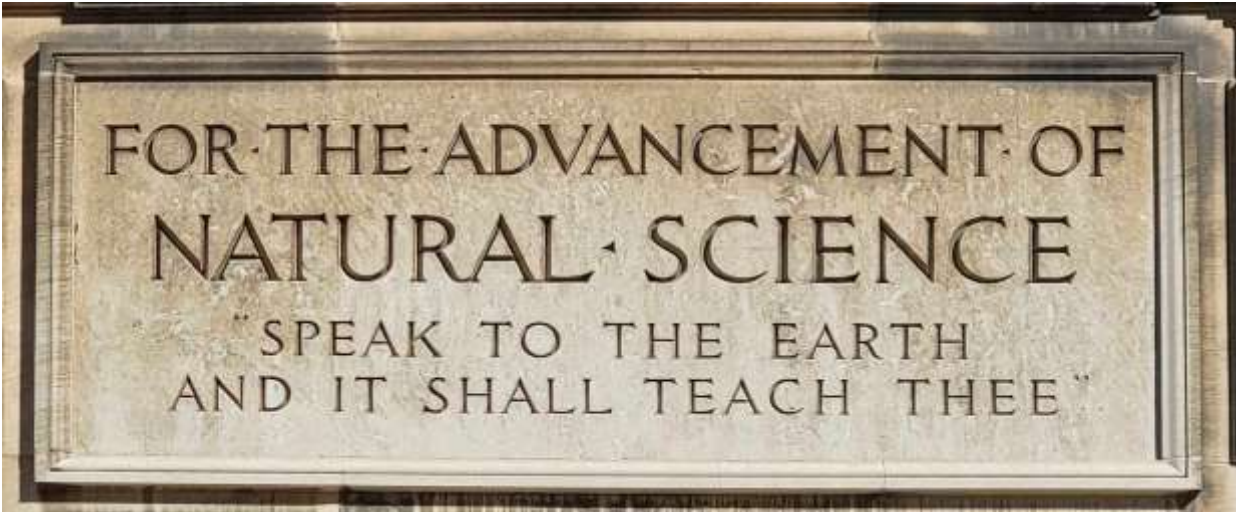


## Not Really About Geology

Bill Menke, March 3, 2022



Inscription above the doorway, Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University in the City of New York

I guess that this "Speak to the Earth and it Shall Teach You" quote, on the facade of Schermerhorn Hall (Columbia University), was placed with the presumption that the Earth will teach you Geology. If so, this quotation\* from the Book of Job is grossly out of place. Job speaks these words to counter the assertion of his friend Zophar, who has just argued that all of Job's problems (and he had many) were due to some great sin that he had unknowingly committed and that had brought down divine punishment upon him. Job says even the Earth and the sea and the animals and plants in it know the obvious truth that the just and blameless can suffer misfortune, while robbers and other wicked people often are safe in their houses. So, the quote is really about achieving justice, not knowledge. It would better decorate the Law School!

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\*Job 12, with Job speaking:

The righteous and upright man is a laughingstock. <sup>5</sup>The one at ease scorns misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping. <sup>6</sup>The tents of robbers are safe, and those who provoke God are secure—those who carry their god in their hands. But ask the animals, and they will instruct you; ask the birds of the air, and they will tell you. <sup>8</sup>Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; let the fish of the sea inform you. <sup>9</sup>Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?