

Many writers of considerable name have been recently proclaiming that our chief works on Systematic Theology are constructed on a purely deductive method, and that the inductive reasoning to which all science defers has hardly begun to be applied to dogmatics—a serious charge, indeed, if true. When men who thus regard our theological literature condescend to deliver their opinions on matters of doctrine and interpretation, we are not surprised that they should be of a somewhat radical type.

But having thus indicated sources of danger to theology when men whose studies are too exclusively scientific enter a province to which they are not accustomed, it becomes necessary to add that scientific attainments and a good scientific training are in many respects of the greatest value to the student of the Bible and of theology. Too high demands cannot be made on theology as to the legitimacy and scientific accuracy of its methods. The unscientific should certainly not find refuge in that province of human thought which is the highest and holiest; for in every department where science has right of entry the unscientific will probably lead to the untrue. Let theology, then, be thoroughly scientific, but let no methods and canons which are properly applicable to other subjects but not to it be unseasonably introduced. Let the accuracy of thought, the strict regard for fact, the devotion to truth, which are the honorable characteristics of the man of science, have their complete illustration in the theologian; but let him still remember that the evidence by which he must establish his weighty conclusions is chiefly moral; that in discussing questions which relate to God and the soul humility and reverence are quite as essential as clearness of thought, and that none but the Spirit of God can interpret for us the things which are of God. Should the study of theology be prosecuted in a spirit in which scientific fidelity is properly blended with devotion, there will be little difficulty, we apprehend, in harmonizing the claims of the old and the new, of the earlier centuries with the present; the conservative and the progressive will so happily combine that each shall but supplement and regulate the other. These words of Lenormant are well worth transcribing: "I am a Christian, and proclaim it loudly; but my faith fears none of the discoveries of criticism when they are true. A son of the Church, submissive in all things necessary, I for that very reason claim for her, and with even greater ardor, the rights of scientific liberty. And it is just because I am a Christian that I regard myself as being more in accord with the true meaning and spirit of science than those who have the misfortune to be without faith."

We do not here enter upon an allied topic, the valuable contributions which several branches of physical science are actually making to Christian Apologetics—an interesting bond of union between the man of scientific research and the man of faith, and a rebuke, on the one hand, to the supercilious flippancy of certain scientists in their references to the Bible and, on the other, to those believers (a rapidly decreasing number) who speak evil of science and scientific men.