

tions of the present (such as present no secondary rocks), for at first it seems evident that a limited space only would be requisite; or if more extensive, they may have been submerged in whole or in part,* during those great convulsions which accompanied the deluge.

Or secondly, We may perhaps without real violence to the inspired writer, regard the periods of the creation recorded by Moses and expressed under the term of days, not to have designated ordinary days of twenty-four hours, but periods of definite but considerable length; such a mode of extending the signification of this term being not unexampled in other parts of the sacred writings. Those who embrace this opinion will of course assign the formation of the secondary strata, in great part at least to these *Days of creation*; and we have the authority of several divines in favor of such an interpretation.

Or thirdly, It does not seem inconsistent with the authority of the sacred historian to suppose that after recording in the first sentence of Genesis the fundamental fact of the original formation of all things by the will of an intelligent Creator, he may pass, sub silentio, some intermediate state whose ruins formed the chaotic mass he proceeds to describe, and out of which, according to his farther narrative, the present order of our portion of the universe was educed; upon this supposition the former world whose remains we explore may have belonged to this intermediate æra.

It does not become us to propose hypotheses of such a nature with any feeling of confidence. It is amply sufficient for our purpose to shew that there exists more than one mode by which the appearances presented by the structure of the globe may be satisfactorily reconciled to the facts recorded by Moses, in order to remove the objection which has been drawn from them: other hypotheses tending to the same effect may perhaps present themselves to other minds. They who have experienced the limits which so soon present themselves to all the researches of human philosophy (limits which will ever be the most distinctly recognised by those who are able to cast the most comprehensive survey over its whole field, and who have approached the utmost boundary most nearly) will ever be content to acquiesce in what has well been termed "*a learned ignorance*," on many subjects; while at the same time attributing a due weight to moral evidence on the one hand, and physical evi-

* The notice with regard to the rivers flowing from Eden appear to indicate at least a partial identity between the antediluvian and postdiluvian continents; but this argument is perhaps not decisive, since the names in question may perhaps (as is common in the appellatives of countries) have been generic terms; the whole context, however, certainly favors the former idea.