

leading are not only "desirable" but "necessary." Respectfully, therefore, I ask that my desultory remarks shall be judged as only of the nature of suggestions from one who has pondered, according to opportunity, this most important, most difficult, and, just now, burning question.

The present position, then, seems to be something like this: An ecclesiastical doctrine of inspiration, of greater or less antiquity has been in possession of the field among orthodox evangelical Churches, according to which the Bible has been viewed as a compact whole, from end to end the words of God, every part of it divine in the same sense, infallible in every detail, inspired in every word, accepted as the sole authority on all questions, established in its place as the ultimate arbiter on the evidence of miracles and prophecy, acknowledged as such almost without question by all teachers and members of these Churches. Now, there is an uneasy feeling that this elaborate structure is more or less undermined. It stands erect, apparently uninjured, but there has been much digging and investigation going on at the foundations beneath, so much sapping and mining on the part of what is known as criticism, that it appears as if at any moment a collapse might come and the authority of the sacred Scriptures be shaken to its very base. "What are we to say?" I have been asked again and again by ministers and intelligent laymen, What is the worth and strength of this criticism, and how is the doctrine of inspiration affected by it?

Is there any inconsistency between an unhesitating belief in the inspiration of Scripture, so that it may be revered as the Divine Word, an authoritative revelation, the ultimate arbiter of faith and practice, and a reasonable and valid Biblical criticism, searching into all possible questions concerning the books of the Bible. I am strongly persuaded there is no such inconsistency, but much depends on the way in which the subject of inspiration is approached. Now, I should answer: the doctrine of inspiration is the very last thing we come to in a time of searching inquiry and unsettlement of foundations. It is not wise to begin with that, and make the authority of the Book the basal tenet of faith. All are agreed