inTRoDUCTION.] OF THE PRESENT WORK.   
   
   
 23, Widely different however from any expression of rationalistic   
 opinion is the carrying out of the enquiry, sometimes forced on us,   
 whether an incident related in the sacred narrative is intended to be   
 miraculous, or not. Such an enquiry might for example naturally occur   
 " regarding the rising up of St. Paul after he was stoned at Lystra (Acts —   
 xiv. 19, 20), Such an enquiry, I have believed, is fairly open to us in   
 the case of the narrative of the Star of the Wise Men. Was that a   
 miraculous appearance from first to last, was it some phenomenon in   
 the ordinary course of the celestial revolutions, which the Magi were   
 guided by God to interpret as they did? I have been led to incline to   
 the latter view. I have no bias leading me that way : I should feel no   
 difficulty whatever in receiving the whole as miraculous, did I think the   
 sacred text required me to do so. Those who do think this, have much   
 to favour their view. But let them concede to a Christian brother the   
 right to enquire into the meaning of the sacred text itself, without   
 binding him to a pre-conception of that meaning : and let them abstain   
 from harsh judgment, where his enquiry has led him to a conclusion   
 different from that to which they themselves have come.   
 24. In closing this preliminary chapter, I may venture to say, that I   
 hope this work may be found useful to those readers for whom it has   
 been specially designed. It is not in the proper sense of the word, a   
 popular Edition of the New Testament. Some cultivation of mind by   
 an ordinary liberal education will be required for its use: but certainly   
 not more than is possessed by Christian women in the middle ranks of   
 life, and by the majority of the mercantile classes. Should it be found   
 to contribute in any degree towards the diffusion of an intelligent know-   
 ledge of the contents of God’s Holy Word, I shall be more than rewarded   
 for the labour bestowed on it.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
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