

iii. That it pleased the Almighty, Wise, and Benevolent Supreme, out of that state of ruin, to adjust the surface of the earth to its now existing condition; partly by the operation of the mechanical and chemical causes (what we usually call *Laws of Nature*,) which Himself had established; and partly, that is, whenever it was necessary, by His own creative power, or other immediate intervention; the whole extending through the period of six natural days.

It has been indeed maintained, that the conjunction *and*, with which the next sentence begins, connects the succeeding matter with the preceding, so as to forbid the intercalating of any considerable space of time. To this we reply, that the Hebrew conjunction, agreeably to the simplicity of ancient languages, expresses an annexation of subject or a continuation of speech, in any mode whatever, remote as well as proximate. For denoting such different modes of annexation, the Greek and other languages have a variety of particles; but their use is in Hebrew compensated by the shades of meaning which the tone in oral speech, and the connexion in writing, could supply. To go no further than the first two leaves of the Hebrew Bible, we find this copula rendered in our authorized version, by *thus*, *but*, *now*, and *also*.

This interpretation is what I have been labouring to diffuse for more than thirty years, in private and in public, by preaching, by academical lecturing, and by printing. But it is not my interpretation, though I believe that I originally derived it from the sole study of the Bible-text. Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, and Augustine, among the fathers, (though not in a truly philosophical way, which was not to be expected,) departed from the vulgar notion: and some judicious interpreters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have done the same, in particular, Bishop Patrick and Dr. David Jennings. Of modern Scripture critics I say nothing; for prejudice, justly or unjustly, may lie against them. Not that the question is to be settled by human authority. Our only appeal for

---

attention and directed my mind to what I regard as the more accurate interpretation of this verse, and which is therefore maintained in these lectures. Referring to the preceding paper, of which he speaks in kind and courteous terms, he has represented me as conceiving "that the beginning means an indefinitely long period, during which the successive formations recognised by Geology may have taken place." *Connex. of Nat. and Div. Truth*; p. 297. I venture to believe that this representation arose from oversight. My intention was to apply that word, not to a period, but to the *first term* of a period, the *commencement* of a series of operations; and that therefore the verb *created* is to be understood *sensu prægnanti*, as the Hebrew grammarians say.