

many ages to many hearts, but it was needful to go beyond it. Erasmus in the infancy of textual criticism turned to the Greek, and to the MSS. in Greek, and compiled a text aiming at greater accuracy, a nearer approach to the very words of Christ and his Apostles. He was attacked: he was told he was tampering with the simple faith of the common man, but the process was carried on, and you know the result. Thanks to the labour of great scholars—and I may here mention above all others the names of Westcott and Hort, the scholars of whom not only Cambridge but England is proud,—the New Testament in Greek is known as it was never known before, and the search for a perfect text has given us an insight into the meaning of words and phrases and books and characters beyond what any other age could claim. This was the work of Textual Criticism, the Lower Criticism as it is sometimes called, because it comes first and presents us with a connected text upon which exegetes and commentators and preachers and students may work. But—and let us mark the fact—this result is due to the work of devout and laborious scholars, and scholars alone, who dealt with the New Testament on the assumption that, although the shrine of most precious truth, its text had a history like that of other books.

At a little later time what has been called—possibly unfortunately—the Higher Criticism,* began its work. For almost 150 years or so the careful study, sometimes destructive, sometimes conservative, of the New Testament books has been carried on. Now and again their genuineness has been attacked: their composition and compilation dissected with the utmost nicety: questions of authorship, date, genuineness and authenticity have been debated. Some books such as the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the

*NOTE—An admirable description of Criticism in its two branches is found in the Introduction to the Study of History by Langlois and Seignobos. The two branches are akin in their methods and many Scholars have excelled in both.