

in short, they would comprehend the Astronomy, Geography, and Geology of the ancient Hebrews, not in order to adopt their opinions — the time for this is long past — but to contrast these with our present knowledge. Readers of this class are careful to gain such information respecting all these points as will enable them to enter into the thoughts and situations both of those who wrote and of those who first read the sacred narratives, so that they may transport themselves, in imagination, to the spot, and back to the age in which all occurred. At the same time they use all the information obtained since then, in order to judge the opinions of the various writers, and to ascertain the reality of the facts recorded. Their whole interest in the Bible is a scientific one, to gain information, and to construct or resolve theories: they desire to know the whole meaning of each writer, in order afterwards to ascertain the truth.

3. There is a third class, differing widely from both the foregoing, who constitute the majority of the religiously Christian world. They care little for the letter of Scripture, and do not examine into its correspondence with actual facts; nor yet into the opinions, manners and habits of the people concerning whom the writings treat, and from whom they proceed. It is solely to cultivate their religious affections, and to impart religious hopes and consolations, that they employ the sacred narrative. It is, in one word, for *edification* that they read, and every construction of words which will increase this power of the sacred book over their minds is eagerly embraced or invented by them; whilst every interpretation which tends to bring down their soaring thoughts, or, as they would think, to naturalize or materialize a work, every page of