

feel the need of looking well to the ground he stands on. If the Bible is, as is popularly taught, God's word, it is high time that we all knew it, for it is the most momentous fact within the bounds of conception. If the Bible is something very different from what it is popularly taught to be, there is equally imperative need of learning that fact. People in general have heard one statement from their childhood; is it not time now to listen to another statement?

The writer is aware that the views set forth in these lectures will strike many as nothing more than ingenious—an exercise in mental gymnastics, to be read, perhaps, as a curiosity, but without any actual bearing upon the subject discussed. If he had sprung upon the world a novel theory of his own, the writer might not demur at such a judgment. But he is in the main stating the conclusions of others, and these the foremost biblical critics in the world. He would also remind readers of this class that these views are not distinctively heretical, since they are largely shared by the author of the article on the Bible in the last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," whom the Scotch Kirk has tried and *not* convicted of doctrinal sin, by Dean Stanley (*clarum et venerabile nomen*), and by not a few other prominent men "in good and regular standing."

In explaining the formation of the Bible on purely natural principles we but fall into line with the whole tendency of scientific thought since the modern revival of knowledge. The time was when men contented them-