

If it be so interesting to us to follow, in the infancy of our species, the almost obliterated traces of extinct nations, why should it not also be so, to search, amid the darkness of the infancy of the Earth, for the traces of revolutions which have taken place anterior to the existence of all nations? We admire the power by which the human mind has measured the motions of the celestial bodies, which nature seemed to have concealed for ever from our view. Genius and science have burst the limits of space; and observations, explained by just reasoning, have unveiled the mechanism of the universe. Would it not also be glorious for man to burst the limits of time, and, by means of observations, to ascertain the history of this world, and the succession of events which preceded the birth of the human race? Astronomers have undoubtedly advanced more rapidly than naturalists; and the present period, with respect to the Theory of the Earth, bears some resemblance to that in which some philosophers fancied that the heavens were formed of polished stones, and that the moon was of the size of the Peleponnesus; but after ANAXAGORAS, came COPERNICUS and KEPLER, who pointed the way to NEWTON; and why should not natural history also one day have its Newton?