

Moreover, such study will throw light upon the Bible page, no matter whether we reject any or all theories. The "Leben Jesu" of Strauss is a very unscientific and untrustworthy book, but modern New Testament criticism and the biography of our Lord entered upon new and blessed phases under the influence of the attention it attracted to these subjects. It is a shame that nineteen centuries of Christian culture waited until an avowed malcontent within churchly ranks gave the world a history and life of Christ. The Minor Prophets also have only religious value for the most part in the light of recent study of their mission and meaning.

It will be our place and duty to treat respectfully and without dogmatism all scientific theories held by sincere and intelligent men, whether they are the traditional theories or the more recent ones. All theories about the Bible should be held as scientific relative theories, to yield to complete explanation when it is forthcoming. It is useless to contend, whatever our own view may be, that the order of production is settled in regard to the Jehovah, the Elohist and the priestly codes. And so long as men as able as Professors Green and Osgood maintain that there is no separation in time of production, we dare not scoff at the opinion, however unlikely it may seem to us. We are preachers of righteousness, and not primarily expounders of literary problems. For it will be furthermore our duty to keep distinctly in mind the fact that these are literary questions, and that they only indirectly affect the message we are sent to deliver. That these speculations, whether traditional or recent, will affect the form of our message may be granted. But they cannot affect the essence, if we are really prophets of the Most High.

It will therefore be the business of the pulpit to so treat the Bible that the most ignorant will not be hopelessly confused in a maze of tentative theory, whether traditional or critical; and that the most scholarly will not be offended by ignorance, narrowness and dogmatism. It is for the most part a prostitution of the pulpit's authority to use it either for the maintenance of traditional or the propagation of newer critical views. Along these lines we have opinions and the right to our opinions, but righteousness and redemption are not matters of critical opinion nor of hair-splitting argument. They are Eternal Truths. We are sent to proclaim a Kingdom come and coming; to warn men of sins they know and point them to a salvation of which we are witnesses. We have seen God and know Him in Jesus Christ, and we believe not on the authority of Church or Reason or the Bible, but by reason of the divine touch and the new life that came to us using one of these or some other means to awaken us to the facts of life and death and everlasting loss or gain.