

the history contains such contradictions as even infinite power and wisdom could not make harmonious ? Some writers endeavour to show the conformity of the sacred history of the deluge to established natural laws, until they meet with some objection too strong to be answered, when they turn round and declare the whole occurrence to have been miraculous. This I conceive to be absurd, and I shall accordingly proceed on the supposition that the whole event was a penal infliction, brought about by natural laws; or, at least, if there was any thing miraculous, it consisted in giving greater power to natural operations, without interfering with the regular sequence of cause and effect. And does not the narrative leave the impression on the mind of the reader, that it was brought about by natural means ? The sacred writer distinctly assigns two natural causes of the increase of the waters, namely, a rain of forty days, and the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, which doubtless means an overflow of the ocean; and, to hasten the subsidence of the waters, it is said that God made a wind to blow over the surface. It is no proof of miraculous agency, that the whole work is referred to the immediate power of God, for it is well known that this is the usual mode in which the sacred writers speak of natural events.

The first difficulty in the way of supposing the flood to have been literally universal, is the great quantity of water that would have been requisite.

The amount necessary to cover the earth to the tops of the highest mountains, or about five miles above the present oceans, would be eight times greater than that existing on the globe at this time. From whence could this immense volume of water have been derived ? A great deal of ingenuity has been devoted to give an answer to this inquiry. By some it has been supposed, that most of the earth's interior is occupied by water, and the theorist had only to devise means for forcing it to the surface. One does this by the forcible compression of the crust; another, by the expansive power of internal heat; another, by the generation of various gases through galvanic action. Others have maintained that the antediluvian continents were sunk beneath the ocean at that time, though such find it hard to tell us why there was a rain of forty days upon land that was ready to subside beneath the ocean. Others