

cept such as may have been going on ever since. According to the popular understanding, the transition and secondary mountains with their coal beds, plants and animals were therefore, formed, in two or three natural days, by physical laws, which is incredible, because it is impossible.

We cannot conceive therefore, that even the limitation of morning and evening is decisive against the extension which we would claim, and we are left at liberty to interpret the word day in harmony with the facts of geology.

It is granted that Moses himself might have understood the word day according to the popular signification and that this sense would be the most obvious one to every mind not informed as to the structure of the globe; even those who are learned on other subjects, but ignorant of geology, always adopt, in this case, the literal and obvious meaning. This however proves nothing; for the truths of astronomy, are in exactly the same situation. Until the modern astronomy arose, no one whether learned or unlearned, entertained a doubt that the earth is an extended plain; that it stands on a firm foundation, even on pillars, and that the sun and starry heavens and the azure canopy revolve around it as a centre.

Such is still the impression of barbarous nations, but few even of the common people of enlightened countries would now fall into so gross an error; and no one in this age fears that he shall, like Galileo, be thrown into prison for declining (on this subject) to understand the scriptures in their literal sense.*

It is objected that as the sabbath is a common day and that as it is mentioned in the fourth commandment, and in other parts of the scriptures, in connexion with the other six days, they ought to be limited to the same *time*.

* When the present system of astronomy was introduced, it met with the most violent opposition and the following is the "Judgment pronounced at Rome, in 1622, only two hundred and eleven years ago, on the Philosophy of Galileo, and on the Philosopher himself, by the seven Cardinal Inquisitors." "To affirm that the sun is in the centre, absolutely immoveable, and without locomotion, is an *absurd* proposition, *false* in sound philosophy, and moreover *heretical*, because it is expressly contrary to *Holy Scripture*. To say that the earth is not placed in the middle of the world, nor immoveable, is also a proposition *absurd and false* in sound philosophy; and considered theologically, is at least erroneous with respect to faith." "Whereupon Galileo so refuted, was compelled on his knees to abjure, curse and detest, the *absurdities, errors and heresies*, which the sagacity of the Cardinal Reviewers and Inquisitors had discovered in his writings."—*Penn's Compar. Estimate, &c. 2d. Ed. Vol. I. p. 37.*