

of the creation of the universe, the introduction of death into the world, and the extent and operation of the deluge, were misinterpreted till geology disclosed the true meaning. It is still customary, indeed, to speak of geology and revelation as in collision with each other on these subjects; but this is a false view of the case. Revelation is illustrated, not opposed, by geology. Who thinks, at this day, of any discrepancy between astronomy and revelation? And yet, two hundred years ago, the evidence of such discrepancy was far more striking than any which can now be offered to show geology at variance with the Scriptures. We ought, therefore, to look upon that science as illustrating, instead of opposing, the Scriptures.

Having once admitted the conclusions of geology as to the great age of the world, and a flood of light is shed upon some of the most difficult points both of natural and revealed religion. It shows the occurrence of numerous changes on the globe which nothing but the power of God could have produced, and which in fact were most striking and stupendous miracles. Hence the arguments which have so long been employed to show that the world is eternal are rendered nugatory; for if we can point to epochs when entire races of animals and plants began to exist on the globe, we prove the agency of a Deity quite as strikingly as if we could show the moment when the matter of the world was summoned into existence out of nothing. In the same manner, also, we silence the argument against the giving of a revelation from heaven, as well as the miracles by which it is substantiated, on the ground that we have no example of a special interference with the established course of nature. Here we have interpositions long anterior to man's existence, as well as by his creation, which take away all improbability from those which are implied in a revelation. We hence likewise establish the doctrine of a special providence over the world; a doctrine proved with great difficulty by any other reasoning of natural theology.

Still more abundant is the evidence derived from geology of the divine benevolence. And this evidence comes mostly from the operations and final effect of the most desolating agencies, heretofore regarded as a proof of malevolence, or, at least, of vindictive justice; and we may reasonably infer, that could we look through the whole system of divine government, we should find that all evil is only a necessary means of the greatest good.