

that the present creation was not cut off abruptly from the preceding one, but that, on the contrary, it dovetailed into it at a thousand different points, we are led also to know, that any scheme of reconciliation which would separate between the recent and the extinct existences by a chaotic gulf of death and darkness, is a scheme which no longer meets the necessities of the race. Though perfectly adequate forty years ago, it has been greatly outgrown by the progress of geological discovery, and is as I have said, adequate no longer; and it becomes a not unimportant matter to determine the special scheme that would bring into completest harmony the course of creation, as now ascertained by the geologist, and that brief but sublime narrative of its progress which forms a meet introduction in Holy Writ to the human family."

From the present time up to the times represented by the earliest Eocene formations of the Tertiary division, day has succeeded day, and season has followed season, and that no chasm or hiatus—no age of general chaos, darkness, and death—has occurred, to break the line of succession, or check the course of life. All the evidence runs counter to the supposition that immediately before the appearance of man upon earth, there existed a chaotic period which separated the previous from the present creation. Up till the commencement of the Eocene ages, if even then, there was no such chaotic period, in at least what is now Britain and the European continent; the persistency from a high antiquity of some of the existing races, of not only plants and shells, but of even some of the mammiferous animals, such as the badger, the goat, and the wild cat, prove there was not; and any scheme of reconciliation which takes such a period for granted must be deemed as unsuited to the present state of geologic knowledge, as any scheme would have been forty years ago which took it for granted that the writings of Moses do "fix the antiquity of the globe."

He next disposes of Pye Smith's view, one which however has never received much countenance either among Theologians or Geologists.

The scheme of reconciliation adopted by the late Dr Pye Smith, though, save in one particular, identical, as I have said, with that of Dr Chalmers is made, in virtue of its single point of difference, to steer clear of the difficulty. Both schemes exhibit the creation recorded in Genesis as an event which took place about six thousand years ago; both describe it as begun and completed in six natural days; and both represent it as cut off from a previously existing creation by a chaotic period of death and darkness. But while, according to the scheme of Chalmers, both the Biblical creation and the previous period of death are represented as coextensive with the globe, they are represented, according to that of Dr Smith, as limited and local. They may have extended, it is said, over only a few provinces of Central Asia, in which, when all was life and light in other parts of the globe, there reigned for a time only death and darkness amid the welterings of a chaotic sea; which, at the Divine command, was penetrated by light, and occupied by dry land, and ultimately ere the end of the creative week, became a centre in which certain plants and animals, and finally man himself, were created. And this scheme, by leaving to the geologist in this country and elsewhere, save mayhap in some unknown Asiatic district, his unbroken series, certainly does not conflict with the facts deduced by geologic discovery. It virtually removes scripture altogether out of the field. I must confess, however, that on this, and some other accounts, it has failed to satisfy me. I have stumbled, too, at the conception of a merely local and limited chaos, in which the darkness would be so complete, that when first penetrated by the light, that penetration could be described as actually a *making* or creating of light; and that, while life obtained all around its precincts, could yet be thoroughly void of life. A local darkness so profound as to admit no ray of light seems to have fallen for a time on Egypt, as one of the ten plagues; but the event was evidently miraculous; and no student of natural science is entitled to have recourse in order to extricate himself out of a difficulty, to supposititious, unrecorded miracle. Creation cannot take place without miracle; but it would be a strange reversal of all our previous conclusions on the subject, should we have to hold that the dead, dark, blank out of which creation arose was miraculous also. And if, rejecting miracle, we cast ourselves on the purely natural, we find that the local darknesses dependent on known causes, of which we have any record in history, were