

that the Rev. Mr Banks, in a little tract published in 1850, urged the very insecure character of the doctrine that the planets and stars are inhabited. These coincidences with my views I did not know till my Essay was not only written, but printed. As to myself, the views which I have at length committed to paper have long been in my mind." There is an error in the date given here. The argument to which the author of the Essay refers as "much of the nature" of his own, was first published, not in 1849, but in October 1846, when it appeared in the columns of the "Witness" as part of one of the chapters of "First Impressions,"—a work which was published in the collected form as a volume early in the following year. Essentially, however, the reference is perfectly satisfactory, and, mayhap, not wholly uninteresting, as corroborative of our position, that at certain periods, after a certain amount of fact in some new department has been acquired, inferences never drawn before come to be drawn simultaneously by minds cut off by circumstances from all intercourse with each other. The argument, as originally stated in the "Witness," we shall take the liberty to repeat, slightly abridged, not only from its bearing on one of the most curious controversies of modern times, but as it may also serve to indicate what we deem the just degree in which the inferences of astronomers regarding the inhabitability of the planets are to be qualified by the facts of the geologist.

"There is a sad oppressiveness in that sense of human littleness which the great truths of astronomy have so direct a tendency to inspire. Man feels himself lost amid the sublime magnitudes of creation,—a mere atom in the midst of infinity; and trembles lest the scheme of Revelation should be found too large a manifestation of the Divine care for so tiny an ephemera. Now, I am much mistaken if the truths of geology have not a direct tendency to restore him to his true place. When engaged some time since in perusing one of the sublimest philosophic poems of modern times,—the 'Astronomical Discourses' of Dr Chalmers,—there occurred to me a new argument that might be employed against the infidel objection which the work was expressly written to remove. The