

is placed by Buffon 55,000 or 60,000 years after the beginning of the world, or about 15,000 years before our own time.

The Sixth Epoch was marked by the separation of the two continents of the Old and New Worlds, which, as was inferred from the presence in each of them of what were supposed to be the same fossil mammals, were believed to have been originally united. Buffon placed this event 10,000 years before his time. The same period also saw the submergence that isolated Greenland from Europe, Canada and Newfoundland from Spain, and gave rise to so many insular tracts in the north Atlantic. The history of other late topographical features of the earth's surface, such as the Mediterranean, the Bosphorus, and the Black Sea, is next sketched, and is connected with the occurrence of successive deluges and ruptures of land-barriers.

Buffon added a seventh epoch, in which he traced the commanding influence of man in modifying the surface of the earth.

Recognising the powerful agency of rivers and the sea in washing away the materials of the land, he believed that by this action the whole of the existing continents will finally be reduced and covered by the ocean; and he conceived that by the same series of changes new lands will ultimately be formed. He foresaw, however, the final extinction of our globe as a habitation for sentient beings, but not after the manner of the orthodox creed that the heavens and the earth are at last to melt with fervent heat. Buffon recognised proofs of the gradual refrigeration of our