

world's life; and that they furnish him with a knowledge which is essential to a right understanding of themes of current discussion, which involve in *their* issue all that is dearest and most valuable for the life that is, and for the life that is to be. In fact, the field of Oriental scholarship is to-day earth's great battle-field between truth and error; and the champions of truth in that conflict cannot be fully furnished for their mission without a knowledge of the languages represented there.

The Bible is at the foundation of Christianity. It is at the foundation, moreover, of all civil and religious liberty. On its teachings rest all the trustworthy safeguards of social order and progress, and of personal morality. To destroy belief in the Bible as the inspired record of God's revelation to man is an aim of the chief enemies of society, and of the chief enemies of virtue. To confirm belief in the Bible as an authoritative rule of faith and practice is the desire of the truest lovers of God and of their fellows in all the foremost lands of Christian civilization. Scientific and critical research is a matter of interest to both the friends and the enemies of the Bible. Its results will, in the end, have their influence in shaping the world's opinions concerning the truth or the falsity of the Bible record. In both departments of research—scientific and critical—the Old Testament, rather than the New, is the centre of present conflict; and no open questions of New Testament research are now so vital to the main issue of the Bible's trustworthiness as are the questions concerning the Old Testament record, which are in wide popular discussion to-day.

A few years ago, the state of the case was very different. The sharpest assaults on the integrity of the Bible record were then making against the New Testament story. The specious

theories of Strauss and Renan and Baur, and their followers, as to the authorship and composition and teachings of the New Testament writings, had caused timid minds to tremble, and were a source of no small perplexity even to Christian scholars who had no serious doubt as to the ultimate issue of the newly provoked conflict. For a third of a century the discussion went on. The story of the historic Christ was scanned and sifted as never before. All the apostolic literature was mercilessly subjected to the closest and keenest criticism. As a result, the historic correctness of the gospel story, and the historic verity of the apostolic writings, were newly established by proofs indubitable. Strauss and Renan and Baur are no longer counted formidable opponents of the evangelical faith. Their writings have chief value as the record of exploded errors. New Testament criticism is now chiefly confined to questions in the text itself. There is hardly any opposition to this text from without that is worthy of a scholar's attention.

But *now* the Old Testament is under a searching examination. Its age, its authorship, its composition, its facts, its teachings, are all called seriously in question. The language, the scientific and historic statements and the internal evidence of authorship in the Old Testament text are alike matters of scholarly and popular criticism, in the old world and in the new. Timid Christian souls are again in a tremble; and the strongest Christian minds realize that the conflict in progress is a serious one. Those who are sure that the Old Testament will come out of this conflict as triumphantly as the New Testament came out of the other are by no means blinded to the fact that the conflict of conflicts just now is over the Old Testament, and not over the New. The New Testament rests on