

short duration to the state of our planet, or any part of its surface, which is expressed in the words of our translation, "And the earth was without form and void."

Dr. David Jennings, the author of the well-known work upon Jewish Antiquities, and who, in the days of our fathers, was one of the most esteemed Dissenting Ministers of this city, has these observations. "The Mosaic account does not seem to be designed for an account of the whole creation of God;"—but "plainly to be a designed account of the creation of this planet only." He speaks with approbation of the hypothesis, that "our earth,—as that most penetrating philosopher, Dr. Halley, seems to suspect, might be a former world, reduced to a chaos by the shock of a comet."—It may be not improper here to interpose the remark, that this supposition of Halley and others, is exploded by the fact, ascertained but within the few latter years, that comets are not solid bodies, but are composed of brilliant matter, resembling some kind of vapour; but so attenuated that small stars are visible through it, and that it might pass over and envelop the earth without giving a shock or producing any material effect.—Dr. Jennings goes on to say: "One cannot suppose that this account of the creation was designed to teach the Israelites——such deep points of philosophy as the true motions of the earth and moon: but rather it was designed to teach them to reverence the great Creator of all things, and also to preserve them from the idolatry of the heathen nations around them, who worshipped the sun and the moon, and other creatures which God had made. But yet, as this account was written by inspiration,—it is all agreeable to truth and to the nature of things. And the skill of the Divine Author is in this truly admirable, that the account of the creation is here given, for the use of the people, in such words and phrases as were suited to vulgar conceptions; and yet it