

But such controversial Lives of Christ are not the best for general reading. While they may lead scholars from doubt to certainty, they are likely to lead plain people from certainty into doubt, and to leave them there. I have therefore studiously avoided a polemic spirit, seeking to produce conviction without controversy.

Joubert<sup>1</sup> finely says: "State truths of sentiment, and do not try to prove them. There is danger in such proofs; for in arguing it is necessary to treat that which is in question as something problematic; now that which we accustom ourselves to treat as problematic ends by appearing to us as really doubtful. In things that are visible and palpable, never prove what is believed already; in things that are certain and mysterious, — mysterious by their greatness and by their nature, — make people believe them, and do not prove them; in things that are matters of practice and duty, command, and do not explain. 'Fear God' has made many men pious; the proofs of the existence of God have made many men atheists. From the defiance springs the attack; the advocate begets in his hearer a wish to pick holes; and men are almost always led on from a desire to contradict the doctor to the desire to contradict the doctrine. Make Truth lovely, and do not try to arm her."

The history of the text, the authenticity of the

<sup>1</sup> As quoted by Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, p. 234 (London ed.), 1865.