusions subject to modification or verification from other similar work. Tradition should have its force; our conceptions of God must.