

You must not therefore be content with such knowledge as might have sufficed for your work a few years ago, you ought to be acquainted with the opinions *now* current, you must be prepared, not only to give "a reason of the hope that is in you," but also to show the fallacy of the arguments used by the scoffer, and by which the minds of the illiterate may have been seriously perplexed. They who ignore the conclusions of science, properly so called, afford great advantage to the enemy. We cannot be too jealous of any approach towards unbelief, or disparagement of the written revelation of God's will, but we must beware of assigning to it a place which it was not intended to occupy. We need not fear to admit that, upon questions of astronomy or geology, or of any other science, information is not to be obtained from the Scriptures, and that the writers adopted the mode of speaking common in their day, and which alone could then have been understood, just as even now scientific men use on ordinary occasions the popular language. The Holy Scriptures treat of man, and the highest interests of man, their teaching is designed to mould the character, rather than to enlighten the intellect. They are fully sufficient to make us "wise unto salvation, but there appears to be a studious omission of topics, having no direct bearing upon the object with which the sacred books were written. If therefore any scriptural statement appears to be contradicted by facts, we may be sure that either the supposed facts are without foundation, or we have misunderstood the meaning of the statement. We need not be afraid of admitting that there are discrepancies in manuscripts and errors of transcribers, and difficulties in discovering the exact meaning intended to be conveyed in some passages. As has been said by a great critic,* the text "is competently exact, even in the worst MSS. now extant, nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them, choose as awkwardly as you can, choose the worst by design out of the whole lump of readings." Whatever may be the deficiency of our knowledge, respecting some points, we are still satisfied that we have a sufficient guide, for we rely upon *His* love who, if he had so willed, could have by a miracle preserved for us the indisputable original text of the divine revelation, and could have so framed its language, that there might be no room for misconception of

* Dr. Bentley.

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