

the future editions of his work, the system of *Geological Dynamics* may be stripped of even the semblance of hypothetical assumption.”*

It would be desirable here to give a sketch of the reasons which we have for believing in the high antiquity of the earth : but the length of this lecture and the demands of the subsequent ones render such an attempt impracticable.† Instead of it, my kind and patient auditors will allow me to conclude by reading a passage, from a paper by an unknown writer, in the *Christian Observer* for the present month.

“ In regard to difficulties, the popular interpretation labours under heavier ones than that of the scriptural geologist ; but I fear that such *argumenta ad hominem* are of very little service ; for there is a class of minds upon which inductive science makes no impression. Argue with a person of this order of intellect, (he may be a good linguist, a critic, an historian, a man versed in polite literature,) upon the known incontrovertible facts of Geology ; he cannot deny them ; but when you press the conclusion, you perceive that his mind has not really grappled with them. He replies, ‘ How do we know that it was not a miracle ? ’ or, ‘ How do we know that things were then as they are now ? ’ or, ‘ I will believe God rather than man ; ’ or, ‘ We know nothing at all about the matter ; ’ or something equally vague, and to which of course no reply can be given. But the most common resource is, ‘ *The Deluge did it all.* ’ This reply exhibits either complete ignorance of the facts, or a rejection of the inevitable conclusions which they suggest. No epitome of those facts would do justice to them ; for they would require at least a hundred pages of minute detail ; and yet, without having even glanced over the outlines, some persons are not ashamed to say, ‘ It was the Deluge ; ’ or, ‘ It was a miracle ; ’ and they persuade themselves they do God service by this sort of obtund argument. Geologists have carefully examined some ten miles’ thickness of solid fossiliferous strata to the number of hundreds, which they are able to do by means of their slanting position, where the edges crop up. These strata are not homogeneous ; but consist of successive layers differing widely in their character and contents. They are divided into groups ; they

* Address to the Geol. Soc. Feb. 18, 1831 ; on retiring from the President’s chair.

† To meet this object, a Supplementary Note, E, is added to this volume