

the parents of Moses and their family. "And there went a man of the name of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son, (that is, Moses,) and when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months." (Ex. ii, 12.) Suppose, now, that no other account existed in the Bible of the family of this Levite; we could not surely have suspected that Moses had an elder brother and sister. But imagine the Bible silent on the subject, and that the fact was first brought to light in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics in the nineteenth century, who could hesitate to admit its truth because omitted in the Pentateuch? or who would regard it in opposition to the sacred record? With equal propriety may we admit, on proper geological evidence, the intercalation of a long period between the beginning and the six days, if satisfied that it does not contradict the Mosaic account. Hence all that is necessary, in this connection, for me to show, is, that such contradictions would not be made out by such a discovery.

Once more: if this long period had existed, we should hardly have expected an allusion to it in the fourth commandment, if the views we have taken are correct as to the manner in which the Old Testament treats of natural events. It is literally true, that all which the Jews understood by the heavens and the earth, was made, (*awsaw*,) that is, renovated, arranged, and constituted, (for so the word often means,) in six literal days. Had the sacred writer alluded to the earth while without form and void, or to the heavenly bodies as any thing more than shining points in the firmament, placed there on the fourth day, he could not have been understood by the Hebrews, without going into a detailed description, and thus violating what seems to have been settled principles in writing the Bible, namely, not to treat of natural phenomena with scientific accuracy, nor to anticipate any scientific discovery.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I am endeavouring to show, only, that the language of Scripture will admit of an indefinite interval between the first creation of matter and the six demiurgic days. I am willing to admit, at least for the sake of argument, that the common interpretation, which makes matter only six thousand years old, is the most natural. But I contend that no violence is done to the language by admitting the other interpretation. And in further proof of