

several narratives, the many philosophical questions that must arise in such a field, I have not formally discussed; still less have I paused to dispute and answer the thousands of objections which swarm around the narrative in the books of the sceptical school of criticism. Such a labor, while very important, would constitute a work quite distinct from that which I have proposed, and would infuse into the discussion a controversial element which I have especially sought to avoid, as inconsistent with the moral ends which I had in view.

I have however attentively considered whatever has been said, on every side, in the works of critical objectors, and have endeavored as far as possible so to state the facts as to take away the grounds from which the objections were aimed.

Writing in full sympathy with the Gospels as authentic historical documents, and with the nature and teachings of the great Personage whom they describe, it is scarcely necessary to say that I have not attempted to show the world what Matthew and John *ought* to have heard and to have seen, but did not; nor what things they did *not* see or hear, but in their simplicity believed that they *did*. In short, I have not invented a Life of Jesus to suit the critical philosophy of the nineteenth century.

The Jesus of the four Evangelists for wellnigh two thousand years has exerted a powerful influence upon the heart, the understanding, and the imagination of