

present a full and rounded doctrine, satisfactory to the reflective intellect, of existence as a whole, it could only avoid Theology on the supposition that we can know nothing of the Eternal or of the real meaning of human life. Moral philosophy is no doubt sometimes interpreted in a way that excludes religion and Theology; it is also sometimes interpreted in a way that to my mind excludes morality, being identified with irrelevant investigations into the functions of nerve and brain, or enquiries into the development of the non-moral life of the lower animals; but, as understood in this University, it has to do with all that gives meaning to life, ennobling, beautifying and purifying it, and therefore in its higher range it leads up to, if it does not include, an enquiry into the meaning of religion. Now, it is of course impossible to give a philosophy of religion without devoting attention to that phase of religion which is revealed to us in the sacred writings, and especially to Christianity, which, as we believe, is the ultimate or absolute religion,—the religion which in principle has made a final synthesis and has grasped the true significance of the life of man. Hence, though I cannot pretend to that detailed knowledge of the results of Biblical Criticism which can only come from life-long devotion to one pursuit, I do not feel as if I were unduly presumptuous in saying a few words about a topic in which we have all an equal interest. Perhaps it is well that occasionally there should be heard in the sheltered retreat of our theological halls the voice of a layman who cannot be supposed to be influenced by professional or ecclesiastical bias. You will therefore pardon me if I take the opportunity of making a few desultory remarks upon what I conceive to be the true mental attitude of the biblical critic, who comes to his study without other preconception than the legitimate one of faith in the saving power of Christianity.

Perhaps I had better begin by saying a word about what it is at present the fashion to call "higher criticism." The term is unfortunate, and is apt to suggest a kind of aggressive Philistine self-complacency, trying to the feelings of ordinary humanity. I do not wonder that a plain man, whose religious feelings are strong, and are closely interwoven with the very words of our grand old English Bible, and who in all those great crises of life, in which the ordinary conventional supports give way, and he finds himself alone with the Eternal;—I do not wonder, I say, that such a man, who has found in the words of scripture inexpressible comfort and peace, should be shocked and outraged, when he is bluntly told by some convert to new ideas, fresh from the schools, that he can know nothing of the bible, until he has undergone the severe gymnastic of "higher criticism." His resent-

ment, I venture to say, is not only natural, but sound and healthy. Theology is not religion, nor is Biblical Criticism any substitute for that direct personal contact with the divine which religious minds of all ages have enjoyed, and most of all the inspired writers of our sacred books. The biblical critic has occasionally to be reminded that, like Carlyle's bailie he is "but a man after a'," and that no amount of acquired knowledge about the mechanism of scripture will enable him to enter sympathetically into its spirit,—especially if his training has been in a cold and barren school of thought.

What, then, is Biblical Criticism of the spiritual, as distinguished from the mechanical type? To speak of the last first, we may say, roughly and generally, that investigations into the authorship of particular books and the date of their composition fall properly under the head of the "mechanism" of scripture. In a vast body of literature such as that contained in our Bible, there are of course writings of many kinds. We have, for example, historical documents, literary and constitutional; proverbs, biographies and autobiographies, and familiar letters on topics of special or general interest. Besides these, which are mainly in prose, there is a large body of poetry, including the prophetic books, which we might classify as epic, lyric and dramatic, though these terms are only approximately correct. Now every one knows that we must bring different canons of criticism to bear upon prose and poetry respectively, and that the utmost confusion may be produced by overlooking this very simple distinction. Hence, though it is not the function of Biblical Criticism, in its lower or mechanical sense, to interpret the meaning or spirit of the books with which it deals, it is its function to determine, as far as possible, by a careful sifting of evidence external and internal, whether a given production was meant by its author to be a plain statement of facts, or whether on the other hand it was written by one who lived habitually in that region of large and world-wide ideas, which is characteristic of the highest poetry. Even a criticism of the bible which resolutely confines itself to determining such questions as these may indirectly be of incalculable service to all who love their bible. But, on the other hand, the injudicious critic, by failing to see the limits and the comparative unimportance of what he is doing, may be partly responsible for much perturbation of mind that might perhaps have been avoided. In any case it is worth our while to ask what is the proper attitude of mind, which those who aim at doing justice to all sides of truth, without unduly exalting or depreciating any one, ought to cultivate. The question is one of wide and general interest, affecting all