

once; though different portions of it may have been reduced to form at very different periods. When the universe was created, or how long the solar system remained in a chaotic state, are vain inquiries, to which no answer can be given."

"The detailed history of creation in the first chapter of Genesis," says Dr. Chalmers, "begins at the middle of the second verse; and what precedes might be understood as an introductory sentence, by which we are most appositely told, both that God created all things at the first, and that afterwards, by what interval of time it is not specified, the earth lapsed into a chaos, from the darkness and disorder of which the present system or economy of things was made to arise. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis, the world, for ought we know, might have been the theatre of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate," etc.

"A philological survey of the initial sections of the Bible, (Gen. i, 1, to ii, 3,)" says Dr. Pye Smith, "brings out the result:"

1. "That the first sentence is a simple, independent, all-comprehending axiom, to this effect: that *matter*, elementary or combined, aggregated only or organised, and *dependent*, *sentient*, and *intellectual beings* have not existed from eternity, either in self-continuity or succession, but had a beginning; that their beginning took place by the all-powerful will of one Being, the self-existent, independent, and infinite in all perfection; and that the date of that beginning is not made known."

2. "That at a certain epoch, our planet was brought into a state of disorganization, detritus, or ruin, (perhaps we have no perfectly appropriate term,) from a former condition."

3. "That it pleased the Almighty, wise and benevolent Supreme, out of that state of ruin to adjust the surface of the earth to its now existing condition, the whole extending through the period of six natural days."

"I am forming," continues Dr. Smith, "no hypotheses in geology; I only plead that *the ground is clear*, and that the dictates of the Scripture *interpose no bar* to observation and reasoning upon the mineralogical constitution of the earth, and the remains of organised creatures which its strata disclose. If those investigations should lead us to attribute to the