

ately someone who is familiar with the higher criticism knows that they are simply parroting something they have heard from someone else and have no real understanding of the subject. After that they may go on and give a very excellent argument, including some excellent material, but it will have no effect at all.

In this course there is one thing that I insist upon: that you get a definite and exact understanding of what the higher criticism is. You may understand some of the arguments I will give you against it, and not others. You may forget some details and remember others. If you have the basic material you can review the rest or study it through on your own. Your success in the course does not depend on your having an absolutely perfect understanding of the arguments against the higher criticism that I shall give, but I will insist that you have an absolutely perfect knowledge and understanding of the principal details of what the theory is and how it has developed. If you do not have that, you will not be in a position to discuss it or to understand the arguments against it. For this reason, I am going to insist, in the early portion of the course, upon a meticulously accurate recollection of the principal facts about the history of the higher criticism and an exact knowledge of the positions that various scholars have held. I remember one time a few years ago that a man failed in this course and then he studied up very hard on it and took a make-up examination. In one of the questions in the make-up examination I asked him to describe the P document and he gave me an absolutely perfect description of the J document, calling it the P document. It was as good a description of the J document as I have ever seen. But what I asked for was the P document! When you finish this course it should seem just as absurd to you to say that the P document is considered by critics to be the oldest document as it would be to say that California is the state in which the capital of the United States is located. If it is not just as absurd to you as that would be, why there is no point in anything else you might have learned from the course. (I am glad to be able to report that the student repeated the entire course and turned in an excellent examination at the end of it.)

At this point I am stressing the fact that it is far more important to master the main features of the higher criticism than to try to remem-