

an Egyptian zodiac, or the mechanism of the universe, or that of living bodies, or lastly some new fact relating to the structure of the earth) than the first aspect under which some minds have seemed anxious to view it has been, whether it would not furnish some new weapon against Revelation. Whether such a mode of proceeding was more likely to arise from a genuine desire to remove prejudice and bigotry, or rather was itself the fruit of a prejudiced and bigotted eagerness to propagate peculiar opinions, we do not feel called upon to decide. Its result is matter of history, and it would perhaps be instructive to form a collection of the attacks which have been made on all these subjects, and the theories which have been broached concerning them, under such views: it would form a curious monument of the aberrations of reason, and be quite as humiliating to its pride as the records of the most unenlightened enthusiasm; no other single principle could perhaps be pointed out, by which so much crude and absurd speculation would be brought together; in whatever degree the physico-theological reveries of the Hutchinsonian school deserved this character, they have been infinitely surpassed in every respect.* All this, however, it may be justly said, leaves the real merits of the question untouched; but it is necessary, nevertheless, to dissipate the illusions which often hover over it, and to assist us in forming a fair estimate how far such attacks are to be attributed to pure reason, and how far to prejudice and passion.

But let us proceed. Before we examine the bearings of physical science on Revelation, our ideas should first be settled as to what may be reasonably expected from Revelation in this respect. Both its opponents and some of its defendants often argue as if it should have included the discovery of a system of physical truth; which it would not be difficult to shew, gives an entirely erroneous view of its professed object; to treat, namely, of the history of man only, and that even but as far as affects his relations to his Creator, and the dealings of Divine Providence in regard to him. To have made physical truth generally the subject of Revelation, would have been to destroy its great use, namely, that its investigation might form at

* See for the proofs of this not merely the earlier theories on many of these subjects of Buffon and Bailly, and the notions of Voltaire, but more especially in the present day the Hydrogeologie of Lamarck (before which old Burnet and Whiston fade into sober reason) and all the metaphysical speculations which load the first volume of the same author's otherwise valuable '*Système des Animaux sans Vertèbres.*' De credulitate infidelium would be the proper title for such a collection; on the whole the cavils of many an objector might be effectually silenced, by moving the previous question of his real acquaintance with that science from whence he professed to draw them.