

## LECTURE VI.

### GEOLOGICAL PROOFS OF THE DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

THE subject of the present lecture is the divine benevolence, as taught by geology. But what connection, it will be asked, can there be between the history of rocks and the benevolence of God? Do not the leading points of that history consist of terrible catastrophes, aqueous or igneous, by which the crust of the earth has been dislocated and upheaved, mountains lifted up and overturned, the dry land inundated, now by scorching lava, and now by the ocean, sweeping from its face all organic life, and entombing its inhabitants in a stony grave? Who can find the traces of benevolence in the midst of such desolation and death? Is it not the very place where the objector would find arguments to prove the malevolence, certainly the vindictive justice, of the Deity?

This, I am aware, is a not unnatural *prima facie* view of this subject. But it is a false one. Geology does furnish some very striking evidence of divine benevolence; and if I can show this, and from so unpromising a field gather decisive arguments on this subject, they will be so much clear gain to the cause of Theism. This is what, therefore, I shall now attempt to do.

*In the first place, I derive an argument for the divine benevolence from the manner in which soils are formed by the disintegration and decomposition of rocks.*

Chemical analysis shows us that the mineral constituents of rocks are essentially the same as those of soils; and that the latter differ from the former, in a pulverized state, only in containing animal and vegetable matter. Hence we cannot doubt but the soils originated from the rocks. And, in fact, the process of their production is continually going on under our eyes. Wherever the rocks are exposed to atmospheric agencies, they are seen to crumble down; and, in fact, most of them, having been long exposed, are now covered with a deposit of their own ruins, forming a soil over them. This