

admissible, the passage not only allows, but expressly teaches that a period intervened between the first act of creation and the six days' work. And if such an interval be allowed, it is all that geology requires to reconcile its facts to revelation. For during that time, all the changes of mineral constitution and organic life, which that science teaches to have taken place on the globe, previous to the existence of man, may have occurred.

It is a presumption in favour of such an interpretation that the second verse describes the state of the globe after its creation and before the creation of light. For if there were no interval between the fiat that called matter into existence, and that which said, "Let there be light," why should such a description of the earth's waste and desolate condition be given?

But if there had been such an intervening period, it is perfectly natural that such a description should precede the history of successive creative acts, by which the world was adorned with light and beauty, and filled with inhabitants.

But, after all, would such an interpretation have ever been thought of, had not the discoveries of geology seemed to demand it?

This can be answered by inquiring whether any of the writers on the Bible, who lived before geology existed, or had laid claims for a longer period previous to man's creation, whether any of these adopted such an interpretation. We have abundant evidence that they did. Many of the early fathers of the Church were very explicit on this subject. Augustin, Theodoret, and others, supposed that the first verse of Genesis describes the creation of matter distinct from, and prior to, the work of six days. Justin Martyr and Gregory Nazianzen believed in an indefinite period between the creation of matter and the subsequent arrangement of all things. Still more explicit are Basil, Cæsarius, and Origen. It would be easy to quote similar opinions from more modern writers, who lived previous to the developments of geology. But I will give a paragraph from Bishop Patrick only, who wrote one hundred and fifty years ago.

'How long,' says he, "all things continued in mere confusion after the chaos was created, before light was extracted from it, we are not told. It might have been for any thing that is here revealed, a great while; and all that time the