

it was the only representation of his character that would give them any idea of it. Nay, even in this enlightened age, such descriptions are far more impressive than any other upon the mass of mankind; while those, whose minds are more enlightened, find no difficulty in inculcating the pure truth respecting God from these comparatively gross descriptions.

Now, if, upon a point of such vast importance as the divine character, revelation thus condescends to human weakness and ignorance, much more might we expect it, in regard to the less important subject of natural phenomena. We find, accordingly, that they are described as they appear to the common eye, and not in their real nature; or, in the language of Rosenmuller, the Scriptures speak "according to optical, and not physical truth." They make no effort to correct even the grossest errors, on these subjects, that then prevailed.

The earth as we have seen on a former occasion, is described as immoveable, in the centre of the universe, and the heavenly bodies as revolving round it diurnally. The firmament over us is represented as a solid, extended substance, sustaining an ocean above it, with openings, or windows, through which the waters may descend. In respect to the human system, the Scriptures refer intellectual operations to the reins, or the regions of the kidneys, and pain to the bones. In short, the descriptions of natural things are adapted to the very erroneous notions which prevailed in the earliest ages of society and among the common people. But it is as easy to interpret such descriptions in conformity to the present state of physical science, as it is to divest the Scriptural representations of the Deity of their material dress, and make them conform to the spiritual views that now prevail. No one regards it as any objection to the Old Testament, that it gives a description of the divine character so much less spiritual than the views adopted by the theologians of the nineteenth century; why then should they regard it as derogatory to inspiration to adopt the same method as to natural objects?

These considerations will afford us some assistance in rightly interpreting the description of the creation, in the first chapter of Genesis, to which we will now turn our attention.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon