

decision is to the Bible itself, fairly interpreted. But the mention of venerable names may be useful, to allay the apprehensions of some good persons, who only hear obscurely of these subjects, and have not the means of forming an independent judgment on solid grounds.

I, therefore, with many, feel greatly obliged to Dr. Buckland for having come in aid of this, which I believe to be, *the true sense and meaning* of the sacred writers. I am framing no hypotheses in Geology; I only plead that *the ground is clear*, and that the dictates of Scripture *interpose no bar* to observations and reasonings upon the mineralogical constitution of the earth, and the remains of organized creatures which its strata disclose. If those investigations should lead us to attribute to the earth, and to the other planetary and astral spheres, an antiquity which millions or ten thousand millions of years might fail to represent, *the divine records forbid not their deduction*. Let but the geologist maintain what his science so loudly proclaims, that the universe around us has been formed, at whatever epoch, or through whatever succession of epochs, to us unknown, by the power and wisdom of an Almighty First Cause. Let him but reject the absurdities of pre-existent matter, of an eternal succession of finite beings, of formations without a former, laws without a lawgiver, and nature without a God. Let him but admit that man is but of yesterday, and that the design of revelation is to train him to the noblest purity and happiness in the immortal enjoyment of his Creator's beneficence; and he will find the doctrines of the Bible not an impediment, but his aid and his joy.

I have written much more than I anticipated, and I will tax your indulgence no longer; otherwise, confirmation and illustration might be brought from various passages of Scripture, and it would plainly appear that a just interpretation of the idioms of the Hebrew language, marked with archaic simplicity, would show them to be susceptible of an unforced accommodation to philosophical truth; just as, in every modern language, phrases of current parlance, which, literally taken, would be absurd, are continually used by the masters of science as well as by common men. In such cases, error is neither given nor taken, and to affect philosophical precision would be miserable pedantry. This general principle may, I humbly think, be satisfactorily applied to the account of the Noachian Deluge, and to the obviating of some of its difficulties, though others will probably remain as a proper test of our disposition to rely implicitly on the infinite wisdom, goodness, and power of the glorious Author and Preserver of all things; "in whose hand are the deep places of the earth, and the strength of the hills is His also." J. P. S.

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