

ence on the other, they will be far indeed removed from a gloomy and cheerless scepticism.*

* ‘The true state of the question respecting the difficulties that arise from the periods of time in which the creation is said to have taken place, has been set forth with much ability and fairness by Mr. Sumner, a divine whose rational and sober piety no person will venture to dispute, and whose admirable work on the Records of Creation, from its originality of sentiment, accuracy of argument, and elegance of writing, ranks amongst the most able productions of the present day.’

“ ‘Any curious information as to the structure of the Earth ought not,” he says, “to be expected by any one acquainted with the general character of the Mosaic records. There is nothing in them to gratify the curiosity or repress the researches of mankind, when brought in the progress of cultivation to calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies, or speculate on the formation of the globe. The expressions of Moses are evidently accommodated to the first and familiar notions derived from the sensible appearances of the earth and heavens; and the absurdity of supposing that the literal interpretation of terms in scripture ought to interfere with philosophical inquiry, would have been as generally forgotten as renounced, if the oppressors of Galileo had not found a place in history. The concessions, if they may be so called, of believers in Revelation on this point have been amply remunerated by the sublime discoveries as to the prospective wisdom of the Creator, which have been gradually unfolded by the progressive improvements in astronomical knowledge. We may trust with the same confidence as to any future results from Geology, if this science should ever find its Newton, and break through the various obstacles peculiar to that study, which have hitherto precluded any general solution of its numerous and opposite phenomena.’ ”

‘After following up these general remarks with a more detailed exposition of the harmony which subsists between the facts observable in the structure of the earth, and a fair and liberal interpretation of the Mosaic account of the creation, Mr. Sumner concludes his statement with the following satisfactory result of his investigations.

“ ‘All that I am concerned to establish is the unreasonableness of supposing that Geological discoveries, so far as they have hitherto proceeded, are hostile to the Mosaic account of the creation. No rational naturalist would attempt to describe, either from the brief narration in Genesis or otherwise, the process by which our system was brought from confusion into a regular and habitable state. No rational theologian will direct his hostility against any theory, which, acknowledging the agency of the Creator, only attempts to point out the secondary instruments he has employed. It may be safely affirmed, that no Geological theory has yet been proposed, which is not less reconcilable to ascertained facts and conflicting phenomena, than to the Mosaic history.

“ ‘According to that history, we are bound to admit, that only one general destruction or revolution of the globe has taken place since the period of that creation which Moses records, and of which Adam and Eve were the first inhabitants. The certainty of one event of that kind would appear from the discoveries of geologists, even if it were not declared by the sacred historian. *But we are not called upon to deny the possible existence of previous worlds, from the wreck of which our globe was organized, and the ruins of which are now furnishing matter to our curiosity.* The belief of their existence is indeed consistent with rational probability, and somewhat confirmed by the discoveries of Astronomy, as to the plurality of worlds.’ ” Records of Creation, vol. 2. p. 356,