

from its hiding-place,' [that is, from the inward parts of the earth, from between every atom where it lay hid, and kept each atom separate from the other, and so the whole in a state of dissolution; his bringing out those parts of the light which caused the dissolution would of course permit the agents to act in their usual way, and so reform the earth.]" *Treatise on the Deluge*, p. 43, (London, 1761.)

We can hardly believe at the present day, that a logical and scientific mind, like that of Catcott, could satisfy itself, by such a dreamy exegesis, that the Scriptures teach the earth's dissolution at the deluge; especially when they so distinctly describe the waters of the deluge, as first rising over the land and then sinking back to their original position. Still more strange is it how Burnet could have thought it consistent with Scripture to suppose the earth, before the flood, "to have been covered with an orbicular crust, smooth, regular, and uniform, without mountains and without a sea," when the Bible so distinctly states, as the work of the third day, that "the waters under the heavens were gathered together unto one place, and the dry land appeared;" and that "God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called seas;" and further, that, by the deluge, "all the high hills were covered." Yet these men doubtless supposed that, by the views which they advocated, they were defending the Holy Scriptures. Nay, their views were long regarded as exclusively the orthodox views, and opposition to them was considered, for one or two centuries, as virtual opposition to the Bible. Truly, this, in biblical interpretation, was straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

It is quite convenient to explain such anomalies in human belief, by referring them to the spirit of the age, or to the want of the light of modern science. But in the present case, we cannot thus easily dispose of the difficulty. For in our own day, we have seen these same absurdities of opinion maintained by a really scientific man, selected to write one of the *Bridge-water Treatises*, as one of the most learned men in Great Britain. I refer to Rev. William Kirby, evidently a thorough entomologist and a sincere Christian. But he adopts the opinion, not only that there exists a subterranean abyss of waters, but a subterranean metropolis of animals, where the huge leviathans, the gigantic saurians, dug out of the rocks by the