

1. The matter of *fact* must be ascertained. Is there evidence, such as cannot be set aside, of such facts as the following? That the *state* of the surface of our globe has been changed by submersion under oceanic or lake water, and frequent elevation and drying, a great number of times, (say 30 to 40;) that *each* of those successive states continued during a vast period, which it would be presumptuous to conjecture, but which might very moderately be taken at many thousands of years; that, in every one of those states, (till in the descending order, we arrive at the very early strata,) we find the *unquestionable remains* of animals, or their shelly habitations; that these are not huddled together, as if drifted on by a torrent, or thrown into a hole, but are disposed in horizontal, or what was once horizontal, order, spread over large surfaces, often of the same family or tribe, in all stages of their growth, preserving the most delicate parts of their form, and thus showing that *there* they had quietly *lived* and *died*; that of these humble beings, many are shown, by the structure of the shell, to have been *carnivorous*; that, in some far more recent* members of the *secondary* class of strata, are found the skeletons of *gigantic lizard-formed animals*, with their stomachs remaining under their ribs, and those stomachs still retaining the more solid relics of their food, among which are fish-scales, and bits of bone; and that every stratum has its own *characteristic* animal and vegetable remains, the differing natures of which indicate great and progressive *alterations* in temperature and other circumstances. All these are familiar facts to the geologist. He sees those remains in the midst of hard rocks, yea, often composing the chief substance of those rocks; he digs them out; he sends them to the British and other Museums, or to be preserved in private collections; and there the delicate inhabitants of cities may see them without pains or peril.

We cannot argue against facts. Let us seek the solution of difficulties in the best way that we can; but let us proceed with modesty and humility, ever ready to confess our weakness and ignorance; thankful for what we may know, submissive in what we cannot know, and confidently relying on the glorious perfections of God, where we cannot follow their unfolding. Are there not, *ought* there not to be, many things in nature, as well as in providence and grace, of which it is our *privilege* to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high; I cannot attain unto it! His judgments are a great deep:—unsearchable;—past finding out!"

* *Recent*, in a geological sense; but if compared with our common measures of time, we confess ourselves unable to give an equation. Untold thousands of years before the adjustment of the earth for the human race, would be no extravagant expression.