

HIGHER CRITICISM

Kenyon, Sir Frederic, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts . Revised by A. W. Adams. Introduction by G. R. Driver. (New York: Harper & Brothers) 1958

p. 62 The resistance to the principle of free inquiry is not so strong as it once was, but it is perhaps still advisable at this point to utter a warning against the misuse which is frequently made of the phrase 'Higher Criticism', as if it implied an attitude of disbelief in the authenticity of the Bible. This is a complete misunderstanding of the real meaning of the words. 'Higher Criticism' is criticism applied to the substance or contents of a book, while 'Lower Criticism' is criticism applied to its form or text. And criticism is not necessarily hostile criticism. It is merely examination or judgment. It is just as much 'Higher Criticism' to argue that Moses personally wrote all the books of the Pentateuch as it is to maintain that they are of late date and consequently ^{p.63} / untrustworthy. The question of importance is not whether the criticism is 'higher', but whether it is sound; and that is a question of evidence and argument, not of a priori assumptions or of impeaching the motives of those whose views we find unpalatable or consider to be unsound.