

help in the process of exact detail interpretation of the Scriptures, but the loss is a hundred-fold greater when this element is used or abused in order to diminish or reduce to a minimum, or even exclude entirely the divine factor as the *sui generis* element in these writings over against all other literatures, when scholars take the position of Kuenen, who declares it as his standpoint to start with, that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are no more a supernatural revelation than are the literary productions of Mohammed and Zarathustra, and that between the religion of the Old and the New Testaments on the one hand and all other religions on the other, there exists no specific difference (De Godsdienst, 1, 5—13 our standpoint), then the methods and the resultant schemes from such begging of the question can, of course, lay no claim to a fair and honest critical treatment of the divine word and Scriptures. Kuenen's reduction of religion and revelation to human factors exclusively is, of course, an extreme and radical and not a representative illustration of the peculiar spirit and tendencies of the modern critical school. But it is a fair example of what the one-sided development of a principle and methods, which may be correct within proper limits and modifications, may lead to, and it will further serve the purpose of showing where the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of modern Biblical criticism lie.

It is accordingly not an accidental feature of the technical Bible study of the day that the questions of history, chronology, archaeology, and the like occupy a prominence never before enjoyed. The older generation of Bible students would not have exhibited the same zeal in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics and Assyrian cuneiforms, inscriptions, in viewing the Book in the light of the Land, in Oriental history, customs and manners, as is exhibited by their successors now. The ideal aim now is to bring to bear upon the interpreter all the conditions that surrounded the original writer, and by thus as much as possible putting the former in the place of the latter, enable him to think over again and correctly the original thoughts. In idea and ideal there lies in this a decided advance over the manners and methods of former days. It is only to be regretted then in taking this step, modern Biblical science has to a greater or less degree, at least in the case of many prominent investigators, neglected or ignored that factor in revelation which it was the chief glory of other generations to have made especially and perhaps at times unduly prominent.

In the application of these general principles and tendencies to the details of Biblical problems, the beginning must be made with lower or textual criticism. If the words of Revelation are to be interpreted in their own meaning and signification, the first thing necessary is to have those words in exactly the same form and shape in which they were penned. In other words, textual criticism aims at the reproduction of the *ipsissima verba* of the sacred scribes. The necessity and