

cords.—The style, and the entire manner of the description, involve evidence of the highest antiquity. At every step we perceive proofs of that extreme simplicity which must have been the character of our race in its very infancy. With respect to divine subjects, in particular, the first step of human knowledge must undoubtedly have consisted in conceptions of God derived from our own nature; ascribing to the Deity the same properties and perfections which men perceived in themselves, but in modes and degrees infinitely more perfect. Upon this principle are founded the representations of God which are given in the books of Moses, and many other parts of the Old Testament. Indeed this is, in my judgment, a very plain argument, not only of the genuineness and truth of those books, but of their DIVINE origin: seeing that they present to us a method of description concerning God and divine things, perfectly suited to the capacity of men in the earliest times, and yet the most sublime, and, when fairly and candidly interpreted, in perfect accordance with spiritual truth. The scoffers at revealed religion, philosophers as they please to call themselves, betray an almost unpardonable ignorance, when they make stumbling-blocks out of those constantly occurring expressions of the Old Testament which speak of the Deity [*anthropopathicis locutionibus*] in language borrowed from human properties and actions. What can be a grosser absurdity, and even folly, than to require that Moses and the prophets should have spoken of divine truths, in the very infancy of the human race, according to the philosophy of Descartes, Newton, or Wolf?—

“In the beginning God created this universe; the heavens and the earth. But, with respect to this earthly globe, it was not at once the abode of men and animals, as it is now: but there was a period during which it was utterly destitute of such a furniture of things as it now possesses, it did not enjoy the light of the sun, and it was completely covered with water. Whether, at its first being brought into being, it possessed a constitution like that of comets,\* being consequently uninhabitable; or whether it was reduced into its actual state, after a vast space of time, by some kind of universal inundation of water, with the concurrence of other causes both natural and extraordinary; cannot be with certainty determined from the Mosaic narrative. But this detracts nothing from the truth and dignity of the narrative. It never was in the mind or intention of Moses, to unfold physical causes, of which he was most probably ignorant, and

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\* One cannot but observe here the working of a sagacious mind, and the approach which it makes, though on principles purely conjectural, to the Nebular Hypothesis.