

this strain. True, the preachers had not seen the skeletons but they talked as if they had. One can respect the faith of the good woman who made answer to her doubting son,—“Yes, and I would believe that Jonah swallowed the whale, if the Bible said so.” And one can respect the faith of the Scotch quarryman who answered the boy who afterwards was known as Dr. Livingstone, “that when God made the rocks he made the fossils in them.” The man’s faith in traditions was so bound up with faith in what he knew to be truth that he took both together, the chaff with the wheat, the foolish tradition with the spiritual verities on which his soul had lived from childhood. But how can we respect educated men who shut their eyes and denounce those who are walking in the light? We pity the blind, but not the blind leaders of the blind. Again, however, the truth shone out so clearly that it could not be denied longer, but again and with equal stubbornness it was contended that man, at any rate, had been created only six or seven thousand years ago. We need not go into the details of the repeated conflicts. To review them is weary, almost heartbreaking work.

One would suppose indeed that by this time the lesson might have been learned that the divine element in the Bible, does not extend to the knowledge of science, natural history or physical geography possessed by the writers, but that on all such matters they occupied the same platform as other men of their class and time and were subject generally to all ordinary human limitations. But the lesson has not been learned and fatal mistakes along the old lines are still being made. To-day there is almost as much apprehension in some circles with reference to the conclusions of Historical Criticism as there was half or quarter a century ago with reference to the truths that geologists were discovering. The evil consequences of this timidity are now far more widespread because the scientific method has invaded every department and is universally accepted even by those who know nothing of science. The mistakes made in connection with this method of enquiry are corrected as fuller light dawns. Working hypotheses have to be adopted. But while it may take a long time to ascertain the truth on any subject, it is a great thing to be on the right track and in due time the truth is sure to be known or at any rate the boundaries between what can and what cannot be known are sure to be clearly marked out. Sometimes indeed, the search for truth is better than the particular bit of truth obtained. The search develops patience, humility, industry and absolute reverence for truth and thus benefits the seeker a thou-