

bable that fire was the agent, or one of the agents, employed to send out the waters from the abyss; and this is no new hypothesis. "It is the opinion of geologists," says Laplace, "that, originally, there existed in the interior of the crust of the earth, a great magazine of fire, which according to them was the cause of the deluge." Some writers suppose that the air was driven downwards into the earth, being forced through those chasms which opened towards the sky, and that then by its expansion it drove out the water.\*

He who willed the deluge, and the destruction of the primeval earth and heavens by it,† kept in his own hands the reins, and guided the whole body of means that he employed to fulfil the great purposes of his Providence, saying to every agent, "*Thus far shalt thou go and no further.*" It must always be kept in mind that this was not an event in the ordinary course of nature, and a result of the enforcement of her established code of laws, but a miraculous deviation from it, in which their action was suspended, and in consequence of which, perhaps, some were abrogated and new ones enacted in their room. I may here further observe, that probably, the whole body of waters which before the creation of the firmament or expanse, with the earthy atoms suspended in it, formed the primeval chaos, were now again its masters; descending and ascending from every receptacle or storehouse to which that powerful expansion had been the means employed to guide them. Whatever waters were suspended in the atmosphere, or could be formed in it, whatever were contained in the ocean, or the womb of our globe, now united their forces and subdued and destroyed the primitive earth, till they reduced it to the state, for the most part, in which we now behold it.

I am next to inquire what has been said in scripture on

\* Rev. W. Jones's Works, x. 264.

† Pet. iii. 6, 7, and see Appendix, Note 10.