

Holy City, and testing the accuracy of the descriptions given in Scripture of Jerusalem. The closer examination of Sirai has also demonstrated the possibility of the events recorded in Exodus taking place in the neighbourhood in which they are said to have occurred. If we pass to the region of scientific enquiry, we meet with testimony equally satisfactory, assuring, and reasonable. The progress of science has disproved not a few of the interpretations of Scripture that have been in former days accepted, but no statement of Scripture has itself been found false. It is not very long since the sea shells found on lofty eminences were adduced as evidences of the flood. Research and inquiry have shown that these were due to far other phenomena, of much more remote date, and that such a flood as Moses records, would probably leave no marks by which at this period we could trace it. The extent of the flood is also questioned, but believers in Scripture feel the veracity of the sacred records is unaffected by any such questions. The sacred record only requires the destruction of the human race, and that race at that period may have occupied but a comparatively narrow slip of earth's surface, while the universally spread tradition of a deluge confirms the account of the whole world being overspread by the descendants of the sons of Noah. The statements of science are far more startling than the accounts of miracles given by inspired writers, as for instance that the earth revolves on its axis at the rate of 600 miles an hour, and that it is passing through space at the rate of 63,000 miles an hour. Some were disposed to reject the facts of geology as utterly irreconcilable with revelation, and others to discard revelation as utterly discredited by the facts, but patient research has taught men that "he that believeth shall not make haste," that facts may displace preconceived notions, but the word of God standeth sure, and that, assuming the accuracy of successive geological hypotheses, they still may be harmonized with the statements of revelation.

The fields over which evidential literature has extended are so wide that time would fail were I to attempt to pay a transitory visit to all. But he is without excuse who suffers his doubts of the truth of Christianity to hold him back from faith, without a fair and full inquiry into the particular branch of knowledge on which his doubts grow. That the evidences should be such as by force to compel the judgment to yield, were a demand inconsistent with a system which demands the exercise of the faith of its adherents. "We walk by faith and not by sight." A physical demonstration—evidence that could leave no possibility of doubt—would leave no place for faith. What we have a right to expect is, such evidence as can satisfy reasonable scepticism, show that the facts faith is required to receive are not contrary to reason, nor irreconcilable with facts we know.

In conclusion, let me remind you of the one purpose for which the word of God has been given to man. It is not to teach science, to open out the secrets of nature, to furnish the annals of mankind, to satisfy the legitimate desire after knowledge implanted by God in man. It is to give the knowledge of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. Should we find history falsified, or statements of the process of nature irreconcilable with well-ascertained facts, then the record would fail of its purpose of inspiring or confirming faith in its testimony to things unseen; rather would it impede and overturn faith, and leave the infidel well-nigh justified in his unbelief. But when we find prophecies fulfilled, historical allusions in the sacred writers verified, and a resurrection of witnesses from long-buried cities; when Assyria, and Babylon, and Moab, and Bashan, and Jerusalem, confront the sceptic with their material testimony; when science ratifies the statements of Solomon touching the circulation of the wind and the waters, and the declarations of Job, and of Amos, may we not say, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early!"