

adduced, aside from the Bible and geology, to prove the non-eternity of the world. I am not prepared to say that they amount to nothing; but I do believe that they perplex, rather than convince, and that some of them are mere metaphysical quibbles.

They do not produce that instantaneous conviction which most of the arguments of natural theology force upon the mind; and it is easy to see how a man of a sceptical turn should rise from their examination entirely unaffected, or affected unfavourably. Let us now, therefore, turn to geology, and inquire whether its archives will afford us any clearer light upon the subject.

And here we must confess, at the outset, that geology furnishes us no more evidence than the other sciences of the creation of the matter of the universe out of nothing. But it does furnish us with examples of such modifications of matter as could be effected only by a Deity. Suppose, then, we should be obliged to acknowledge to the atheist, that we yield to him the point of matter's eternal existence, if he pleases, because we can find no where in nature decisive evidence of its creation, and then take our stand upon the arrangements and metamorphoses of matter. Or, rather, suppose we say to him, that we shall not contend with him as to the origin of matter, but challenge him to explain, if he can, without a Deity, its modifications, as taught by geology. If that science does disclose to us such changes on the globe as no power and wisdom but those of an infinite God could produce, then of what consequence is it, so far as religion is concerned, whether we can, or cannot, demonstrate the first creation of matter? I can conceive of no religious truth that would be unfavourably affected, though we should admit that this point cannot be settled. Let us, then, at least for the sake of argument, admit that it cannot be, and proceed to inquire whether, aside from this point, geology does not teach us all that is necessary to establish the most perfect system of Theism. I shall select four examples from that science, each of which is independent of the others in its bearing upon the subject, since in this way the argument will become cumulative; and if some are not satisfied with one example, the others may produce conviction.

In the first place, geology teaches that the time has been