

exciting such interest at the present time is as yet far from complete, that permanent constructive results are at this stage impossible, and that what has hitherto been shaped must be regarded as hypothetic and tentative.

2. Nor must the Higher Criticism be regarded as proceeding from a principle or as animated by a spirit of hostility to the inspiration and authority of the sacred Scriptures, or to the supernatural and redemptive revelation they unfold. This may be the case with some who apply the method, but the same is true of the Lower or Textual Criticism, and indeed of every method of scholarly investigation applied to sacred literature. There are no more earnest and devout believers in the Bible than some who are pursuing this line of research, and it is safe to say that the Higher Criticism is being applied to the Bible to-day mainly by those to whom the Bible is, in an altogether unique and transcendent way, the Word of God, and who would rather die than misrepresent it or weaken its proper influence with men.

II. What, then, is the Higher Criticism ?

1. The Higher Criticism is simply a method of critical research, which may be applied to any writings whose genesis and history are not fully known, has been applied to many with results which the world accepts, is being applied to many others besides those Hebrew writings that are to us so precious, and will be applied to all which stand in any special regard, or for which any special claims are put forth. It is the science of literary verification from internal evidence. It asks concerning the literature to which it is applied : What is its own testimony concerning itself ; first, as to Integrity—whether it is a complete or fragmentary work, a work of original unity, or a compilation, and in its original form, or modified by subsequent editing ; second, as to Authorship, which involves also Date ; third, as to Literary Form and Character, and so, how it is to be taken ; and, fourth, as to Reliability, or whether it is an impartial, competent, and self-consistent witness to that whereof it treats.

2. The Higher, Literary, or Historical Criticism, as it is variously called, is distinct from the Lower or Textual Criticism, both in aim and method. The Lower Criticism aims at a pure text. It examines manuscripts and versions, and citations from copies no longer extant, compares and sifts according to canons which the science has developed, in order to deurge the text of any corruptions which have crept into it in transmission, and restore, as nearly as possible, the original work as it came from the hands of its authors or editors. The Lower Criticism is the basis of and preparation for the Higher ; and no one is competent to employ the principles of the Higher Criticism who has not become proficient in the processes and results of the Lower. The Higher Criticism takes the text which the Lower Criticism has established, and studies it as literature in the light of its own evidence, and with reference to the traditional and current theories concerning it.

3. The Higher Criticism has been extensively applied in various fields.