

all have found ample room in the period preceding that creation to which man belongs, it teaches also that the record in Genesis bears reference to but the existing creation, and that there lay between it and the preceding ones a chaotic period of death and darkness. The scheme propounded by the late Dr Pye Smith, and since adopted by several writers, differs from that of Chalmers in but one circumstance, though an important one. Dr Smith held, with the great northern divine, that the Mosaic days were natural days ; that they were preceded by a chaotic period ; and that the work done in them related to but that last of the creations to which the human species belong. Further, however, he held in addition, that the chaos of darkness and confusion out of which that creation was called was of but limited extent, and that outside its area, and during the period of its existence, many of our present lands and seas may have enjoyed the light of the sun, and been tenanted by animals and occupied by plants, the descendants of which still continue to exist. The treatise of Dr Pye Smith was published exactly a quarter of a century posterior to the promulgation, through the press, of the argument of Dr Chalmers ; and this important addition,—elaborated by its author between the years 1837 and 1839,—seems to have been made to suit the more advanced state of geological science at the time. The scheme of reconciliation perfectly adequate in 1814 was found in 1839 to be no longer so ; and this mainly through a peculiarity in the order in which geological fact has been evolved and accumulated in this country, and the great fossiliferous systems studied and wrought out ; to which I must be permitted briefly to advert.

William Smith, the “Father of English Geology,” as he has been well termed (a humble engineer and mineral surveyor, possessed of but the ordinary education of men of his class and profession), was born upon the English Oolite,—that system which, among the five prevailing divisions of the