

to arise. By this hypothesis neither the first verse, nor the first half of the second verse forms any part of the narrative of the first day's operations,—the whole forming a preparatory sentence disclosing to us the initial act of creation at some remote and undefined period; and the chaotic state of the world, at the commencement of those successive acts of creative power, by which out of rude and undigested materials the present harmony of nature was ushered into being. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis, the world for aught we know might have been the theatre of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate, and to which she in fact has confidently appealed as the vestiges of so many successive continents that have now passed away. The whole speculation has ministered a vain triumph to infidelity—seeing first that the Historical Evidence of Scripture is quite untouched by those pretended discoveries of natural science; and that, even should they turn out to be substantial discoveries, they do not come into collision with the narrative of Moses. Should, in particular, the explanation that we now offer be sustained, this would permit an indefinite scope to the conjectures of geology—and without any undue liberty with the first chapter of Genesis. We may here state that there is no argument, saving that grounded on the usages of popular language, which would tempt us to meddle with the literalities of that ancient, and as appears to us authoritative record. Its main difficulty lies in the work of the fourth day, upon which God is said to have made two great