

construct a complete system of doctrine by the aid of exegesis, history, philosophy, and the enlightened consciousness of man—that is the crowning work of dogmatics. As distinguished from all these, it is concerned with questions more external—with literary phenomena, with historical situation, with anything that throws light on the problem of how, when, and by whom the books of the Bible were composed. It does not claim to be “higher” than all other kinds of Bible study. “Higher” is here a technical term, used for convenience’ sake over against the technical term “lower,” to distinguish this literary criticism from another and still more external kind of criticism—viz., that which is occupied with determining the exact original text of Scripture. The “Lower Criticism” is textual criticism; literary criticism is “Higher Criticism,” because it rises from the subordinate and subsidiary question as to the accuracy with which certain records have been transmitted to us, to the higher and broader question as to how these records came into existence at all. In considering this question, however, it confines its attention to the human agency in the matter. It does not thereby deny a Divine agency any more than the botanist denies a Divine agency in the production of plant-life by dissecting flowers and determining the conditions of their growth. It simply, for purposes of thorough and systematized study, devotes itself to the minute examination of certain phenomena connected with the Bible—namely, those which aid in the solution of problems of structure, date, and authorship. It endeavors, as a result of this minute examination, to actually attain satisfactory solutions of these problems—solutions, that is to say, that explain all the facts which the examination brings to light as far as these fall within its province. The ultimate facts it does not undertake to analyze. It does not ask whether there has been a revelation from God, or whether there is a God at all. It does not try to show how God may speak to men, nor the impossibility of such communication. Nor does it inquire how men learned to write, nor enter upon the mysteries of language, its origin and early history. These are all worthy objects of study and thought, but they are not the business of the Higher Criticism. Like every separate science, the Higher Criticism is a segment, not the entire circle of knowledge. The province is definite and limited; and it is within that province, and there alone, that it can be estimated and judged.

Since, then, the Higher or Literary Criticism deals only with the literary form of the Bible, it is evidently no part of its business to form an “estimate of it as a professed Divine revelation.” When higher critics proceed, from a study of the phenomena, to derive such an estimate, they are entering another field; and here Dr. Watts is waiting for them. In this other field they may or they may not be in error. They may hold dogmatic opinions about the Scriptures as a Divine revelation similar to those of Dr. Watts, or they may hold different ones, but in these opinions they are outside the domain of the Higher Criticism. A zoologist does not become such