

It is my conviction that when we examine the facts which God has made, and the Book which he has inspired, we will find that they fit together. I believe it is worthwhile for us to examine all available facts and see how they fit together. Errors are not always the result of adopting a false presupposition at the first point. They are often the result of failure to examine all the relevant facts or of drawing wrong conclusions from the evidence that is available.

My desire for this course is twofold. On the one hand I want to remove from you any attitude which you may have of thinking that it is completely senseless to believe in this documentary business, and that it is absurd to even pay any attention to it. We need to realize that many people of great intellect, who have done a great deal of very careful study, have believed in it and still believe in it today. We need to see the great strength it has. We need to know how it came into existence and won such widespread acceptance. Many people — some of them against their will and in spite of their presuppositions — were dragged into it, feeling themselves unable to answer the facts presented to them in its favor. It is my desire for you to have something of a sympathetic understanding of its development.

My second desire is that you should see something of the actual situation regarding the facts and arguments involved. I would like you to understand the basis upon which it rests, to see its weaknesses, and to see the reasons it does not rest upon true conclusions from actual facts. In my opinion it is vital, in training a group with your background, that both of these purposes be realized.

It is possible to ignore the existence of Higher Criticism and simply do evangelistic, pastoral, or missionary work and never pay any attention to the questions it raises. For a time you may completely ignore the Higher Criticism, but if your work is at all successful you will find that students from families affected by your ministry — who are bright young people anxious to make their lives count for the Lord — will be attending universities, and in a very short time many of them will be affected directly or indirectly by the Higher Criticism and its results and implications. You will then find that if you know nothing about it (except to say that it is perfectly absurd and that no sensible person