

subterranean fires communicate with the atmosphere, and by which the air, rushing into the earth when circumstances are favourable, may possibly act the part of the fabled Cyclops, and blow them up previous to an eruption: thus they become literally channels or chimneys, through which the matter constituting the expanse or firmament passes, either *from* heaven, or, in an eruption, *towards* heaven. The expression, in Isaiah, quoted above, *The windows from on high* are opened, and the foundations of the earth do shake*—seems to indicate that *earthquakes* are connected with the opening of the windows of heaven, thus pointing to volcanic action as the result. Still the expression is ambiguous, and requires further elucidation: it may, however, be intended to include both interpretations. The violent disruption of the fountains of the great deep, which appears to have been the first step towards producing the deluge, since God generally employs *means* to effect his purposes, was probably occasioned by the expansive power of *heat*, and the same agent would, as it does at this very time in some countries, send out the waters; and it seems equally probable, that in proportion as the waters rushed out the air would rush in and take their place, and thus form a centre of repulsion, or *vis centrifuga*, to counteract the pressure of the superincumbent waters. It seems not improbable, if this were the case, that, in its transit from the surface of the earth to its centre, the air might bring with it vast cataracts of water attended by thunder and lightning and other electric phenomena.

Heat, the most elastic of all fluids, at the first creation, under the name of the *expansion* or *firmament*, acting in the bosom of the chaotic waters, divided them, and therefore it is consistent with the Divine proceedings that the same mighty element should be put in action to bring them

* Heb. ממרום.