

proportion to their magnitude and density. Whoever weighs these analogies, and conceives the power of their relations, will not doubt that the planets have issued from the sun by the stroke of a comet, because in the solar system comets only could have power and sufficient motion, to communicate a similar impulsion to the masses of matter which compose the planets. If to all these circumstances we unite that of the innate heat of the earth, and of the insufficiency of the sun to support nature, we must rest persuaded, that in the time of their formation the planets and earth were in a state of liquefaction, afterwards in a state of incandescence, and at last in a successive state of heat, always decreasing from incandescence to actual temperature, for there is no other mode of conceiving the origin and duration of this heat peculiar to the earth. It is difficult to imagine that the fire, termed central, can subsist at the bottom of the globe without air (that is, without its first aliment, and from whence this fire should proceed, which is supposed to be shut up in the centre of the globe), because what origin, what source shall we then find for it? Descartes has imagined the earth and planets were only small incrustrated suns; in other words, suns entirely extinguished.