

Fully admitting the assumptions in the last query, I deny that of the preceding one.

It is to be lamented that the common habits of expression nourish the opinion, that the authority of Scripture maintains the commencement of dependent nature to have been as has been stated: and it is scarcely less to be lamented that theories have been propounded for conciliating the facts of nature and the Scripture narrative, which rest upon either a defective acquaintance with those facts, or a disregard to the plain use of language in that narrative. Of the former kind are the schemes for finding the time requisite for the terrene formations, in the period from the creation of the first man, to the Noachian Deluge; of the latter, those which interpret the *days* of successive operation, laid down in the primeval record, as if they were indefinite periods.

It will appear evident to any one who will reflect upon the case, that the records of revelation must have been written in the phraseology and idioms of the people and the age to which they were given; or they would have been unintelligible. Upon this principle we account for the manner in which natural phenomena are currently described; and for the expressions which impute to the Infinite Spirit the form, the organs, and the mental affections of a human being; and various other characteristics of the parabolic style of the Hebrew Scriptures. Such language was a condescension to the infirmities of mortals, and best adapted to the instruction of the general mass of mankind: but it is self-evident that it must be interpreted in a manner congruous with the perfect attributes of the Deity, and the reality of things.

A philological survey of the initial section of the Bible (Gen. i. 1, to ii. 3,) brings out the result:—

i. That the first sentence is a simple, independent, all-comprehending, axiom, to this effect—that *matter*, elementary or combined, aggregated only or organized, and *dependent sentient and intellectual beings*, have not existed from eternity, either in self-continuity or succession, but had a *beginning*; that their beginning took place by the all-powerful will of ONE BEING, the Self-existent, Independent, and Infinite in all perfections; and that the date of that beginning is not made known.

ii. That, at a recent epoch, our planet was brought into a state of disorganization, detritus, or ruin, (perhaps we have no perfectly appropriate term,) from a former condition.*

* I beg that this position may be understood in the way which the preceding lectures explain. Prof. Powell's volume awakened my closer