

verted all the dust of Egypt into some punitive animal or genus of animals, for they attacked man and beast, concerning the kind of which interpreters differ ; \* but this does not affect the question : it is evident that here is an instance of the creation of an animal in great numbers, and what is worthy of particular observation, that this animal was not afterwards again annihilated as the frogs and others were. What has evidently been done once, under circumstances that required it, though not recorded, may have been repeated, and thus all the punitive species in question may have been produced.

This is given merely as an hypothesis, to account for the existence of these animals, without doing violence to probability ; and rather in accordance with the word of God, than controverting anything delivered therein ; and if it excites a discussion that may throw new light upon the subject, which ever way the question is determined, I shall be well pleased ; my object being rather to elicit *truth*, than to uphold *opinion*.

Another inquiry also suggests itself with respect to the original animal creation. Are any of those animals with which God peopled the earth, air, and waters, preparatory to the creation of man, now extinct? The answer to this question will principally depend upon that to another. Did any alteration take place in the climate and productions of our globe in consequence of the fall of man from his original state? We learn from the inspired penman, that God, induced by that sad event, pronounced a curse upon the ground, and predicted that it should produce in abundance noxious plants for the annoyance of the offending race of man, and that whereas the primeval earth brought forth spontaneously her fruits and flowers, and afforded man a pleasant and de-

♦ See Appendix, Note 6.