

the astronomer tells us of myriads of worlds not spoken of in the sacred records; the geologist in like manner proves (not by arguments from analogy, but by the incontrovertible evidence of physical phenomena) that there were former conditions of our planet, separated from each other by vast intervals of time, during which man, and the other creatures of his own date, had not been called into being. Periods such as these belong not, therefore, to the moral history of our race; and come neither within the letter nor the spirit of revelation. Between the first creation of the earth and that day in which it pleased God to place man upon it, who shall dare to define the interval? On this question scripture is silent: but that silence destroys not the meaning of those physical monuments of his power that God has put before our eyes; giving us at the same time faculties whereby we may interpret them and comprehend their meaning.

In the present condition of our knowledge, a statement like this is surely enough to satisfy the reasonable scruples of a religious man. But let us, for a moment, suppose that there are some religious difficulties in the conclusions of Geology. How then are we to solve them? Not by making a world after a pattern of our own—not by shifting and shuffling the solid strata of the earth, and then dealing them out in such a way as to play the game of an ignorant or dishonest hypothesis—not by shutting our eyes to facts, or denying the evidence of our senses: but by patient investigation, carried on in the sincere love of truth, and by learning to reject every consequence not warranted by direct physical evidence. Pursued in this spirit, Geology can neither lead to any false conclusions,