

the subsidence, the words used are such as remarkably suit the conception of a large body of water undergoing a process of evaporation from the surface, and of a gradual draining off by outlets beneath: "God made a wind to pass over the earth" —(an expression which definitely conveys the idea of a local field of operation; extensive it might be, but totally inapplicable to the surface of the whole globe;)—"and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven* was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually—(literally, *going and returning*:) and, after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated."

If we suppose the mass of waters to have been such as would cover all the land of the globe, we present to ourselves an increase of the equatorial diameter by some eleven or twelve miles. Two new elements would hence accrue to the actions of gravity upon our planet. The absolute weight would be greatly increased, and the causes of the mutation of the axis would be varied. I am not competent to the calculation of the changes in the motions of the earth which would thus be produced, and which would propagate their effects through the whole solar system; and indeed to the entire extent of the material creation: but they would certainly be very great. To save the physical system from derangements, probably ruinous to the well-being of innumerable sentient natures, would require a series of stupendous and immensely multiplied miracles.

Again, pursuing the supposition, the ark would not remain stationary: it "went upon the face of the waters." Its form was adapted to secure slowness of motion; so

* This "rain" is not to be considered as a third cause; but, according to the frequent style of Scripture, exegetically intended, or upon the principle of the *hendiadys*, which is abundant in the Hebrew Scriptures.