

matter before investigating it in any exact sense of that term. Without any desire to disparage theology, I do not hesitate to state that the almost exclusive preference for the method of theology on the part of Old Testament scholars, which is largely due to incapacity to grasp these distinctions clearly, has arrested intellectual progress along Biblical lines more than it is possible to say. The popular view that because the Bible is used as a religious text-book it can only be adequately interpreted by the method of theology is an unwarranted, illogical, and pernicious assumption, and has done more to injure the Bible and obscure its sublimities than anything else. Since the fundamental doctrinal points of the unity and tri-unity of the God of the Jewish and Christian systems respectively, are and always have been almost exclusively a fixed quantity, the diminution or increase of which would rapidly lead to the dissolution of their respective churches, or at any rate to their assumption of a very different character, it is obvious, viewing the question in the abstract, that the method of theology has failed, and is bound to fail in virtue of its nature, to lead to one iota of progress in regard to the Bible, along purely intellectual lines.

Consequently a certain measure of the virtue of critical abandon or that objective indifference to the specific complexion and bearings of prospective results sought for by the Old Testament interpreter is a prerequisite for any real extension of our knowledge. In other words future progress lies exclusively in the hands of the exponent of the method of evolution, if anywhere, so far as this subject is concerned; and in prosecuting this method consistently and enthusiastically the historical critic is really subserving the highest interests of religion. Unless he is of abnormal mental constitution he is sure to have a sense for religious speculation somewhere at the back of his mind, for this has been the experience of all the greatest thinkers. But whenever he gives *ex cathedrâ* pronouncements, *qua* historical critic, by the aid of the method of theology, he is clearly abandoning his own proper function for that of another which, though it be of enormous practical concern to the individual and the