

by which its motions and developements are regulated, is to expect to understand thoroughly the laws of motion, of development, and of providence; it is to expect that we may ascend from geology and astronomy to the creative and legislative centre, from which proceeded earth and stars; and then descend again into the moral and spiritual world, because its source and centre are the same as those of the material creation. It is to say that reason, whether finite or infinite, must be consistent with itself; and that, therefore, the finite must be able to comprehend the infinite, to travel from any one province of the moral and material universe to any other, to trace their bearing, and to connect their boundaries.

One of the advantages of the study of the history and nature of science in which we are now engaged is, that it warns us of the hopeless and presumptuous character of such attempts to understand the government of the world by the aid of science, without throwing any discredit upon the reality of our knowledge;—that while it shows how solid and certain each science is, so long as it refers its own facts to its own ideas, it confines each science within its own limits, and condemns it as empty and helpless, when it pronounces upon those subjects which are extraneous to it. The error of persons who should seek a geological narrative in theological records, would be rather in the search itself than in their interpretation of what they might find; and in like manner the error of those who would conclude against a supernatural beginning, or a providential direction of the world, upon geological or physiological reasonings, would be, that they had expected those sciences alone to place the origin or the government of the world in its proper light.

Though these observations apply generally to all the palætiological sciences, they may be permitted here, because they have an especial bearing upon some of the difficulties which have embarrassed the progress of geological speculation; and though such difficulties are, I trust, nearly gone by, it is important for us to see them in their true bearing.

From what has been said, it follows that geology and astronomy are, of themselves, incapable of giving us any distinct and satisfactory account of the origin of the universe, or of its parts. We need not wonder, then, at any particular instance of this incapacity; as, for example, that of which we have been speaking, the impossibility of accounting by any natural means for the production of all the successive tribes of plants and animals which have peopled the world in the