

Here, not less truly than in the life of the individual believer, all real and assured progress is through guidance of the Holy Spirit; and unless He shall direct and govern theological research and activity, only error and failure can result.

It is not necessary to vindicate theological studies. Wherever the great problems which they present are felt to be important, they must receive attention. Men will earnestly enquire into the structure and characteristics of the Bible as a whole, and in its several parts. They will ask, Who wrote this or that book of Scripture? Under what circumstances was it produced? What was the writer's aim and object? How has he sought to accomplish that aim? What are the distinctive features of his thinking and style? How does his work stand related to other parts of the sacred volume? Have we this production as it left the writer's pen, or has it undergone changes of more or less importance?

Then there are large and vital questions touching the degree of authority pertaining to all canonical Scripture. Are the histories and narratives of the Bible authentic throughout? Would their religious value remain unimpaired should their authenticity be—in part, at least—discredited; or must we hold authenticity essential to canonical authority? Are the ethical teachings and decisions of Scripture in all places of such character that a Christian man may confidently use them in the direction of his life; or has morality been a development—thus requiring that the earlier teachings at least should be received with discrimination? Is the Bible the one absolute rule of faith and practice, from which there is no appeal; or are there other authorities of equal rank? Are the Scriptures inspired throughout, and does inspiration carry inerrancy? If inerrancy is involved, is it to be predicted of the substance of the teaching, or of the entire contents of Scripture?

But our investigations will necessarily extend to the great topics of which the Bible treats, and to the revelations therein made. Questions regarding the characteristics and history of the Bible are merely introductory to the study of its doctrine. And here the deepest, and most difficult, and most important things which the human mind can entertain come before us. God and man, sin and salvation, life and death, are the momen-