

dicate for Geology a place among the exact sciences. The facts on which it rests have, since the beginning of the present century, and especially since the establishment of the Geological Societies of London, Dublin, and Paris, and kindred institutions in many parts of Europe, and in America, been collected by the assiduous labour of many men of the finest talents; and those facts have not only been brought together and freely exposed to examination, but they have been subjected to the most jealous scrutiny and the most rigorous tests that can be imagined. Philosophers, whose previous opinions were very discordant, but whose qualifications for the task were of the highest order, of different nations, (and there was a time when national rivalry even violated the sacred ground of science and letters,) and who had been trained and raised to the first stations in all the other departments of physical knowledge and the liberal arts; have concurred, and have emulated each other, in sifting and scrutinizing to the utmost every announced discovery, and every theoretical deduction. Can it be then supposed that a scientific edifice thus framed, and in the fundamental doctrines of which all who have a claim upon our confidence, are agreed,* possesses not the elements of stability, and has no claims upon our confidence?

But we are compelled to make the unwelcome admission, that the rules of reason, with regard to evidence, have been not a little disregarded, in relation to the proposed subject of these Lectures. It would not, I am persuaded, be possible to point out any department of scientific investigation, in regard to which persons have rushed

* "I need not dwell upon the extreme danger of representing, as necessarily subversive of a faith in revelation, physical conclusions received, I believe, by all those who are generally considered as competent judges, as *firmly established truths*." Rev. W. D. Conybeare, in the *Christian Observer* for 1834, p. 307.