

which He referred them to be illusive or insignificant; nor would the Emmaus disciples, when "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself," have guessed from His conversation that there was no part of the old Scripture that could be safely attributed to "Moses," nor that the "things" referred to as prophetic were so only to a vagrant fancy. Had such methods been attributed to Him by His friends in that day as are charged upon Him in ours they could with ill grace have resented the charge, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people." "If Jesus was not divine," said Lessing, "He at least said a hundred two-meaning things to lead the people to believe Him so." Was He, then, less candid or only less sagacious than the nineteenth century critics, that He did not or could not emancipate His docile followers from their traditional and degrading faith in the supernatural? In either case why should not faith be transferred from Him to them as more trustworthy? That there was progress in revelation from the callow "childhood" of Mosaism to the riper life of the new era, the Scriptures themselves distinctly state. Our Lord clearly intimated that His doctrine was advanced as His disciples were "able to bear it"—"milk for babes," "meat for strong men." But immaturity or incompleteness are not to be confounded with falsity, nor wise reserve with uncandid acquiescence in noxious error.

Of course there is danger in pertinacious effort to defend the indefensible, but there is equal danger, or greater, in too soon abandoning the defensible, under the mistaken impression that it is immaterial. There is abundant room, therefore, for caution and patience in preliminary inquiry on the part of those who cling to the old faith as to the nature of the issues involved, and the validity of the methods of inquiry adopted by the new criticism.

It would be of course impossible, even to recount in so brief an article the specific conclusions [if they can with any fairness be called conclusions, diverse as they are in detailed feature, and changing with each new essay] of current criticism. No effort will here be made to count or weigh actual results, but only to inquire as to the validity of the claim that results obtained through such agencies and such methods must from the nature of the case command prompt and unhesitating assent, however unpalatable or revolutionary in themselves. For it will be observed that the "great swelling words," made familiar by the orotund proclamations of the oracles of physical science, warning theologians off the whole domain of natural phenomena, promising to abstract from their usurping clutch all "the works and ways of man," claiming for secular discussion the exclusive monopoly of metaphysics as well as physics, leaving to theology only a certain, or rather uncertain, hypothetical field of "hyperphysics;" these are quite in consonance with the autocratic tone of many of the recent utterances of the "higher