

ritus of any large region of the earth ; then, and not till then, we may speculate about their stature and their manners and their numbers, as we now speculate among the disinterred ruins of an ancient city.

“ We might, I think, rest content with such a general answer as this. But we may advance one step further.—History is a continual record of passions and events unconnected with the enduring laws of mere material agents.—The progress of physical induction, on the contrary, leads us on to discoveries, of which the mere light of history would not indicate a single trace. But the facts recorded in history may sometimes, without confounding the nature of moral and physical truth, be brought into a general accordance with the known phenomena of nature: and such general accordance I affirm there is between our historical traditions and the phenomena of geology. Both tell us in a language easily understood, though written in far different characters, that man is a recent sojourner on the surface of the earth. Again, though we have not yet found the certain traces of any great diluvian catastrophe which we can affirm to be within the human period ; we have, at least, shown, that paroxysms of internal energy, accompanied by the elevation of mountain chains, and followed by mighty waves desolating whole regions of the earth, were a part of the mechanism of nature. And what has happened, again and again, from the most ancient, up to the most modern periods in the natural history of the earth, may have happened once during the few thousand years that man has been living on its surface. We have therefore taken away all anterior incredibility from the fact of a recent deluge ; and we have prepared the mind, doubting about the truth of things of which it knows not either the origin or the end, for the adoption of this fact on the weight of historic testimony.”*

I shall add one more to the mention of eminent Geologists who, upon the point before us, have shown their loyalty to the laws of evidence and the dominion of truth, by surrendering favourite, long cherished, and diligently elaborated sentiments. It is scarcely twenty years since Mr. Greenough, at that time President of the Geological Society, of which he was one of the founders, published his *Critical Examination of the First Principles of Geology*, in which he investigates at great length the phenome-

* Proceedings of the Geol. Soc. Vol. I, pp. 312—314. 1831.