

that epoch, this matter has passed through a multitude of changes, and been the seat of numerous systems of organic life, unlike one another, yet all linked together into one great system by a most perfect unity; each minor system being most beautifully adapted to its place in the great chain, and yet each successive link becoming more and more perfect. Nor does geology admit that any evidence exists of the future annihilation of the material universe; but rather of other changes, by which new and brighter displays of divine wisdom and benevolence shall be brought out, it may be in endless succession. Geology is not, indeed, insensible to the displays of the divine character which are exhibited on the present theatre of the world. Indeed, she distinctly recognizes the act which is now passing as the most perfect of all. Yet this scene of the great drama she regards as only one of the units of a similar series of changes that have gone by or will hereafter come; the chain stretching so far into the eternity that is past and the eternity that is to come, that the extremities are lost to mortal vision.

Do any shrink back from these immense conclusions, because they so much surpass the views they have been accustomed to entertain respecting the beginning and the end of the material universe? But why should they be unwilling to have geology liberalize their minds as much in respect to duration as astronomy has done in respect to space! Perhaps it is a lingering fear that the geological views conflict with revelation. Such fears formerly kept back many from giving up their souls to the noble truths of astronomy. But they learned, at length, that astronomy merely illustrates, and does not oppose, revelation. It showed men how to understand certain passages of sacred writ respecting the earth and heavenly bodies which they had before misinterpreted. Just so is it with geology. There is no collision between its statements and revelation. It only enables us more correctly to interpret some portions of the Bible; and then, when we have admitted the new interpretation, it brings a flood of light upon the plans and attributes of Jehovah. Geology, therefore, should be viewed, as it really is, the auxiliary both of natural and revealed religion. And when its religious relations are fully understood, theology, I doubt not, will be as anxious to cultivate its alliance as she has been fearful of it in days past.