

for thirty years. I hope, however, that all my suggestions will not be thought of equal importance in my own estimation; since some of them are merely hypothetical hints thrown out for the consideration of abler minds.

This work does not exhibit quite so much of logical exactness as I could wish. But my leading object has been fully carried out, namely, to exhibit all the religious bearings of geology. Several of the lectures, however, have been written as if independent of all the rest; and, therefore, the reader will find some leading thoughts repeated, but always in different connections.

After acknowledging that more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since this subject first engaged my attention, it may be useless for me to ask any indulgence from criticism. But really, I feel less prepared to write upon it than I did during the first five years in which I studied it. I have learned that it is a most difficult subject. It requires, in order to master it, an acquaintance with three distinct branches of knowledge, not apt to go together. First, an acquaintance with geology in all its details, and with the general principles of zoology, botany, and comparative anatomy; secondly, a knowledge of sacred hermeneutics, or the principles of interpreting the Scriptures; thirdly, a clear conception of the principles of natural and revealed religion.

As examples of efforts made by men who were deficient in a knowledge of some of these branches, I am compelled to quote a large proportion of the works which, within the last thirty or forty years, have been written on the religion of geology; especially on its connection with revealed religion. I am happy to except such writers as Dr. J. Pye Smith, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Harris, Dr. Buckland, Professor Sedgwick, Professor Whewell, Dr. King, Dr. Anderson, and Hugh Miller; for they, to a greater or less extent, acquainted themselves with all the subjects named above, before they undertook to write. But a still larger number of authors, although men of talents, and familiar, it may be, with the Bible and theology, had no accurate knowledge of geology. The results have been, first, that, by resorting to denunciation and charges of infidelity, to answer arguments from geology which they did not understand, they have excited unreasonable prejudices and alarm among common Christians respecting that science