

## CHAPTER III.

*Proper Subjects of Geological Enquiry.*

THE history of the earth forms a large and complex subject of enquiry, divisible at its outset, into two distinct branches; the first, comprehending the history of unorganized mineral

Higgins on the Mosaical and Mineral Geologies, 1832; and more especially to Professor Sedgwick's eloquent and admirable discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge, 1833, in which he has most ably pointed out the relations which Geology bears to natural religion, and thus sums up his valuable opinion as to the kind of information we ought to look for in the Bible: "The Bible instructs us that man, and other living things, have been placed but a few years upon the earth; and the physical monuments of the world bear witness to the same truth: if the astronomer tells us of myriads of worlds not spoken of in the sacred records; the geologist, in like manner, proves (not by arguments from analogy, but by the incontrovertible evidence of physical phenomena) that there were former conditions of our planet, separated from each other by vast intervals of time, during which man, and the other creatures of his own date, had not been called into being. Periods such as these belong not, therefore, to the moral history of our race, and come neither within the letter nor the spirit of revelation. Between the first creation of the earth and that day in which it pleased God to place man upon it, who shall dare to define the interval? On this question scripture is silent, but that silence destroys not the meaning of those physical monuments of his power that God has put before our eyes, giving us at the same time faculties whereby we may interpret them and comprehend their meaning."