

## RECENT CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN RELATION TO FAITH

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BY THE

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It is a remarkable fact that Old Testament criticism has for some years past attracted a much larger share of public attention than has been given to the critical study of the documents of the Apostolic age. One reason for this is, no doubt, to be found in the striking additions which recent archaeological discoveries have made to our knowledge of the nations and the countries which form the background of the Old Testament literature. Many serious persons, who have been fascinated by the difficult problems of the Old Testament literature, hardly seem as yet to have realised that the problems which the New Testament presents are quite as difficult, and—as it seems to me at least—far more serious in their direct bearing on our faith. No considerable attempts have as yet been made by persons in authority (and we should be thankful for it) to popularise startling theories, or to publish premature statements of the results of critical study of the Gospels. And thus the “higher criticism” of the New Testament has so far, been little disturbed by popular clamour, and has had little influence on the public mind. I doubt if the time has yet come to formulate results in this department with confidence. I only propose now to say something as to the directions in which investigations are being made; and although it will be necessary, in accordance with my instructions, to indicate the provisional conclusions which have been reached, I shall not put them forward as more than provisional.

I must not dwell long upon the monuments of early Christianity which have been brought to light during the last two or three years, various and interesting as these are. The discovery of a scrap of a