

or on a question of geology—whether we investigate the past history and present state of the divine administration, or investigate the past physical history and actual state of our globe. In either, we should deem the real findings of one man to be of more value than the splendid fancies of a thousand men.

10. For example—in the latter science, we may have one doctrine on the degradation of the hills, and another on the encroachment or regress of the sea, and another on the relation between the position of the strata and the character of the fossil remains to be found in them. Of the last of these it is evident, that the results of theory must give way to the results of observation, should they stand opposed to each other; and in reference to the two first it is obvious, that there might be an evidence of history which should overbear the speculation. For instance had we the authentic memorials of a trigonometrical survey taken two thousand years back, and with the same securities for its correctness that we have in the surveys of the present day, who would not prefer the informations of such a document to all the plausibilities of all the speculatists? It were in the very spirit of our modern science to learn of the height of our mountains and the line and locality of our shores, from the men who had then measured rather than from the men who were now arguing them—and it is just a recognition of the great principle that all the philosophy of actual being in the universe, to be solidly established, must rest on the basis of facts—when we affirm that the doctrines of science