

Deemphasis on the Gospel

This may not have been intentional but it is apparent that with the coming of an age of greater thought, there was a reaction against the great revivals and the lessening of Gospel interest. It is seen mostly in the lack of our period and the comment is that in the absence of positive truth error will flourish.

Church Multiplication

A strange item is the fact that as the denominations grew in number the ability to offer theological control to the life of the church continually decreased. It is true that iron sharpens iron but it can be good only to a certain point...in time all will lose edge and identity.

IV.2.b Biblical CriticismDevelopment of Biblical Criticism

With the rationalistic enlightenment came the challenging of nearly everything that was historic or classical. The older literary works were popularly rejected as not genuine and regarded as populist frauds. Even more recent works (Shakespeare!) were challenged. It was the beginning of an age of doubt that would look closely and critically at all sorts of things. Perhaps there is no harm in taking a critical look but when the critical look makes no allowance of the possible reality of an existing situation, it works without a full induction of the facts. Although there had been doubters of the Scripture before, the turn in this period was to have a rationalistic approach to the Scripture with complete disregard for what it says of itself...and much of this doubt would be centered in the church itself. The literary biblical criticism may be said to have begun practically with Astruc (1753) although the foundations were much earlier. Looking for the original source materials became the game. In earlier thinkers there was not much that amounted to denial of basic concepts but in the next century the ideas of literary criticism would explode into a denial of all the established points as they were given in the Word. Please note that the concept of biblical criticism as developed in this paragraph is what we will later call "destructive biblical criticism" and is treated in greater detail in the "Introduction" courses of the seminary curriculum.