

only of the sensible appearances of things, adapting both the matter and the expression to the capacities of the Israelites, a people recently delivered from the oppression of Egyptian slavery, and whose minds had not been elevated above low and common conceptions.*

Calvin considers the design and purport of the first verse, as being to establish this primary truth, that "the world was not from eternity, but was created by God." Thus that acute Bible-interpreter sanctions the general idea for which I am pleading, that the passage is a grand and independent axiom.

Bishop Patrick, in his Commentary, supports the sentiment, which many others have done, that the passage declares a chaotic condition of the earth, between its creation and its being made the receptacle of vegetable and animal life: and he regards this state as having been of an indefinitely long continuance. He thus admits the principle of our interpretation, though we think him to have been misaken in his method of applying it. There appears to be no reason for attributing any other than a

* Homil. II. et Sermo I. in Gen. Op. tom. II. pp. 12, 723; Francof. 1698.

"It is indeed singular that all ancient cosmogonists should conspire to suggest the same idea, and preserve the tradition of *an early series of successive revolutions*."—The Hindoos:—the Burmese:—Egyptians.—"But I think it much more important and interesting to observe, how the early Fathers of the Christian Church should seem to have entertained precisely similar views; for St. Gregory Nazianzen, after St. Justin Martyr, supposes an *indefinite period* between the creation and the first ordering of all things. St. Basil, St. Cæsarius, and Origen, are much more explicit; for they account for the creation of light prior to that of the sun, by supposing this luminary to have indeed before existed, yet so as that its rays were prevented, by the dense chaotic atmosphere, from penetrating to the earth; [and that] this was, on the first day, so far rarified as to allow the transmission of the sun's rays, though not the discernment of its disk, which was fully displayed on the third day." Principal Wiseman's Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion: delivered in Rome, in 1835; Vol. I. p. 297.