

known course of events. The first origin of language, of civilization, of law and government, cannot be clearly made out by reasoning and research ; just as little, we may expect, will a knowledge of the origin of the existing and extinct species of plants and animals, be the result of physiological and geological investigation.

But, though philosophers have never yet demonstrated, and perhaps never will be able to demonstrate, what was that primitive state of things in the social and material worlds, from which the progressive state took its first departure ; they can still, in all the lines of research to which we have referred, go very far back ;—determine many of the remote circumstances of the past sequence of events ;—ascend to a point which, from our position at least, seems to be near the origin ;—and exclude many suppositions respecting the origin itself. Whether, by the light of reason alone, men will ever be able to do more than this, it is difficult to say. It is, I think, no irrational opinion, even on grounds of philosophical analogy alone, that in all those sciences which look back and seek a beginning of things, we may be unable to arrive at a consistent and definite belief, without having recourse to other grounds of truth, as well as to historical research and scientific reasoning. When our thoughts would apprehend steadily the creation of things, we find that we are obliged to summon up other ideas than those which regulate the pursuit of scientific truths ;—to call in other powers than those to which we refer natural events : it cannot, then, be considered as very surprizing, if, in this part of our inquiry, we are compelled to look for other than the ordinary evidence of science.

Geology, forming one of the palætiological class of sciences, which trace back the history of the earth and its inhabitants on philosophical grounds, is thus associated with a number of other kinds of research, which are concerned about language, law, art, and consequently about the internal faculties of man, his thoughts, his social habits, his conception of right, his love of beauty. Geology being thus brought into the atmosphere of moral and mental speculations, it may be expected that her investigations of the probable past will share an influence common to them ; and that she will not be allowed to point to an origin of her own, a merely physical beginning of things ; but that, as she approaches towards such a goal, she will be led to see that it is the origin of many trains of events, the point of convergence of many lines. It may be, that instead of being allowed to travel up to this focus of being, we are only able to estimate its place and nature, and