

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

SINCE the publication of the second edition of this work, I have found that the celebrated Hutton, as is stated by Keith, was of opinion, that all the geological bodies of the earth had been formed by "marine exuvise or remains." It is satisfactory to have this part of the theory of the earth, which, previous to my seeing this opinion, I had formed and presented to the world, sanctioned by so great an authority.

But Hutton's Theory of the Earth, being adverse to the Mosaic account of the creation, he drew upon himself much obloquy from the supporters of it; and it is to be lamented that a due consideration of the first verse of Genesis had not occurred to him; as, most probably, his sagacious mind would have discovered, how completely the explanation we have in our theory given of that verse, will give the length of time which, in the opinion of many geologists, the various formations of the globe require.

Many of the modern geologists, however, who had published their works previous to the Rev. Dr. Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, in which the above construction of the first verse of Genesis is assumed, or who, having not yet sufficiently contemplated that construction, so as to adopt it themselves, and, probably, not willing to come into collision with the sacred writings: these geologists, I say, have now abandoned the practice of forming any theory of the earth at all, and limit themselves to the collection of geological facts. Now, it appears to me, that if, on a due consideration of the facts which botany, chemistry, pneumatics and geology present us with, it be conceived, that, by a just combination of these facts, we can by fair induction and analogy gain an insight into the most mysterious operations of nature, and of the laws which its omnipotent Creator may have established for these operations; there is then no just cause why such a combination of these scientific facts should not be attempted;

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