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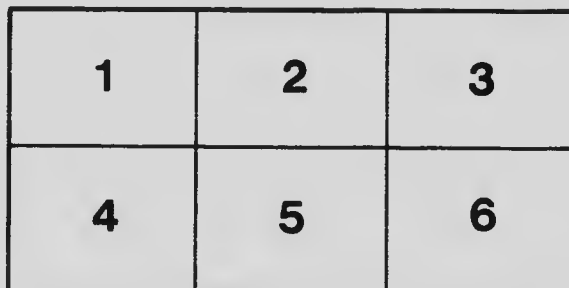
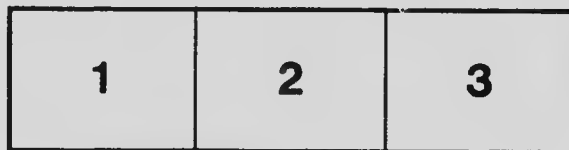
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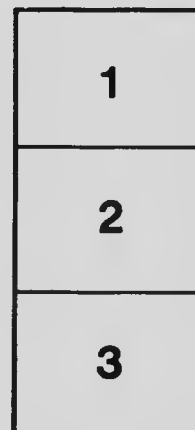
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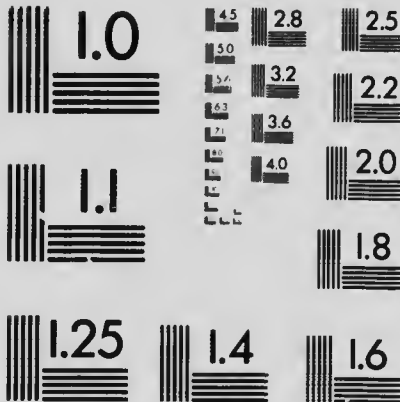
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# The Higher Criticism.

A SERMON.

By Rev. Dr. Whitney.

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TOGETHER WITH

## AN OPEN LETTER

TO HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP-COADIUTOR  
OF MONTREAL,

with reference to his Provincial Synod Sermon, 1904.

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#### ERRATA.

- Page 2, last line. Before "*John*" insert "*St.*"
- " 6, line 13. Before "*mention*" insert "*or.*"
- " 9, " 1. After "*past*" insert "*days.*"
- " 19, " 6. For "*Ihistorica*" read "*Ihistorical.*"
- " 22, " 10 from end. For "*work*" read "*works.*"
- " 22, " 2 from end. For "*Teastment*" read "*Testament.*"
- Pages 18 and 30. In heading for "*Criticitm*" read "*Criticism.*"





# THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

A SERMON PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF BISHOP'S COLLEGE,  
LENNOXVILLE, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1904.

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"WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY."  
Corinthians III, 17.

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The process of growth and change has both its sad and joyful sides, its dangers as well as its gains. In no field is the truth of this more easily seen than in the field of Bible Study: there never has been a time when change has not been feared from it and change opposed. I, for you, a generation younger than I, start with helps to the knowledge of the Bible far beyond what I possessed when I was young: its spiritual truths are the same now as then but you have ready to your hand wealth of textual knowledge, historic illustration, and all in a word that we sum up as Introduction, Criticism and Exegesis, far beyond what I had attained a few years ago. Biblical Study is a more arduous task now than it was a generation ago: it is so because of the fund of fresh information that has been thrown in the light that study has thrown upon its words, its phrases, its historic setting, its writers, the relation of the writers to each other and the relation of the Bible to the Church, the history of the Canon which is the living history of a living book. Let me speak a word now of the New Testament before I turn to the Old, let us look at its history, and the history of its criticism. At one time the Vulgate was all that was held needful. The Vulgate, indeed, has a beauty, a rhythm of its own as our English Bible has: the Vulgate has been, as our English Bible, the language of devotion for

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA  
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many ages to many hearts, but it was needful to go beyond it. Erasmus in the infancy of textual criticism turned to the Greek, and to the MSS. in Greek, and compiled a text aiming at greater accuracy, a nearer approach to the very words of Christ and his Apostles. He was attacked: he was told he was tampering with the simple faith of the common man, but the process was carried on, and you know the result. Thanks to the labour of great scholars—and I may here mention above all others the names of Westcott and Hort, the scholars of whom not only Cambridge but England is proud,—the New Testament in Greek is known as it was never known before, and the search for a perfect text has given us an insight into the meaning of words and phrases and books and characters beyond what any other age could claim. This was the work of Textual Criticism, the Lower Criticism as it is sometimes called, because it comes first and presents us with a connected text upon which exegetes and commentators and preachers and students may work. But—and let us mark the fact—this result is due to the work of devout and laborious scholars, and scholars alone, who dealt with the New Testament on the assumption that, although the shrine of most precious truth, its text had a history like that of other books.

At a little later time what has been called—possibly unfortunately—the Higher Criticism,\* began its work. For almost 150 years or so the careful study, sometimes destructive, sometimes conservative, of the New Testament books has been carried on. Now and again their genuineness has been attacked: their composition and compilation dissected with the utmost nicety: questions of authorship, date, genuineness and authenticity have been debated. Some books such as the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the

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\*NOTE—An admirable description of Criticism in its two branches is found in the Introduction to the Study of History by Langlois and Seignobos. The two branches are akin in their methods and many Scholars have excelled in both.

Pastoral Epistles have been subjected to specially searching criticism.

What has been the result? The process of criticism has given us an insight into the New Testament impossible to our grandfathers. The Acts of the Apostles has been most completely vindicated: the number of the Pauline Epistles generally held to be authentic, has been constantly increasing: differences of opinion still exist, and possibly always will exist. But with the possible exception of one Epistle—that of 2nd Peter—the Books of the New Testament are accepted as authentic by the majority of critics. The date of the composition of the Gospel of St. John, which it was once the fashion to put as late as 200 A.D., has been put constantly earlier. It is something to have gained this result.

But what I wish you to note is this: the result has been gained only by the balancing, the testing of theories of authorship and composition—some of them painful to people not scholars and of simple minds: it has been gained by treating the books of the New Testament as if they were ordinary books—subject to the same laws of composition and preservation, subject to the same criticism and the same tests. Believers in a full inspiration and believers in no inspiration have here met on a common field where reason and scholarship had the right to speak and decide, where no assumptions were to bar their right. Had scholars as Westcott and Lightfoot, and Hort and Sanday, and Rendel Harris been afraid of criticism, had they feared to use the intellects which God had given them, what would have been our position to-day? We should have had a Church treasuring the New Testament but almost afraid to open it, with a faith in its accuracy very deep maybe but not very intelligent and certainly unable to give reasons for its existence. On the other hand we should have had outside critics, strengthened in their positions of negations and refusals: hardened in their beliefs by the declarations of ignorant be-

lievers who could not meet their arguments. And between the two you would have had a vast multitude inclined to believe that Reason and Revelation, Historical Accuracy and the New Testament Story were incompatible. But most surely the lessons of the Renaissance can teach us what Christianity loses if it divorces itself from intellectual study on the one hand or reason on the other: it is well for us in the English Church that our fathers taught us a different lesson. "Keep your faith in criticism and keep your faith in God" were the parting words of Westcott to his sixth form at Harrow.

And it is in this process of reverent study and scholarship that our knowledge of the New Testament has been gained. Without it we should have gone on not gaining a living interpretation for ourselves but repeating to the loss of spiritual energy and the deadening of our hearts the interpretation of ages other than our own. But because we have not been afraid of criticism—in the case of the New Testament at any rate—our knowledge is more complete and our faith in its power has been greatly strengthened.

Is it presumptuous, is it unnecessary, to put in then a plea for a study and a criticism which is to be unfettered and free, which is to use in God's great work every scrap of learning, every atom of intellect, every spark of reason we may possess? Then and then only can we understand what God wishes us to learn and know; how can we work if we are to tie the hand of reason, or to blind the eye of criticism? Thank God our English critics have no Pope to silence a Loisy on the one side or a Sanday on the other;—no Index to check them by its terrors.

We believe then—and the history of the New Testament justifies us in the belief—that we must be prepared to criticize with reverence (of course) but with scholarship and reason the Books of the Bible. For this purpose whatever be our special theory of Inspiration we must deal with them as if they were ordinary books written in the same way and

under the same influences as other books. It is true there is one theory of Inspiration which would prevent us from entering upon such a work: it is the theory of Verbal Inspiration which in my opinion—although I am not going to stop here to justify my view—is the twin-brother of Papal Infallibility, and as its brother would weaken and finally destroy all that is strong and active and growing in Christianity itself. But the Church has never accepted and never taught Verbal Inspiration, and I shall venture therefore to pass it by.

But what, one may ask, is my belief in Inspiration? I do believe that God spake to men of old by a religious and moral revelation which is enshrined for us in the Bible and in the history of the Church. At any rate we must believe in the Bible as a record of moral and religious growth: as a progressive Revelation of God. We do not go to it for our Science, we do not go equally to all parts of it for our moral ideas, but we recognize a moral and progressive revelation of God, made through the medium of history, through the medium of men, through the medium of a nation and a Church. That must be the germ of our belief, and around it more may be grouped, but so long as a man is prepared to believe in that we must, I think, welcome him as a brother believer in the Bible and its truth.

But now we come to the contest that has raged around the Criticism of the Old Testament. Higher Criticism, let me remind you, is the ordinary expression for a study which does not confine itself to the text—as the Lower Criticism does, but deals with the composition of the books, their authorship and all internal questions that may arise.

The historic setting of the Old Testament, the history of the formation of its Canon, is very different from that of the New Testament. The one belongs to a world nearer to ourselves, its limits are within say a century and a half: the other ranges from a simple pastoral people to a full developed monarchy: its writers and its people were far

more different from ourselves than were the New Testament authors, and were also far more varied among themselves.

The question is therefore a more complicated one and seems to have aroused even stronger feelings and caused harder words. It has one side-issue of importance—viz., the extent of our Lord's human knowledge, and his use of language natural to the men of His earthly day. Did He accept limitations common to mankind, was His humiliation so real as to leave behind it His divine insight and power? Surely here is a problem difficult and needing to be treated with reverence, but admitting of different views, and it would seem a vast assumption to make a mere reference to Him decisive of questions that we can study for ourselves. I merely mention the problem lest I should seem to pass it by. If as Bishop Westcott suggests in a letter to Archbishop Benson, our Lord spoke as in common speech of the "sun-rising" and "sun-setting" might He not also speak of "Moses" or "David" as did His hearers, without going behind their ideas or adopting language of His own?

But when we come to study the Old Testament books we are met at once by the questions—did the writers use existing material or authorities, and if so can they be discovered? I have had myself to study medieval chronicles and I know how the best of them incorporate whole passages of previous writers. I should expect to find the same hold good of the Old Testament writers and I need not remind you here that even moderate critics of to-day accept that division of the Hexateuch into different layers which is the foundation of the Higher Criticism. If they accept it—and I have hardly a right on independent grounds to an opinion of my own—it is because they wish to find out all that God has to teach them: they know—and I know—no other way of doing this than to use on the Old Testament the same Canons of Criticism, of Scholarship, of common sense that we do upon other books which do not enshrine Revelation and have therefore less to teach us. I do not

think this method of Criticism trenches on the great issue of Revelation : it has not been invented for, and it is not solely used upon the Old Testament : it is something some of us have often to use upon other books. I know it gives to many devout minds, in the case of the Old Testament, a nobler view of God's dealings with the ancient world, and the preparation for the Christ who was to come in the fulness of the time. It is true it does change a view of the Old Testament which scholars of the past were contented with. It might be easier to rest content with their results, but God has given us the power to study and the right to know. We must face the responsibility of our opportunities. What, let me ask, if this after all be the true history of the Old Testament, and we, because we are afraid, let it lie hidden from our eyes. That would indeed be a disaster to our faith and a danger to ourselves. Let us know the truth, and the truth which is of God will surely teach us, when it deals with his work, something more about Himself.

For this reason I should not be afraid of criticism just because it did not quite agree with what people thought of old, or because they may think a little differently to-morrow. There is no finality in criticism or in knowledge. It is a question of methods—and I believe that the application of ordinary historic criticism to the books of the Old Testament is bound to give us a deeper knowledge of God's dealings with the world and therefore a fuller knowledge of Himself. At any rate I feel sure that if we may not use with the records and literature of the Jews the same methods that we use with the literature of Greece or Egypt or Rome, we must be content to know less of the true history of the Jews than of the other people, and yet their history is that which above all others is most vital for the world and ourselves. To bar criticism, to deny to reason and scholarship their use of God's own methods is to my mind a distrust of God and a forfeiture of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

It has been a matter of pain to me to see the language used on this side the Atlantic of writers, some of whom I know and to some of whom I am indebted. Bishop Ryle, an old Cambridge friend of mine, and one of the most devout and religious men I know: Prof. Sanday, who has been a pillar of strength to the Church in Britain, Prof. Kirkpatrick, and others of like views and like renown—all these are men wishing to know the truth, and the truth is not to be gained, let me remind you, by declamations from the pulpit or even by letters to the press. It is gained in Old Testament matters as elsewhere by the quiet unimpeded and unwearied work of prayerful and devoted scholars. Let us not impede their work, lest perchance—and I confess this is my fear—we should be found to fight against God.

I have not spoken of results: it may be they will vary or be different from what they appear at present to be. But I must confess that it seems to me, unless we are to accept verbal inspiration (a position which is to me incredible), or to refuse to know of the Old Testament what we can find out—the outlines of the present critical position will stand.

And it is for this reason I deprecate the treatment of such a problem solely in the interests of the unlearned and simple minds. They have their rights and their claims. Woe to us if by our negligence one of these little ones perish—and some eritics are wild and hazy and extreme just as some of their opponents are timid and unfair. But that is always the case when knowledge grows. Are you going to fetter surgery because of the existence of many a quack? But a Church which contained a St. Paul among its Apostles must never dread the learning of either Gentile or Jew. I remember—and this was a blessed lesson I learnt from Cambridge in the olden days—that learning and study and research are God's own precious gifts for strengthening and enriching God's very world.

We may have something to unlearn as well as something to learn: that is the price of having been too sure and too



positive of old. But do not let the judgments of men of past stifle the Divine oracles of God, which have a voice for us as truly as for them.

I grant you that if you do allow to the writers of the Old Testament the use of oral tradition, of manuscripts and of earlier sources—the ordinary human means of composition—further questions may arise. Some expressions, some events, may belong to an earlier tradition, may embody some fact which the writer himself did not vouch for. On such facts there will always be a difference of opinion and we have no right to force our own conclusions upon others. In the same way no critic has a right to insist upon the interpretation of anything as a historic fact which generation after generation has been left free to hold allegorical, and of this the work of Jonah is a case in point. But all these conclusions, remember, do not affect Inspiration or Revelation or touch the Person of Christ. I urge you for the sake of the simple souls you may have to teach, beware of being wise beyond what is written: do not exalt to the level of Inspiration the views of the past or the views you hold yourselves. Preach to them the Christ and do not wage needless battles upon points which the Church has always left open.

My brethren, I have spoken shortly—but the matter is most vital. I feel the responsibility of what I say, and I say it here in the place where most of all I am bound to feel my responsibility before God, and my duty towards you

## AN OPEN LETTER.

TO HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP-COADIUTOR OF MONTREAL,  
WITH REFERENCE TO HIS PROVINCIAL SYNOD SERMON, 1904.

MY LORD,—

As this sermon of mine, preached last June but delayed in publication by my absence and stress of work only appears in print after a sermon of your Lordship's on like topics but of very different views; it has seemed to me only respectful and right to add a few words of comment upon your Lordship's eloquent discourse.

I was one of the minority at the Provincial Synod who were unable to support a vote of thanks to your Lordship when its mover stated at first that he wished it to be regarded as approving your Lordship's general position and views. I knew your Lordship would acquit me of any personal disrespect in following my strong and conscientious opinions. When the Prolocutor ruled, with the approval of the Synod, that the motion, while expressing a courtesy we were all glad to render, did not bind the members of the Synod to approval of your Lordship's views, we of the minority willingly joined in thanks for an eloquence all men have learnt to expect whenever your Lordship speaks. Although my personal opinions are of slight importance I feel it right to add these words of explanation, prompted by a respect so sincere as to need no expression.

It might therefore seem unnecessary or presumptuous to make any comments upon what your Lordship said. But as one who is concerned with the training of young men, both in Arts and Divinity (primarily in History) who has to

study thought in older lands, and is familiar with the difficulties felt by educated laymen, I feel a special responsibility laid upon me. When I say with all due respect to your Lordship's person and position, that it would, in my opinion, be a serious danger to our Church if the views expressed in the Synod Sermon were either approved by the Church at large or generally and permanently held by individuals, it is plain that I could not, in my conscience, be silent. Personal and somewhat discourteous reflections made by some members of Synod upon myself as one of a band of Professors I should, of course, pass by: your Lordship's deliberate utterances on a general subject of great importance are something very different and deserve consideration: the interests of the Church and of what I think sound and religious learning are a matter more important still, and it is in these interests I speak. The views that I hold were challenged and I should, as it seems to me, be lacking in courage if I were not prepared to state and fully justify both them and myself. It may seem strange, but it is not unnecessary, to add that no view deserves condemnation upon the singular ground that it is held almost without exception by those who are specially devoted to learning and weighted by the responsibility of teaching.

To begin with, were the conclusion true that Christian Scholarship or Criticism (for the two mean the same thing) is bound not to go behind tradition it would mean in the end the removal from our Courses of Old and New Testament Criticism, the studies glorified by the labours of Westcott and Hort, (both of them critics in the Higher and Lower sense alike) of Sanday, Driver and of many others, and forming the richest gains of modern days. Had they and Scholars like them been fettered by tradition (often of a late and uncertain growth, and never authorized by the decrees of the Church): they would not have laboured and we should have been the poorer in our knowledge and appreciation of the Scriptures. Had the Church, primitive or medieval,

Eastern or Western, Roman or Anglican, held such adherence to traditions of authorship essential, some expression of such an opinion would have reached us. The Church did not shrink from asserting and emphasizing traditions in doctrine and worship: but these traditions of authorship it has always left open to investigation and discussion. They cannot therefore be fairly described as "the catholic faith of all the catholic ages on the subject of the Word of God." Indeed were Tradition to bind us we should be forced to believe, with a long string of writers (Jewish and Christian) from about A.D. 100 to A.D. 1500, that the whole of the Old Testament, after having been absolutely destroyed, was restored by Ezra from an inspired memory. This is absolutely the earliest tradition as to the formation of the Canon handed down to us, and might almost be described as the faith of most of the "Catholic ages." It was superseded after the Reformation by the equally unhistoric and later tradition of the formation of the Canon by the Great Synagogue. If tradition, unaccepted by the whole church, is to bind us, we should be forced to accept these traditions. But I am sure your Lordship would not for a moment hold such a view. Nor with Christian Tradition alone to guide us should we find it altogether easy to refuse some books of the Apocrypha an almost Canonical authority. (See Bishop Ryle, Canon of O. T., pp. 239-250; and Bleek, *Introd. to O. T.*, Eng. trans., II pp. 312 and 330-336.)

It is certainly true that the Church, both by its decrees and by its explicit formation of the Canon, has affirmed the Inspiration of the Scriptures. This is indeed the verdict of all Christian ages, a necessary outcome of the Catholic faith. But it is equally certain that the mode of Inspiration has never been defined; it is open to anyone, without trenching upon the Church's doctrine of Inspiration, to assume documentary sources to have been used by the Biblical writers, to discuss the literal truth of certain incidents as did Origen (*de Principiis IV*, 15-17). "The Scripture has inter-

woven in the history what did not actually happen: in some places what could not possibly have happened: in others what might possibly have happened, but did not happen of a certainty." He also accepts many parts as figurative, but he insists always upon the spiritual teaching, and it is this which the Fathers of the Church, unlike many later ages, held to be the main purpose of Inspiration. St. Augustine again distinguishes sharply (in language which if used before a Synod of to-day might place a theologian in danger) between what is historical and what is figurative in the Scriptures. Not every detail he says, is to be defended as having literally occurred. (St. Augustine *de Genesi ad literam*: I. For this reference I am indebted to Mr. Ottley's Bampton lectures on Aspects of the Old Testament pp. 401 on). And the great medieval scholar John of Salisbury (c 1120-1180) when asked as to the number of books in the Canon and their authors could say, "whether we hold this opinion or that, it brings no damage to our salvation. Moreover I consider that he rather assails the faith who affirms too confidently that which is not certain than he who abstains from a rash decision and leaves in uncertainty a subject on which he observes the Fathers disagree and which he is wholly unable to investigate. Opinions vary as to the authors, though in the church the opinion has prevailed that they were written by those whose names they bear.....But why should we be anxious to discuss various opinions on the subject, since we are agreed that the Holy Spirit is the one author of all Holy Scriptures." The whole passage as quoted by Westcott (Hist. Canon pp. 464-5) is most instructive and shews that tradition had not for a great medieval scholastic the binding force your Lordship claims for it now, and in his History of the Canon (pp. 487-494) Westcott has shown most conclusively that the denial to us of the freedom of discussion taken by these writers results from the teaching of the Swiss Reformers alone. It is therefore open to us to adopt (as do Dr. Gore, now the

Bishop of Worcester, and Dr. Sanday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, both notable champions of Inspiration) the critical position so often denounced. There was indeed in the days of the Fathers, a spiritual insight, a freedom of criticism and a liberty of interpretation which we sometimes seem to have lost today. We may say of all critical study what Bishop Westcott said—speaking of textual study—"the laws of criticism are absolute, and the Christian may confide with implicit reverences in their issues: in criticism and philology there is still room for the operation of that spirit of God which is promised to the Christian scholar." Upon one theory of Inspiration and one theory alone is such study impossible, but that, the Calvinist theory of Verbal Inspiration, I do not intend to discuss here.

I can not therefore agree with your Lordship in fearing the growth of criticism. It would be sad for the Church and world alike if any of us taught that any branch of study fearlessly and devoutly followed out could be eventually dangerous to religious truth: we of to-day are suffering from the opposition once so unwisely made between Science—the study of God's law—and Revelation—the voice of God Himself: let us not repeat the error in another field, but let us labour on believing that God will not put us to confusion, although it is true we may confuse ourselves. I fear many of the public will infer from your Lordship's utterance that Religion and Revelation have received serious shocks, and that their credit, in the eyes of modern scholars, is seriously impaired. It is true that religious knowledge, like all other kinds of knowledge, has constantly to be adjusting its facts in the light of life and growth. But in no age has religion received greater help from its scholars, and I cannot, for myself, believe it to be in the plight your Lordship so eloquently described. There were some who drew nearly as dark a picture when Erasmus four hundred years ago departed from the Vulgate and its tradition, to carry the Church back to the Greek of the Apostles. The groundlessness of such fears

for Religion has indeed been affirmed by an authority higher than any individual: a Committee of the Lambeth Episcopal Conference of 1897 recorded "their unfaltering conviction that the Divine authority and unique inspiration of the Holy Scriptures cannot be injuriously affected by the reverent and reasonable use of criticism in investigating the structure and composition of the different books." "They expected from such study in the future, if diligently and patiently pursued, great gain to the Church, in an increased and more vivid sense of the Divine Revelation which has been made therein through human agencies and human history, and which contains for us 'all things necessary for salvation.' And weighing 'the wellknown results of the study of the New Testament Scriptures' they 'expect analogous gains' from critical studies of the Old Testament. May I add the opinion upon this very question of the most spiritually minded of our great English scholars, Dr. Westcott, late Bishop of Durham, (Life II 60)—'We have much to learn, and the scantiest material to teach us. Meanwhile we must be patient, and above all not pledge the Faith to a special decision on 'critical' questions, For us the Old Testament is that of the Apostolic age. How it came to be so we will reverently seek to know. I cannot see that any conceivable result affects spiritual truth." And again he writes to Dr. Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Life II 68) "We want.....a living faith. When we are quite sure that God is speaking to us—and He is speaking—we shall not grow wild in discussing how He once spoke.....I am quite sure that our Christian faith ought not to be perilled on any predetermined view of what the history and character of the documents contained in the Old Testament must be. What we are bound to hold is that the Old Testament, substantially as we received it, is the Divine record of the Discipline of Israel. This it remains, whatever criticism may determine or leave undetermined as to constituent parts."

It was (if I may touch upon a personal matter) in the

University of Dr. Westcott that my friend Canon Welch and I myself were trained : to Dr. Westcott, I with many others owe the deepest spiritual debt. With his example before us, and his words in our ears and in our hearts we feel it would be a lasting hurt to our Church if any word of any preacher did aught to prevent a generation of Canadian scholars growing up who in such a spirit will "reverently seek to know." That is the danger I foresee from language such as your Lordship thought well to use.

But it might be said that your Lordship was only speaking of critics, hostile to the faith, and opposed to anything supernatural. My Lord, your Lordship's words will not hurt them. They will hurt the patient souls who half believe and partly know, and fain would believe in whole : they may tend to lower the value attached in Canada as elsewhere to the guidance of Christian scholars like Dr. Sanday, Dr. Driver at Oxford, and your Episcopal brother at Winchester. Such men approach the study of the Scriptures with a faith as fervent and a love as holy as your own. It would be presumption on my part to defend their orthodoxy, even in the case of Dr. Ryle, the Bishop of Winchester, whom I have known and honoured since we were fellow-undergraduates in the college which can claim Dr. Westcott as once a Professorial fellow : it would be presumption on the part of anyone to question their learning.

But there is not one word in your Lordship's sermon to enable a casual listener or reader to discriminate between the very different groups of critics. The stress laid upon the Babylonian captivity would hardly apply, without qualification, to any group : it would certainly not apply to the writers I have named above. We cannot expect your Lordship to affect a sympathy you do not feel, but even a critic who is a believer should not be treated unfairly and condemned along with men very different from himself. May I quote from the Bishop of Winchester (Preface to *The Canon of the Old Testament* : 1892, pp. VIII-IX). "There are, no



doubt, some who would still include the Biblical critics under the same sweeping charge of rejecting Revelation and denying the Inspiration of Scripture. . . . But they thus show so plainly either their want of acquaintance with the literature of Christian criticism or their disinclination to distinguish between the work of Christian scholars and that of avowed antagonists to religion, that the complete misapprehension under which they labour is not likely to be widely shared, and only calls for the sincere expression of a charitable regret. The Church is demanding a courageous restatement of these facts upon which modern historical criticism has thrown new light.....But we shall at least, I trust, endeavour to make use of the gift with which God has enriched our age, the gift of historical criticism, to the very utmost of our power, so that the Church may be found worthy of the responsibility which the possession of such a gift entails. If we are true to our belief in the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in our midst, we need never doubt that the Church of Christ is being guided—even through frequent failure—into a fuller knowledge of the truth." It is with these hopes and in this mind, rather than with (may I say it) the real timidity and fear of your Lordship's attitude towards modern studies I would see our Church in Canada face the magnificent possibilities, the weighty responsibilities, of its future.

I do not know that any of the many groups of critics would quite accept your Lordship's statement of the problem: no solution of it escapes difficulties altogether: the difficulties of the "traditional" views are obvious and well-known. But your Lordship seemed to speak as if the composition of ancient books were on lines similar to those of modern books, and their problems of authorship and materials as easy to solve. In the case of an ancient writer there is first of all the determination of the actual text as he wrote it: that is the province of the "Lower" or "Textual" critics. There then arises upon that text the criticism

of the author's veracity, historic truthfulness, use of previous writers and so forth. I am not here speaking so much to your Lordship to whom these distinctions and methods are of course familiar as to the outside public who know little of them. It is this second investigation, the criticism of the material when the text is found, which is known as Higher Criticism: it might better be called Historical Criticism, for it is the method we have constantly to use in our historical studies. Just as a copyist may have several manuscripts before him and from them in combination form a text by close study of which textual critics can again discover much of the manuscripts he used, so we can proceed with literary works. In the case of modern writers this process of Historical Criticism is mainly confined to a study of the author's honesty, the authorities upon which he depended for his statements, and the extent to which other authorities confirm his narrative. For as a rule a writer so passes his authorities through his own mind, so clothes their facts in his own language that were it not for the purpose of testing his accuracy his work could be treated as verbally independent. It is however very different with medieval and ancient writers. They often transferred to their own pages with no thought of dishonesty but in the simple use of the literary methods of the day, whole passages from previous writers. Passages of Tacitus (born 56 A.D.) have been recovered from a later writer Sulpicius Severus (in the fifth century): Diodorus Siculus (about B. C. 6) incorporates whole passages from writers such as Ephorus centuries earlier than himself: many medieval chronicles use two or three of their predecessors, sometimes in such a way that the parts incorporated can easily be denoted by difference of type. Of this Dr. Luard's edition of the Winchester Annals in the Rolls Series is a good illustration: down to A. D. 1066 the Annals follow verbatim a Manuscript History sometimes ascribed to Richard of Devizes: after this William of Malmesbury is mainly followed, but passages are also

taken from other writers: information about Winchester, where the Annals were written, is often added independently. The material thus comes from varied sources and by Higher Criticism the varied parts can be discriminated. The same is the case with other medieval works such as those on philosophy and theology. Historical Criticism (Higher Criticism if that name may be used) has in every case to discuss and possibly dissect a work in some such way. By such a method and by such a method alone can we determine the history and the historical value of any given work: not infrequently a passage if traced to an earlier writer has of course much greater weight than if it merely belonged to the text where we come across it: not infrequently from the alterations and additions made by the later writer we gain a knowledge of his own day and his own tendencies. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that this method of Historical Criticism, which has a science of its own, is within limits certain in its results: it has grown immensely in the last forty or fifty years, its use has placed the study of history (of secular history at any rate I may speak) upon a new foundation. It has recovered early works, long supposed to be lost: it has thrown light upon fields of history long in darkness: it has (and surely this is a great gain) enabled us to tread firmly where before we had groped.

The general public might not gather from the discussions upon Higher Criticism reaching its ears that there is here no question of a method applied to the Old Testament and to it alone: it is the method by which in any case of historic material we "reverently seek to know." It is as much an instrument of use, with those who are trained to use it, as the eyesight is with those who read ancient manuscripts. It would be almost impossible to lay down rules forbidding us to apply Historical Criticism to the Old or New Testament which would not equally forbid the application of Textual criticism. In the case of the New Testament the application of both branches of criticism has enlarged our knowledge and

deepened our spiritual life. If we employ a method we must be free to accept its results. We believe it is one of the gifts God has given us so that we may know the truth.

This method is employed not only with books written by one writer, but with those such as many medieval chronicles written by a succession of writers often all belonging to one monastic house. But there are works of a different class and with a different literary history, where we have not to deal with one individual writer but with a series so complicated as to be rather a literary growth than an effort of one writer. Broadly speaking the verdict of Higher Criticism in the case of the Old Testament is to substitute for one individual supposed to be the writer (such as Moses) a process involving many writers and revisions or as we should say editions. Your Lordship regrets this substitution and considers that the hypothesis of a literary growth fits in less well with the belief in inspiration than does the hypothesis of a single writer. I say hypothesis for *a priori* (apart from a tradition far from early in date and as I have said left open by the Church for discussion) there is no more reason to postulate one than the other: each is a hypothesis—the one is founded upon tradition, the other upon the result of scientific study. The hypothesis or the conclusion of a literary growth is indeed one that constantly meets us: in early writings it, and not the single writer, is the rule. The nature of the conclusion does not then of itself in any way weaken the results of criticism. For to many of the most pathetic of medieval poems we assign no author: the beauty of the Arthurian cycle—known as the *Morte D'Arthur*—is incontestable, but it is rather a growth than a production of a single mind. The priceless heritage of Englishmen, the *English Chronicle*, begun probably at the behest of our great King Alfred, is the production of a school of writers, it exists in different recensions, and has had a long history of its own. In such a continuous expression of the national life there is something at least as grand and as impressive as

in the composition of a single writer. We miss the personality, but we see the national force, the continuity of ages, that lies behind the literary process. These are cases, it is true, of poetic inspiration, of historic and patriotic inspiration and are therefore far below the Inspiration that deals with religious and moral truths. But why should not the Holy Spirit speak as truly and as well through a school or a succession of writers, even if some of them did set special objects before themselves or shared the special tendencies of their day, as He could through a single writer? We have absolutely no ground in Inspiration or in history for assuming one to be the case more than another: how the books came into being, whether by one writer's labours or by a deeper and longer literary growth, study or criticism can help us to say. But the Inspiration is there as truly, and speaks to us as truly, in the latter case as in the former. It is hard for those who believe in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, who believe that He will and can be with us always, to deny the possibility of an Inspiration working in such a way.

It is impossible for us English Churchmen, at any rate, with our own Prayer Book and its history in our mind to deny it. We cannot claim Inspiration for our Prayer Book but we do surely believe that God has guided its history and its growth. It speaks to us of no one mind alone: no one writer is either hidden or revealed for us in its pages: it was composed at no one time: it has rather grown, and grown in the deepest sympathy with the spirit of our Church speaking in it. Versicles that take us back to the very earliest Church, collects from Gregory the Great or even earlier Saints, pages from the English Uses and Prayers from the Roman Sacramentaries, translations instinct with the literary power of Cranmer, revisions by the Church at large, all these form a magnificent growth which excels in grandeur, and in its varied associations, any work possible for a single writer. Other liturgic growths might teach us the

same lesson, and we of the English Prayer Book should therefore never feel that in assigning a book to a literary growth and to a varied history instead of to a single writer we are belittling it or doing it wrong. Whether of the two we must assign it to is a matter for investigation and for investigation only: tradition may have its sway but it must not rule us.

As a further illustration of these literary growths we might take (I will not say the *False Decretals* with your Lordship but a very different work) the *Liber Pontificalis*—the ecclesiastical history of the Roman See—edited so carefully by the learned Abbe Duchesne, which became the model for many chronicles and did much to extend the influence of Rome. It was founded upon early lists of Bishops going back to the 2nd century, and upon the *Chronographers*: utilizing these materials it began as a contemporary chronicle just when the Papacy emerges from the early centuries: it is fairly full in the 4th century: it is contemporary in the sixth, seventh and in the eighth is very full. But its literary history is varied: the original work can be shown to have reached down to 530 A.D.: about 700 A.D. a writer extended it, and his extension was a basis of the work continued by later writers. But it is due to no one writer although by a late tradition connected with one special name and yet it reflects closely both the variations and fortunes of the Roman See.

I quote these examples not to parallel the work themselves with the Bible but to illustrate the methods and the results of Historical Criticism. It is employed and usefully employed elsewhere, it is as certain as the application of a science to literature can be: in the examples quoted—as in many others that might be brought—we arrive at no individual writer but at a long literary process which has given us the finished work. Such a result—usual elsewhere than in the case of the Old Testament—can in no way discredit the method. I would therefore respectfully urge that

much of argument in your Lordship's sermon directed to exhibit the improbability of such a result is beside the point. We, who have to use the method, take such a result not as a matter of course but as at least no cause for surprise. Many of the public however have not had reason to study earlier works in such a way, they have not had similar cases brought before them, and in their hasty but natural ignorance brush Historical Criticism aside. It is indeed useless to appeal to a large but necessarily untrained audience (I speak of training in the special branch of study concerned) for a judgment on such points. They have not the data before them, they have not had the requisite training: it is easy to force a verdict from them by sarcasm, by ridicule and by denunciation, but the verdict itself is worth little. It is to the quiet study and the patient conclusions of experts the appeal really lies.

The *data* of the question need to be clearly set out. It is here the problems of the Old Testament differ so greatly from those of the New Testament, and we need to remind ourselves and others that the details of the Old Testament have often a much less vital connection with our faith than have those of the New. It is a mistake in proportion, and it is no service to Christianity, if we insist upon (let us say) the historical character of the Work of Jonah, or the literal truth of the sun's standing still upon Gibeon, as strongly as we insist upon the virgin birth of our Lord, or the historical truth of His miracles. In many points there is a great distinction between the *data* of the New Testament and of the Old: the whole of the former is comprised within one century, and within a century of its close we are in a period where historical material is more abundant and our knowledge, apart from the Bible, greater. But the Old Testament covers a much larger period: from the Exodus to Ezra (444 B.C.) is probably some 800 years or more. Traditions as to authorship and composition had a long way to go, and troubled times to pass through before reaching a comparatively firm

footing in Josephus (70-100 A.D.), and his account of the Old Testament Canon. And even then it is the tradition about Ezra's miraculous memory that meets us: of earlier traditions there is no trace. The traditions of the Talmud (to which your Lordship refers) were recorded at still later dates, stretching from 200 A.D. to 500 A.D. at least: they were formed by a lengthy process (none, I presume, wishes to postulate a single author for the Talmud, which is admitted to be the work of two continuous schools) and from their date alone can have but little weight. The traditional view is then a late tradition and cannot claim to be contemporary with the books themselves: it is later than they are by some centuries and the *evidence* for it even then is of the slightest.

But the Books of the Old Testament can tell us, surely, something about themselves: they do not, it should be noted, claim largely to be contemporary with the events they describe: in Genesis, for instance, no such claim is made (with the possible exception of the dying speech of Jacob; the case of speeches I refer to below): some passages presuppose a later date of composition (e.g. Genesis XXXVI. 31: "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any kings over the children of Israel.") In other books earlier sources, apparently used, are quoted or mentioned (e.g. Joshua X, 13, to 2 Samuel I, 18, "The Book of Jasher," and Numbers XXI, 14, "The Book of the Wars of Jehovah.") We should surely be careful not to make any claim for the Books of the Old Testament they do not claim for themselves; even in the historic portions, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, there are few narratives claiming to be told by contemporaries in the form we now have them. If they make no claim to have been composed independently of earlier traditions or older sources, it is unwise and inviting confusion for us to make such claims in their name. We must allow these Books, which meant so much to the Jews, and mean so much to us, to tell us their own story in their



own way. But to elicit or even to understand a narrative from a witness differing from ourselves in conceptions, language and habits, is often a difficult task and requires the use of trained intelligence and skill. It is here that expert study, and the methods of historical criticism come in; and here is the reason why in the interests of truth, in the interests of the Books themselves, we ask to have reverent study left free: traditions, as we know from other cases, and as we have seen here, are not always formed very intelligently, their value varies with their date, and the fact that the Church has never pledged its members to the particular traditions here concerned, gives us the fullest right to demand such freedom.

It is true that some objection is made to treating the books of the Bible as other books are treated. It is surely sufficient answer to point to the results of treating the books of the New Testament in such a way: as a consequence of such treatment we know more of them both in general truths and single details than was ever known before. Why should we apply different canons of literature or history to the Bible from those applied elsewhere? To conclude, as your Lordship does, that "to compose speeches to put in the mouths of historical personages," is to destroy the historical value of the work where it is done, or to lower its character as a vehicle of truth, seems unnecessary. A canon that asserted any work where this is done to be unhistorical would put out of court Thucydides who (Eck. 1, 22) confesses he does it: not only the mediæval chroniclers but even later writers do the same. It is surely then no argument against criticism that it concludes this to have been done by some Old Testament writers.

I have distinguished in my sermon between the *methods* and the *results* of the Higher Criticism (a distinction at times lost sight of) because while the method itself is correct, its results so far as reached at present, may be only a step towards finality although not final. An excellent illustration of this is

given by the Lausiac History of Palladius, the best authority for the history of Egyptian Monasticism : in the middle ages, this work, in its current shape, was accepted as historic : in recent times its confusions and mistakes were exposed and it was held to be largely a romance : quite lately Dom Butler, a learned English Benedictine, has applied to the work the joint methods of the Lower and Higher Criticism, establishing the results (a) that in the earlier work a shorter text can be discriminated, (b) that the text so gained is of great historic value. Thus a firm footing has been gained in a field of work where without the continued application of criticism we should have been left either in error or without accurate knowledge. The verdict of Dom Butler (as embodied in his contributions to Cambridge Texts and Studies) is probably final for the work in question, but from time to time the verdict has been in suspense although the method has been the same throughout.

When applied to the Old Testament Historical Criticism distinguishes four groups or layers, which can be discerned to a large extent even in the English version, in the Hexateuch, or the Pentateuch with Joshua : there is (a) a part, denoted by J, in which the name Jehovah is used : (b) a part denoted by E in which the name Elohim is used : (c) a distinct and coherent part, the framework of the narrative priestly in tone and sympathies, denoted by P : (d) another distinct part which from its prevalence in Deuteronomy is denoted by D. While P and D are easily distinguished from each other and from J and E, J and E are not so easily separated from each other : their narratives overlap and are so blended that critics while agreeing as to their existence generally differ about details : hence their combination JE is often treated as a whole. These divisions which cover not only the Hexateuch but the text of the historical books as well are generally admitted by the vast majority of scholars : they are due to no new theories, and the belief in their existence is due to the use in Old Testament study of the methods

used in the other examples spoken of. It is convenient as with MSS. to denote them by letters, just as one scholar denotes the earliest Roman version of the Apostles' Creed by R, and there is nothing strange in the abbreviated symbols. It will be seen that if the results appear at first sight to injure the unity of the Pentateuch (which was more a unity of tradition than contents or scheme) it gives a higher unity to the Old Testament as a whole: the Hexateuch and all the Historical Books are shown to have gone through the same process, and are thus brought into a more vivid connexion with the whole life and development of the Jewish nation. It in no way affects the teaching or the results of Inspiration: the Old Testament remains the same for the critic after as before his conclusions. It does affect our views as to the way in which the Old Testament came into being: it may affect our views as to the course of Jewish history as a whole. But those views are either the result of tradition (possibly mistaken) or else an inference (possibly mistaken) from the books themselves. A result which demanded the surrender of those views need not affect our views of Revelation: it should certainly not be represented as an attack upon religion. Where the church has not spoken with the voice of authority it is surely hazardous for private speculation to insist upon its own views as the test of orthodoxy. And for all the proof that can be given either from the Books of the Old Testament themselves or from any external source the traditional view is as much a speculation as the view of the Higher Criticism of to-day. Indeed it has not so strong a support of either reasoning or analogy behind it. I do not care to press upon others what I feel most strongly for myself that these critical results give a greater majesty and power to Old Testament History besides removing many difficulties that have sorely perplexed many anxious souls. For arguments in favour of them Dr. Driver's preface quoted below may be referred to: I merely state the results to shew their analogy with the existence of divisions found in

the other cases mentioned.

But are these questions which should be forced upon the general public? I can only think of two conditions which would make their general discussion desirable or beneficial. One condition would be that a conclusion upon them one way or other was essential to religion: another would be that the general public was qualified to form an opinion. The former condition does not in my opinion, exist. I know men equally pious and devout who hold exactly opposite views upon them: the church, which has with so faltering voice defined the essentials of religion, has not demanded the profession of any special view upon this matter. To ask the general public to judge a point of scholarship, the decision of which demands training and study, is much the same as to discuss before them a question of geology or a difficulty in the higher mathematics. If such questions touched practical life the discussion might have to be forced upon the wider public: if these critical questions touched the foundations of religion their discussion in public might be necessary. I am content to hold with Dr. Westcott that no conceivable results of criticism can make any difference to the faith, therefore and not because of any lack of confidence in my views or courage to express them I deprecate a discussion which can do little good and may do much harm. Harm it cannot help doing if the public are led to suppose that Religion and Research, Revelation and Reason are antitheses no mind can reconcile.

Beyond the question of these different portions there lies the further question of the dates to be assigned to them. While critics generally agree as to the portions there is some difference among them as to dates. By most authorities the writers of the parts denoted by J and E are assigned to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.: D, later in date, was certainly written before the discovery of the law under Josiah (621 B.C.): for P, probably a product of a school of writers rather than of a single writer, a date in the period of the

Exile is now usually given. The succession of prophets beginning with Amos thus went on side by side with the growth of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is to this late date for the recension denoted by P mos. opposition has been made. Much of what has been said above as to the divisions into recensions applies to this question of date. It does not touch the fact of Inspiration or the religious value of the Old Testament. It may affect our view of Jewish history: it cannot affect our view of the supernatural or of the long preparation for the Christ. The Books themselves contain the date and the problem: the true solution of the problem is, as it were, part of the message of the Books themselves. But the history of the Jews, and the Books which bear that message must be studied as other histories and other books.

Of course it is often said and oftener still implied that this critical view (and criticism in this sense does not imply any condemnation or hostility but merely study) is the result of a dislike of the supernatural and is due to assumptions hostile to religion and arbitrary in kind. But as Dr. Driver (in the preface to his recent commentary upon Genesis, page LXI) says of these results, so far as they apply to Genesis, "not one of the conclusions reached in the preceding pages is arrived at upon arbitrary or *a priori* grounds: not one of them depends upon any denial, or even doubt, of the supernatural or of the miraculous: they are, one and all, forced upon us by the facts." None, to my mind, who read this work of his carefully can doubt that his labour is inspired by true devotion: few, I think, would rise from the reading without a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures: it would be cause for regret surely if our church in Canada were to shut itself out from any share in such study of the written Word of God.

I hope, my Lord, that what I have said has made my position clear: none, I am sure, cherishes more deeply than I do, continuity with the past: none is, I hope, readier to hear the voice of the church, but I also

value dearly the freedom to study and to think : I value them for myself, and I would fain see them preserved for the church your Lordship has served so well. But I think your Lordship's views would in the end deprive the church of that freedom which is part of its heritage and a condition of its growth.

Your Lordship will see that I have commented rather upon the broad position and the general statements than upon single details. When any writer or preacher whatever may be his position deals with scholarship or history it is by scholarship and history apart from his position his views must be tested. I am sure your Lordship will prefer that I should have so dealt with them although I trust I have in no way shown any disrespect in so doing.

I have written because I have a strong belief, founded upon training and deepened by experience, that the Spirit of God can still to-day as of old guide earnest seekers into the truth they seek. I believe that the Christ, to whom the Old Testament looks forward as the New looks back, is the Truth as well as the Life and the Light. I cannot therefore imagine that any reverent methods of seeking the truth can be alien to His Church or unsuited for instruments of the Divine study that centres in Him. There may be branches of the Church that dare not wholly trust the unfettered exercise of the intellect, that dread the light of historic criticism, and deaden life by the iron hand of tradition. But to the mind of some of us this is not the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free;" this is not the lesson of the life of St. Paul; we do not so lightly hold the lesson of the Reformation. We believe, and we have felt for ourselves, that the teaching of some great scholars of to-day (and possibly above all of Dr. Driver in his sermons and commentaries alike) has quickened the Old Testament for us, placed it in closer relation with the discipline of the Jewish world, brought us nearer to the Christ for whom that discipline prepared. Nothing less than feelings such as

these could have tempted me to write as I have done in defence of interests that are dear to me and of names that I revere. It would be a grievous loss to our Church in Canada if it were to lose touch of the religious and intellectual guides of the older world. We have inherited its religious past, we share in its continued worship, we dare not, in the interests of the Church, lose its intellectual freedom.

I beg to remain, my Lord, with all due respect,

Your humble servant,

JAMES POUNDER WHITNEY.

