

## P R E F A C E.

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I PROBABLY never should have ventured to engage in the composition and publication of a work like the present, had not that task been assigned me by my nomination as one of the writers of the series of Bridgewater Treatises, and had I not deeply felt the honour done me by that appointment, as well as the importance of the duty which it imposed. The hope, in which I have indulged, that my labours might eventually be useful, has been my chief support in this arduous undertaking; the progress of which has throughout been seriously impeded by the various interruptions incident to my profession, by long protracted anxieties and afflictions, and by the almost overwhelming pressure of domestic calamity.

The object of this treatise is to enforce the great truths of Natural Theology, by adducing those evidences of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, which are manifested in the living creation. The scientific knowledge of the phenomena of life, as they are exhibited under the infinitely varied forms of or-