

new but merely revivals of old disputes. There is hardly a controversy which has not been revived; though it must be said that we have many previously unknown. Conclusions formerly reached and generally accepted are now assailed and disputed. There is no position in this warfare so secure as to be safe from attack. The battles of a former age or ages have to be fought again as if nothing had been debated or concluded before.

This aspect of Theological study appears more discouraging by comparison with the history of physical science, especially in modern times. Since the triumph of the inductive method of observation, experiment and verification, the progress of physical science has been a steady march and a succession of triumphs. Every position once secured is safe for all time. Errors may be current for a time, but such are soon corrected. Conclusions may be modified, but only to make the next conclusion more certain and more accordant with truth. It is true that when scientists do speculate and go from science into the field of philosophical inference upon the universe and the laws of the moral world, and the government of moral beings, they are as fallible as other men. Worse than Samson, they lose not only their hair but their heads. But when their method is applied properly, adhered to and kept within the sphere of matter and its laws, the conclusions of natural reason are irresistible, and in this respect it presents a remarkable contrast to philosophy and moral science—especially biblical criticism and theology.

One great disadvantage in this controversial aspect of theological study is, that it imparts to it all an appearance of uncertainty. If there be so much debate over the whole field, how can I be certain that truth in this subject is at all possible? The study is discouraged by the uncertainty of the results. The object of all study is truth; but in this case it would appear as if any truth attained were doubtful, that what is called truth by some were but an illusion, and that no one can be certain that he possesses that treasure. Besides all this seems to imply the inutility of Revelation. For what was this great boon bestowed? It may be described as serving two purposes. First, it communicates what man never could discover for himself. The whole plan of salvation is a matter of pure revelation. By it we are informed of counsels held before man was created