

duration of the globe since the first series of changes commenced!

Finally. There is no little reason to believe that, previous to the formation of the stratified rocks, the earth passed through changes that required vast periods of time, by which it was gradually brought into a habitable state. It is even believed that one of its earliest conditions was that of vapour; that, gradually condensing, it became a melted globe of fire, and then, as it gradually cooled, a crust formed over its surface; and so at last it became habitable. All this is indeed hypothesis; and, therefore, I do not place it in the same rank as the other proofs of the earth's antiquity, already adduced. Still this hypothesis has so much evidence in its favour, that not a few of the ablest and most cautious philosophers of the present day have adopted it. And if it be indeed true, it throws back the creation of the universe to a period remote beyond calculation or conception.

Now, let this imperfect summary of evidence in favour of the earth's high antiquity be candidly weighed, and can any one think it strange that every man, who has carefully and extensively examined the rocks in their native beds, is entirely convinced of its validity? Men of all professions, and of diverse opinions concerning the Bible, have been geologists; but on this point they are unanimous, however they may differ as to other points in the science. Must we not, then, regard this fact as one of the settled principles of science? If so, who will hesitate to say that it ought to settle the interpretation of the first verse of Genesis, in favour of that meaning which allows an intervening period between the creation of matter and the creation of light? This is the grand point which I have aimed to establish; and, in conclusion, I beg leave to make a few remarks by way of inference.

First. This interpretation of Genesis is entirely sufficient to remove all apparent collision between geology and revelation. It gives the geologist full scope for his largest speculations concerning the age of the world. It permits him to maintain that its first condition was as unlike to the present as possible, and allows him time enough for all the changes of mineral constitution and organic life which its strata reveal. It supposes that all these are passed over in silence by the sacred writers, because irrelevant to the object of revelation, but full of inter-