

The Role of the Bible in Contemporary Christian Education, by Sara Little
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Modern religious education, in the technical sense of the term may be said to have begun with the organization of the Religious Education Association in 1903. It was imbued with liberal theological presuppositions, and although it did not subsume everything that was happening in the Sunday School and other agencies, religious education of this day was precursor of and in contrast to the Christian education of the contemporary period.

The one word most descriptive of the Bible for leading religious educators by the third decade of the twentieth century seems to be "resources", which is a clear indication of how it was to be used. To understand why this came to be, one must go behind the scene to an earlier historical period and isolate at least two factors out of the complex situation - the new formulations of Schliermacher and the development of higher criticism.

. Schliermacher

Criticism and analysis of historical sources especially from the time of the publication in 1878 of Julius Wellhausen's Geschichte Israels, eventuated in rather radical conclusions concerning the Bible, more so in Europe than in America, Darwinian evolution and the scientific method seemed applicable to Bible study.

Footnote to a comprehensive treatment of the subject - John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted through Its Development (New York; Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1954) Chapters 9 and 10 are particularly pertinent.