

to existence that which after all was the surest guide—the Higher Criticism.

This principle has become one of the chief corner-stones of the new system. Now, on the very face of it, such a method of criticism is necessarily imperfect and unreliable. It is altogether over-estimated. It does not compare its conclusions with anything. It does not bring them to the test of any form of contemporaneous evidence bearing upon them, consequently there is ample scope for the indulgence of speculation or fiction to any extent. As Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix remarks in one of his sermons: "It practically invests the modern critic with a power of intuitive discernment, an ability to recognize truth without any aid from historic or other facts. In examining the sacred canon, the critic has no new facts to show; yet he says, with an air of supreme authority, if not actual omniscience. 'This writer was a romancer and fabulist; that writer never lived; this book was not written by him whose name it has borne between two and three thousand years; these discourses and this history were the invention of subtle priestly conspirators.' And when asked how he has made these astounding discoveries, he has not a word of historic testimony to present, but he says: My criticism proves them; modern learning establishes them; they are the ascertained results of the best thought of the day; in fact, these results thus paraded before us, come down, at last, to nothing better than guess-work and fancy; they are the fruit of difficulties which lie in the mind of the critic, and have no foundation in legitimate enquiry. They are the result of a process correctly described as 'free conjecture operating upon the Sacred text.'"

What wonder if this kind of criticism should have broken down wherever it could be tested. We may recall the failure of similar methods in the sphere of Grecian litera-