

after its first creation." *De Vita Mosis*, tom. ii. Among the Jews, these ideas may have been, in part, derived from the Old Testament; though its language, as we have seen, is far less explicit on this subject than the New Testament. That distinguished Christian writers, in all ages since the advent of Christ, have understood the language of Peter as we have explained it, would be easy to show. I have room, however, to quote only the opinions of a few distinguished modern writers.

Dr. Knapp, one of the most scientific and judicious of theologians, thus remarks upon the passage of Peter already examined: "It cannot be thought that what is here said respecting the burning of the world is to be understood figuratively, as Wettstein supposes; because the fire is here too directly opposed to the literal water of the flood to be so understood. It is the object of Peter to refute the boast of scoffers, that all things had remained unchanged from the beginning, and that, therefore, no day of judgment and no end of the world could be expected. And so he says that originally, at the time of the creation, the whole earth was covered and overflowed with water, (Gen. i,) and that from hence the dry land appeared; and the same was true at the time of Noah's flood. But there is yet to come a great fire revolution. The heavens and the earth (the earth with its atmosphere) are reserved, or kept in store, for the fire, until the day of judgment, (v. 10.) At that time the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved by fervent heat, and every thing upon the earth will be burned up. The same thing is taught in verse 12. But in verse 13 Peter gives the design of this revolution. It will not be annihilation, but we expect a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, that is, an entirely new, altered, and beautiful abode for man, to be built from the ruins of his former dwelling-place, as the future habitation of the pious, (Rev. xxi, 1.) This will be very much in the same way as a more perfect and an immortal body will be reared from the body which we now possess."—*Theology*, vol. ii, p. 649.

From Dr. Chalmers my extracts will be longer than are necessary, to show his opinion upon this subject, because he felicitously refutes certain erroneous ideas, widely prevalent, respecting matter and spirit. "We know historically," says he, "that earth, that a solid, material earth, may form the