

We must avoid on the one hand rash assumption that traditional views are wrong; and on the other hand equally rash assumption that all traditional views can hold their own. That Job is a contemporary biography, or that Joshua was written by him whose name it bears, is neither proved nor provable; in either case it is possible, but not probable, and the question is not of vital importance. That all the four Gospels were written before the end of the first Christian century, and are therefore contemporary biography, has in our own days been established upon evidence to which our fathers had no access, and to this question the gravest issues belong.

(b) *Diversity of Method.* More and more clearly from age to age God has made known to man His truth by history, type, prophecy, sign, vision, and parable, "by divers portions and in divers manners" (Heb. i. 1, R.V.). The Bible may be the history of one nation only, but that, as the one unmingled race of high antiquity, has the most persistent of nationalities, and the longest of histories, and is connected with almost every other important nation in the world.

Nowadays it is said in some quarters that the Bible is in peril from "Higher Criticism," and certain good people, whose piety is greater than their intelligence, echo the assertion, and deprecate criticism altogether. The faith of unstable souls is indeed in peril from a criticism that errs in not being high enough. But from criticism of the right kind the Bible has everything to gain, and if we are wise we shall read it in the fullest light our own age can throw upon it. Ignorance, not knowledge, is the real foe; and just as the Church gains fresh strength in times of persecution, so Holy Writ wins fresh appreciation in times when it is being tried (Psalm cxix. 140, R.V. margin). For when unassailed, it is also in great measure unstudied; whereas the labours of scholars in various departments have lately, as never before, shown the unity and beauty of its literary structure, and the minute accuracy of its historical narratives. And when we cease to read into it what it does not say, and clearly ascertain what it does say, we discover again and again that its statements are in harmony with the latest results of scientific research.