

ideas have grown up about the scripture narratives for which in the Scriptures themselves there is not the slightest basis, ideas which are anti-biblical, and which are fast making null and void many a scripture teaching, ideas for the removal of which a strong hand and arm are necessary. Great injury has already been wrought. There is no time now for further delay. (d) The sacredness of truth makes the work absolutely imperative. To add to the truth is as heinous in the sight of God as to detract from it. The highest end of man is to know truth. Every effort toward the acquisition of such knowledge will receive a blessing from the author of truth; for, after all, to know truth is to know God.

### III. THE METHOD AND SPIRIT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

Criticism, in itself, being something legitimate and desirable, something, under the present circumstances, absolutely necessary, I beg you to join with me in an effort to distinguish the true criticism from the false, a rational criticism from a rationalistic. The difference is not, primarily, a difference of purpose; both profess to be in search of the truth, in behalf of a larger and more accurate knowledge. It is not a difference of principles; both claim to adopt the same general principles, the ordinary principles of literary and historical criticism. It is not a difference in the material, for both have access to the same sources, the books of the Bible and the literature and history of contemporaneous nations. The difference lies rather in the method of work and in the spirit with which the work is conducted; and it is this which counts most. With the same purpose in mind, acting according to the same principles, handling the same material, if the methods and spirit are different, the results will likewise differ, and that, too, very greatly.

I may, perhaps, be permitted here three or four explanatory and preparatory remarks: (a) The spirit professed by a given individual in a given work, is one thing; the real spirit which characterizes his work may be something else. I may declare to you that my spirit is honest, open, constructive, reverent, and I may honestly think my declaration true; when an impartial analysis of my words will show conclusively that it