

only about six thousand years ago. But if it may be understood as an announcement of the act of creation at some indefinite point in past duration, then a period may have intervened between that first creative act and the subsequent six days' work. I contend that the passage admits of either interpretation, without any violence to the language or the narration.

The first of these interpretations is the one usually received, and, therefore, it will be hardly necessary to attempt to show that it is admissible. The second has had fewer advocates, and will, therefore, need to be examined.

The particle *and*, which is used in our translation of this passage to connect the successive sentences, furnishes an argument to the English reader against this second mode of interpretation, which has far less force with one acquainted with the original Hebrew. The particle thus translated is the general connecting particle of the Hebrew language, and "may be copulative, or disjunctive, or adversative; or it may express a mere annexation to a former topic of discourse, the connection being only that of the subject matter, or the continuation of the composition. This continuative use forms one of the most marked peculiarities of the Hebrew idiom, and it comprehends every variety of mode in which one train of sentiment may be appended to another." J. Pye Smith, *Scrip. and Geol.* p. 195, 4th edition.

In the English Bible this particle is usually rendered by the copulative conjunction *and*; in the Septuagint, and in Josephus, however, it sometimes has the sense of *but*. And some able commentators are of opinion that it admits of a similar translation in the passage under consideration. The elder Rosenmuller says we might read it thus: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Afterwards the earth was desolate," etc. Or the particle *afterwards* may be placed at the beginning of any of the succeeding verses. Thus: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was desolate, and darkness was upon the face of the waters. *Afterwards* the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Dr. Dathe, who has been styled by good authority, (Dr. Smith,) "a cautious and judicious critic," renders the first two verses in this manner: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; but afterwards the earth became waste and desolate." If such translations as these be