

effective witness of his faith in divine creation. This was especially evident during the 1840's when he publicly opposed the irresponsible evolutionary ideas which had been set forth recently by Robert Chambers in the popular book Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation. In a review of this book in the Edinburgh Review, Sedgwick wrote:

I do from my soul abhor the sentiments...false, shallow, worthless, and with the garb of philosophy, starting from principles which are at variance with all sober inductive truth. The sober facts of geology shuffled, so as to play a rogue's game; phrenology (that sink-hole of human folly and prating coxcombr); spontaneous generation; transmutation of species; and I know not what; all to be swallowed, without tasting or trying.... If the book be true, the labours of sober induction are in vain; religion is a lie; human law is a mass of folly, and a base injustice; morality is moonshine; our labours for the black people of Africa were works of madmen; and man and woman are only better beasts.²¹

Sedgwick, during this controversy, presented strong arguments, derived mainly from the works of Cuvier and Agassiz, for the existence of "unbridgeable gaps between species and organic orders which correspond with similar gaps between geologic periods."²² Sedgwick's confidence in Biblical truth is seen in the following quotation from his works:

Thus we rise to a conception both of Divine power and Divine goodness; and we are constrained to believe, not merely that all material law is subordinate to His will, but that He has also (in the way He allows us to see His works) so exhibited the attributes of His will as to show himself to the mind of a man as a personal and superintending God, concentrating his will on every atom of the universe.²³

The works of Sedgwick and Buckland thus serve as examples of the capable and responsible continuance of Christian orthodoxy meaningfully aligned with advancing geologic knowledge.

During the 25 years following the publication of Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, the wider dissemination of geologic evidence in favor of a more complex and extensive history of the earth brought about the writing of a large number of books attempting to harmonize the facts of geology with the Genesis account of creation.²⁴ Some of these were little more than denials of the nature of fossils and of sedimentary deposits; others made genuine attempts to reconcile the two bodies of evidence. The series of catastrophes proposed by the French naturalist Cuvier continued to be used by numerous authors as an explanation which would allow the necessary time for growth and depositing of all the fossilized animals and plants. However, some other methods of reconciliation were attempted. For example, an English naturalist, Philip Gosse, published an extensive work setting forth the doctrine of creation "with appearance of age." In this he asserted that all things had been created in six literal days,