

adapted to the varying physical conditions of the earth, is only modified, not weakened, by this argument.

What, then, is the result of our inquiry into the ancient state of our globe?—That, so far as our present knowledge extends, all the changes produced by mechanical, chemical, or vital agency, whether on the surface or in the interior of the earth, have been taking place from the earliest periods revealed by geological research; and, as like causes must produce like effects, will continue to take place so long as the present material system shall endure. Thus deposits now in progress may subside to the inner regions of the earth, and by exposure to long continued igneous action, all traces of sedimentary origin may be destroyed; and at some distant period, the metamorphosed masses may appear on the surface in the form of peaks of granite, bearing with them the accumulated spoils of numberless ages. I cannot, therefore, concur in the opinion of those, who imagine that in the granite we see the primeval solid framework of the globe—a consolidated crust formed on the surface of a cooling planet, and subsequently broken up by changes in the temperature of the earth. To me it appears that the only legitimate inference in the present state of our knowledge, is that the solid materials of our globe, at a certain depth, become so entirely changed, as to afford no satisfactory data as to any antecedent period. In no department of natural science is the admirable caution of the phi-