

No one can examine existing nature without being convinced that all its parts and operations belong to one great system. Geology makes other economies of wide extent to pass before us, opening a vista indefinitely backward into the hoary past; and it is gratifying to witness that same unity of design pervading all preceding periods of the world's history, linking the whole into one mighty scheme, worthy its infinite Contriver.

How much, also, does this science enlarge our conceptions of the plans and operations of Jehovah! We had been accustomed to limit our views of the creative agency of God to the few thousand years of man's existence, and to anticipate the destruction of the material universe in a few thousand years more. But geology makes the period of man's existence on the globe only one short link of a chain of revolutions which preceded his existence, and which reaches forward immeasurably far into the future. We see the same matter in the hands of infinite wisdom, and by means of the great conservative principle of chemical change passing through a multitude of stupendous revolutions, sustaining countless and varied forms of organic life, and presenting an almost illimitable panorama of the plans of an infinite God.

If such is the fruit which geology pours into the lap of religion, how misunderstood have been its principles! In many a mind there is still an anxious fear lest its discoveries should prove unfavourable to religion; and they would feel greatly relieved could they only be assured that no influence injurious to piety would emanate from that science. But we can give them far more than this assurance. We can draw from this science more to illustrate and confirm religion than from any other; and we believe that the history of the past justifies the general conclusion, that those sciences whose early developments excited most apprehensions of a collision with religion, have ultimately furnished the most abundant illustrations of its principles.

Another science regarded as barren of religious applications, and even as sometimes positively injurious, is mathematics. Its principles are, indeed, of so abstruse a nature, that it is not easy to frame out of them a religious argument that is capable of popular illustration. But, in fact, mathematical laws form the basis of nearly all the operations of nature. They constitute, as it were, the very framework of the material world. When we look up to the heavenly bodies, we see them