

## A Cynical Brand of Scholarship

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MORE THAN A HUNDRED years ago religious liberals began mixing rationalism and Christianity on an unprecedented scale. The elixir that resulted from that blend turned out to be a deadly poison.

One of the more highly touted products of this turn-of-the-century religious modernism was a new approach to the Scriptures known as *higher criticism*, a principal aspect of which was Historical Criticism. The historical critics subjected the Bible to a cynical brand of scholarship. They devised speculative literary theories—all rooted in skepticism—about the authorship and origin of various biblical books.

They routinely denied both the authenticity and the historicity of Scripture. Before long the critics' theories themselves were canonized, and the word *scholarship* became synonymous with higher criticism in many people's minds.

By the early part of this century, most of the mainline Protestant denominations had embraced one form or another of Historical Criticism. And as they did so, one denomination after the other began the inevitable process of decay and decline.

Today many of those denominations are mere shells of what they once were. Their churches, once bustling, are now lifeless and empty—monuments to skepticism, liberalism, and humanistic rationalism. The damning and destructive fruits of Historical Criticism were thus made manifest for all to see.

(The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship by Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1998, 9, From Foreword by John MacArthur, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)