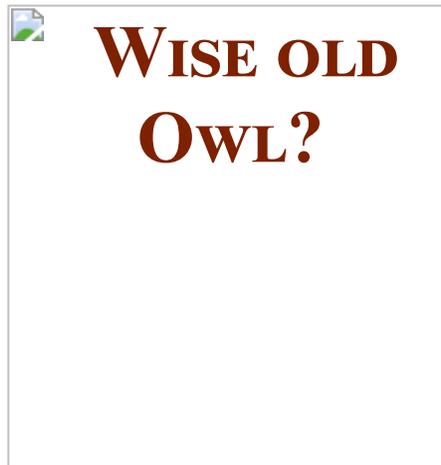


"Old Paths" Baptist Ministries

SHOULD YOU TRUST SCHOLARS?



MAYBE...
MAYBE NOT...

A HISTORY OF THE "HIGHER CRITICISM" MOVEMENT

In the study of the word of God, the Bible, there is a discipline known as "Biblical Criticism." This is nothing more than a study of the origin, development and compilation of the Scriptures into what we now have today in our Bible. It is a very worthwhile study if the intent is to find out knowledge that will increase one's belief and trust in the written word of God. There are two major ways to embark upon this discipline:

- A. To study Biblical Criticism from a believing standpoint recognizing that the history of the Bible is a history replete with the supernatural acts of an Almighty God. I believe that this is the correct way to study God's word.
- B. To study Biblical Criticism from an unbelieving standpoint believing that the Bible is just another book written by men. I believe that this method or way of studying the history of the Bible will lead one to erroneous conclusions that will erode the faith "*once delivered to the saints.*"

Within the Biblical Criticism science there are two major delineations—Higher and Lower Criticism. Generally, Lower Criticism is the study of the manuscripts available from which our modern Bibles are derived. This has developed into what is now known as "Textual Criticism." It is a valuable study if approached from a believing point of view. Generally, Higher Criticism has been defined as the study of the history of the literary aspect of the Bible. Dr. R.A. Torrey states, "*The term Higher Criticism, then, means nothing more than the study of the literary structure of the various books of the Bible, and more especially of the Old Testament.*" Of course, both my definition and Dr. Torrey's are very elementary just to give the reader a very brief understanding of the terms used. Any research into these subjects will yield much more in depth definitions. The purpose of this short paper is to give the reader a rudimentary understanding of the history of belief and unbelief of the Bible and to try to develop a trust in our English Bible in spite of the relentless assault by the media, TV, and other unbelievers upon its character and trustworthiness. The assault weapons used are many and varied, but all can be traced back to the first "*Yea, hath God said,*" mentioned in Genesis 3. The Higher Criticism study of the Bible had some worthy men who were believers and approached their studies from a believing standpoint. Unfortunately, many who embarked upon these studies in Biblical Criticism were not believers and fell into the trap laid by the first unbeliever, Satan. There have been many "*Yea, hath God said Societies*" (YHGSS) formed over the almost 6 thousand years of man's history upon earth, and the unbelieving Higher Criticism crowd of the past 150 to 200 years has had a very strong impact on the science of the study of the Bible in our day. Why is this so?



Dr. Torrey helps us to understand this phenomenon with this statement, "*No study perhaps requires so devout a spirit and so exalted a faith in the supernatural as the pursuit of the Higher Criticism. It demands at once the ability of the scholar, and the simplicity of the believing child of God. For without faith no one can explain the Holy Scriptures, and without scholarship no one can investigate historic origins.*"

Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him".*

For a person to embark upon the study of God's word without faith is to embark upon a voyage doomed to failure. It will not "...*please him.*" Faith is nothing mysterious, it is just a belief in God and His revealed word. Therefore, a study in the science of Biblical Criticism must begin with a life of faith. The first step of faith is to believe what God says about salvation,

Romans 10:10-14

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¹²For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 3:7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

Therefore, before a person can really study the Bible with an understanding spirit, he or she must be saved. The problem that we encounter is that too many so-called scholars are not saved and therefore are not qualified to enter into the scientific study of the Bible.

Some of the scholars of the past who foisted upon us the unbelieving Higher Criticism of the Bible are: Spinoza, Le Clerk, Astruc, Eichhorn, DeWette, Bleek, Ewald, Graf, Wellhausen, Samuel Davidson, Robertson Smith, Driver, Kuenen, and Briggs to name just a few. Some of these names may be familiar as some of them were also involved in giving us the modern versions of the Bible. Dr. Torrey says of these men, *"In one word, the formative forces of the Higher Critical movement were rationalistic forces, and the men who were its chief authors and expositors, who "on account of purely philological criticism have acquired an appalling authority," were men who had discarded belief in God and Jesus Christ Whom He had sent. The Bible, in their view, was a mere human product."*

The Higher Criticism movement of the 1800's has permeated to the very core of most schools in America. Harvard, Yale, Brown, etc., etc., have degenerated to the extent that you couldn't find God in those 'Schools of Higher Learning' if you searched with a bloodhound. Prior to the German

rationalist movement there were many people who studied the history of the Bible with a believing spirit and faith in God. But as time moved on the German movement became more and more predominant. Now, almost all schools either ignore the Bible completely or study its history from an unbelieving point of view.

In modern times the leaders of the YHGSS have books, magazines, TV programs, Internet sites and schools totally dedicated to undermining belief in the Bible. These sources of unbelief have virtually total control of our world today. No matter where you look today, subtle and not so subtle assaults on believing God's word are evident to the true believer. When the National Geographic Society runs a TV special on the history of the Bible, you can be sure of one thing, it will cause people to doubt that God's word is reliable. When the History Channel runs a series about the DaVinci Code, it will cause people to doubt that we have an authoritative Bible. When you have a so-called expert come on Fox News and discuss the subject of the age of dinosaurs, you can depend upon him or her to cast doubt upon God's word by stating the "fact" that dinosaurs lived 65 to 100 million years ago. The YHGSS even has infiltrated so called Christian organizations to the extent that most Bible colleges have curricula that reinforce the belief that what we have in our Bible cannot be trusted. Instead of trusting God and His word, put your trust in the Bible College Professor to let you know what is Holy Scripture and what is not. After all, the translators of the AV 1611 made a mistake in that verse and "*a better translation would be...*"- "***Yea, hath God said....***"



Are there or have there been outstanding Biblical scholars who reject the school of unbelieving Higher Criticism and subscribe to a believing point of view based upon a comprehensive study of the Bible's history? Absolutely!. Men like Lancelot Andrews, William Barlow, John Reynolds, Richard Kilbye, Scrivener, Robert Dick Wilson, David Cloud, Dean Burgon, Benjamin Wilkinson, Laurence Chaderton, Edward Hills, Philip Maury, D.A. Waite and others were/are brilliant men who understood the importance of believing Bible study and wrote about it. However, the din of the unbelieving crowd has almost drowned out their voices over the past years.

Has this had an effect upon the society in which we live? Absolutely. Modern Higher Criticism has spawned a belief system that has undermined mankind's belief in a supernatural book with a Supernatural God to the extent that we are now living in the last chapter of the Book of Judges where, "***...every man did (or today is doing) that which was right in his own eyes.***" **Judges 21:25b.** You would expect unbelievers to follow that corrupt philosophy, but the tragedy of the day is that even those who call themselves Christians are infected with the disease. Recently The Barna

Group did a survey of people who called themselves "born again Christians" and found that only 9 percent have a Biblical worldview. Essentially, Barna defined a Biblical Worldview as just believing that God is and that He has revealed Himself in the Bible. This is the worldview that was espoused by believing scholars prior to the degeneration into unbelief which came about as a result of the modern "Higher Criticism" philosophy. This "...*degenerate plant of a strange vine...*" (Jeremiah 2:21) has just about consumed our spiritual world. In the area of our United States known as the South a plant indigenous to China and Japan known as the 'Kudzu Plant' has overtaken 15 million acres and displaced many local indigenous plants. It is looked upon as intruder by many people. It appears to be indestructible and out of control. I am afraid that the destructive Higher Criticism has taken over Biblical Christianity like a spiritual Kudzu plant and only a return to a solid belief in God's Holy word leading men to salvation will return us to sanity.

The only hope for our country is God and His word. Yet, too many people have abandoned a belief and trust in God's word for the shaky foundation of man's opinion. It does not take much discernment for one to see that mankind is headed in the wrong direction.

The foundational truth that one must believe is that, "God is." Surely that would not be difficult to believe, yet the great majority of non-believers live their lives as if God does not exist. Jacob W. Kapp writing in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia on the subject of 'atheism' calls these people, "practical atheists." He states, "*It has nothing at all to do with belief. Indeed it accepts the affirmations of theism. It has reference wholly to the mode of life. **It is to live as though there was no God.***" (Bold emphasis mine)

The sad truth about this is that many believers also live their lives as if "**there was no God**" when they refuse to obey the word of God. God says, "give" and they don't give. God says "go" and they don't go. I think that maybe the most disturbing way to ignore God is to pervert His words by changing them, adding to them, or by taking away from them in the manner that some so-called scholars do with their perversions of the Bible. Our adversary has very subtly and deceitfully caused many people to doubt the word of God simply by inundating churches with altered words of God thereby reducing the effectiveness of God's word by diluting it's power with the words of men.

Don't let them slip you a "bean bag" for the dynamite of God's unadulterated English word – The Authorized 1611 Bible.

Written by *Dr. Robert E. Bliss*

