inTRODUCTION.] OF THE PRESENT WORK. [PRELIMINARY   
   
 so plain that there can be no question as to its meaning, which it as   
 certainly is not. Coming as it does from God, its simplest saying has in   
 it a depth which the human mind cannot fathom: and its apparently   
 disjoined sentences have a connexion which it often surpasses even the   
 practised eye to discover, or the most ripened and chastened judgment   
 satisfactorily to pronounce upon.   
 16. The reader of this work will find this conviction lying at the root   
 of all its endeavours to explain Scripture: that we are dealing not with   
 mere human thoughts, whose significance we may exhaust and surpass,   
 but with divine Truth, conveyed to us in human words—the treasure, in   
 the earthen vessel. No amount of labour can be ill bestowed in search-   
 ing into, and comparing, and meditating on, the import and the connexion   
 of the words of Scripture. Nor are we to expect a time when our work   
 may be regarded as done. .As the ages of the world and of the Church   
 pass onward, new lights will ever be thrown upon God’s word, by passing   
 events, by the toil of thought, by the discoveries of historical research   
 and of scientific enquiry. ;   
 17. Nor has the Bible any reason to fear the utmost activity, andthe   
 furthest extension, of such pursuits. We have been, I am persuaded, too   
 timid and anxious in this matter. Let research and enquiry be carried   
 forward in every direction, and in a fearless spirit : when their results   
 are most completely established and firmly assured to us, then will it be   
 most undeniably found, that Creation, Providence, and Revelation,‘ are   
 the work of the same God :—then will the plainest light be thrown on   
 the meaning of Holy Scripture, in all points on which such research and   
 enquiry bear. :   
 18. We are too apt to forget that another vehicle in which God has   
 transmitted to us His Revelation, is human writing. The conservation   
 of the sacred books by His Providence ought to be taken into account,   
 as well as their original composition. ‘The general notion concerning   
 the Bible, as regards this point, may perhaps be not unjustly described   
 as being, that the sacred text has come down to us in one unquestioned   
 form, and that form represented by the English Authorized Version.   
 The fact of some variations existing here and there is perhaps known,   
 but its import is at once nullified by some statement, that these varia-   
 tions make no possible difference in the sense: and there the matter is   
 allowed to rest: some even doubting the expediency of further inviting   
 the English reader to its consideration.   
 19. But surely such a course is hardly that of those who are exhorted to   
 be “not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” If it   
 has pleased God, in the course of His providential care of His word, that   
 certain portions of it should be variously transmitted to us, can we, with-   
 out blame, resolve to shut our eyes to this His will? And the case, as   
 affecting English readers, is even stronger than this. There is one   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
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