

IV. We advance to the consideration of a theory, which has been held with strong attachment by persons of talent and piety, upon many of whom we cannot think without the feelings of Christian affection. At the same time, it is incumbent on me to make an observation which is entitled to be well considered. It is, that the persons to whom I advert, and especially those who have most distinguished themselves as the advocates of this theory, are not practical men, not geologists who have devoted the continuous labour of weeks and months, I might justly say years, in exploring those regions of Europe and other parts of the earth, which are the most important in a geological sense, because they present the greatest extent of natural sections, elevations, fractures, and outcrops, and the largest abundance and variety of organic remains. But the writers who have most signalized themselves in the advocacy of this view, appear to have chiefly derived their knowledge of geological subjects from the study of books and their own reflections in calm retirement. I am not so presumptuous as to imagine myself qualified to bear this testimony concerning those estimable persons, so as to exclude all liability to mistake. I utter only the impression made upon my mind, by a small degree of actual knowledge, by credible information from other persons, and above all from the indications of their own writings.

The hypothesis referred to is that which, first, considers the Mosaic record as indubitably affirming the creation of the universe, within the period of six natural days, at an epoch about six thousand years back; then, it regards the interval from the Creation to the Deluge, as affording a sufficient lapse of time for the deposition of the chief part of the stratified formations; and finally it considers the remainder of the phenomena as adequately accounted for by the action of the diluvial waters.