

up the mountains for the purpose of allowing the waters, which had produced the deluge, to run off; and selected those places in which there was the greatest quantity of rocks, without which the mountains could not have supported themselves. A fourth * created the earth from the atmosphere of one comet, and deluged it by the tail of another: The heat which it retained from its origin, was what, in his opinion, excited the whole of the living beings upon it to sin; for which they were all drowned, excepting the fishes, whose passions were apparently less vehement.

It is evident, that, even while confined within the limits prescribed by the Book of Genesis, naturalists might still have a pretty wide range: they soon found themselves, however, in too narrow bounds; and when they had succeeded in converting the six days of creation into so many indefinite periods, the lapse of ages no longer forming an obstacle to their views, their systems took a flight proportioned to the periods which they could then dispose of at pleasure.

Even the great Leibnitz amused himself, like Descartes, by conceiving the earth to be an extinguished sun†, a vitrified globe, upon which the vapours falling down again, after it had cooled,

* Whiston, *New Theory of the Earth*. Lond. 1708.

† Leibnitz, *Protogæa*. Act. Lips. 1683; Gott. 1749.