

I to neglect the opportunity afforded by the publication of this volume, of bearing testimony to truth, and so of counteracting injurious representations. To any candid thinker it must appear an unreasonable expectation, that any person that pleases should be allowed to take notes of the papers, conversations, and discussions of any scientific or literary institution, and to publish them. No Society of respectability and honour would submit to such an intrusion. Besides other obvious objections, this one immediately presents itself; the contingency, not to call it a certainty, that mistakes and misrepresentations would be committed, and those often of the most serious import, even by well-intentioned reporters.

The impropriety of this complaint is however a small thing, in comparison with other parts of the passage. The writer does not say that some instances may have occurred, or even more than one, in which a speaker had uttered sentiments irreconcilable to reason or piety. The reflection would then have arisen, that no society to whose objects unreserved discussion is essential, could prevent such an occurrence, or ought to be held answerable for it, unless it had manifested approbation, or at least connivance. I do not say this as an apology for any known fact, for I have never heard of such an occurrence. But the writer evidently strives to produce the impression that scientific investigation is not the chief object of the Society's meetings, that it is made only a mask for the effecting of other purposes, that the most momentous truths of religion are assailed with scoffs in the guise of witticism and sophistry as the substitute for argument, that infidel and immoral principles are bandied about, and that the Society gives encouragement and protection to such a course of proceeding.

I feel it my duty to declare that, to the best and utmost of my knowledge, these accusations are *contrary to truth* and *exceedingly unjust*. My great affliction, extreme deafness, restricts my advantage, in attending the meetings of the Geological Society, almost entirely to the inspection of the specimens, sections, and figures. Yet I am a constant attendant: and, if infidel or otherwise irreligious and immoral sentiments were propounded by any of the speakers, I am not unprovided with the means of receiving information; and those means would not have been ineffectual. I am well assured that, even if in any *long past* time it may have happened that opinions or insinuations have been broached, of the character which this author alleges, the blame has rested on the offending person, and could, upon no principle of equity, have been imputed to the Society: and, from my own knowledge, I am persuaded that, were such a thing to occur, it would be met by a strong expression of disappro-