

sentiments which exist in the minds of many upon this class of objects ; and of the suspicion and disapprobation, I might even say horror, with which some excellent persons view any deviation from those interpretations which they have been accustomed to hear and read. Scarcely less sensitive are the authors of different hypotheses with regard to their respective views. Many estimable men, who have published their opinions upon the question before us, lay the greatest stress upon their own views, and find it difficult to tolerate, or even to excuse, any dissent from them. For many of them I entertain a sincere esteem ; and I equally respect the motive by which they are excited, a jealousy for the honour of revelation and the interests of religion. But it becomes us all to take the utmost care that our godly zeal may be according to knowledge. If it be not so, we shall inflict no slight disservice upon the cause of truth and righteousness, while we may imagine that we are promoting it.

I. There are some who feel no difficulty at all in the case, or at least, none from which they cannot disembarass themselves with the utmost ease. Of geological subjects, truly they possess but little knowledge ; yet they persuade themselves that they know much, or certainly as much as qualifies them to give a peremptory judgment upon the whole matter. They afford reason enough to believe that, of the most important facts, those upon which the decision of the question principally depends, they are far from being well-informed : and with regard to other geological facts and doctrines, a partial acquaintance with which they have derived from a light and easy perusal of a few books, or perhaps of only one, they make it evident that they have acquired no more than some confused and incoherent notions. But their confidence rests upon the assumption, that the interpretation of the Sacred Records which they have adopted, and in which they can certainly strengthen