

to the subject that unity of design, and that scientific form, which are generally wanting in books professedly treating of Natural Theology, published prior to the present series; not excepting even the unrivalled and immortal work of Paley. By furnishing those general principles, on which all accurate and extensive knowledge must substantially be founded, I am not without a hope that this compendium may prove a useful introduction to the study of Natural History; the pursuit of which will be found not only to supply inexhaustible sources of intellectual gratification, but also to furnish, to contemplative minds, a rich fountain of religious instruction. To render these benefits generally accessible, I have confined myself to such subjects as are adapted to every class of readers; and avoiding all unnecessary extension of the field of inquiry, have wholly abstained from entering into historical accounts of the progress of discovery; contenting myself with an exposition of the present state of the science. I have also scrupulously refrained from treading in the paths, which have been prescribed to the other authors of these treatises; and have accordingly omitted all consideration of the hand, the voice, the chemical theory of digestion, the habits and instincts of animals, and the structures of antediluvian races; the extent of the field which remained, and which, with these few exceptions, embraces nearly the whole of the physiology of the two