

THE PRACTICAL WORTH OF THE HIGHER CRITICAL TEACHING.

THE term "Higher Criticism"—however inappropriate many may consider it—has obtained current recognition, and it is now fairly definitely understood among Biblical students what teachings are included under this term. We wish for the present briefly to examine this set of teachings, not as to their correctness or incorrectness, but as to their *worth*, their practical worth in this world of need. There is, for many theories, a nearer Nemesis than to follow all the tedious terms of their shifting arguments throughout; it is to inquire unsparingly what is their worth? What are the results of these theories accomplishing for the everlasting good of needy man? What is their effect on the moral and religious constitution of the world?

Most of us are sufficiently utilitarian to agree that if the Higher Critical Teaching is of no practical worth it is a veritable parasite on the world and has no rightful claim to recognition. If a drug has been found helpful to some one man it does not follow that it will be like helpful to all men, but if it has been found debilitating to all who have yet taken it, no additional label is required to cause it to be left alone. This is the test which we wish to apply to the Higher Critical Teaching, and its most ardent friends will not object that such a trial is premature or unfair.

Observe, then, our inquiry is, What is the practical worth of the Higher Critical Teaching? We are not concerned at present to ask how much ink has been spent in its defence, or how many eminent scholars have devoted their time to it; but of what eternal worth have the teachings of Higher Criticism been to mankind. We are not asking whether it is the popular view in present-day German scholarship—Deism held that position in England and Infidelity in France about two centuries ago, but that would