

our reason, and to follow the example of the Bereans, who are styled by the sacred historian as more noble or liberal minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. This search is incumbent upon all Christians according to their measure, but more particularly upon us, my Reverend Brethren, who are bound to be apt or fit to teach, to be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us, and to show ourselves workmen, that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Give me leave upon this occasion to make some observations on the study of Theology, which I should have declined were it not for reasons which I deem imperious at the present juncture. I need hardly inform you that much misconception prevails upon this subject. Many seem to entertain the notion, that the principal business of a Theological Professor is to inculcate the tenets and maintain that system of order and discipline by which his own Church is distinguished from other Christian denominations. Now certainly a Professor of Theology, who should enter upon the discharge of this duty with ideas such as these would understand his duty ill, and it is to be feared would discharge it much worse. It is to be presumed, that those who enter upon a course of Theological studies have passed through much preparatory discipline, that besides a competent knowledge of the Greek and Latin Classics, they have had their reasoning powers so exercised and invigorated by mathematical and logical investigation, that they are able to discriminate between truth and sophistry, and fitted to form a right judgment upon controverted subjects, when the evidence on both sides is fairly laid before them.

There are many subjects of Theology common to all Christians, and which therefore furnish no matter for dispute; such as the evidences of natural and revealed religion, criticism, and interpretation of the Scriptures, or what is usually called the exegetical part of Theology; upon the first and second of these important topics it is needless to make any observations, as on them the student of Divinity can be at no loss as long as the works of Grotius, Butler, Leslie, Campbell, Chalmers and Paley remain, which have justly been called the common stock of Theologians. From the learned labours of Campbell, Michaelis, the Lectures of Bishop Marsh, the Biblical Institutes of Dr. Gerard, and from the most excellent and useful work of Hartwell Horne, the student may derive all the information necessary upon this most interesting part of study usually termed Scriptural Criticism.