

contended in this lecture, does not affect injuriously any doctrine of revelation. The community have, indeed, been taught to believe that the universe was all brought into existence about six thousand years ago; and it always produces a temporary evil to change the interpretation of a passage of the Bible, even though, as in this case, it be the result of new light shed upon it; because it is apt to make individuals of narrow views lose their confidence in the rules of interpretation. But when the change is once made, it increases men's confidence in the Word of God, which is only purified, but not shaken, by all the discoveries of modern science. In the present case, it does not seem to be of the least consequence, so far as the great doctrines of the Bible are concerned, whether the world has stood six thousand, or six hundred thousand years. Nor can I conceive of any truth of the Bible, which does not shine with at least equal brightness and glory, if the longest chronological dates be adopted.

Yet, fourthly. I maintain that several of these doctrines are far more strikingly and profitably exhibited, if the high antiquity of the globe be admitted. The common interpretation limits the operations of the Deity, so far as the material universe is concerned, to the last six thousand years. But the geological view carries the mind back along the flow of countless ages, and exhibits the wisdom of the Deity carrying forward, with infinite skill, a vast series of operations, each successive link springing out of that before it, and becoming more and more beautiful, until the glorious universe in which we live comes forth, not only the last, but the best of all. All this while, too, we perceive the heart of infinite Benevolence at work, either in fitting up the world for its future races of inhabitants, or in placing upon it creatures exactly adapted to its varying condition; until man, at last, the crown of all, makes it his delightful abode, with nothing to lament but his own apostacy, with every thing perfect but himself. Can the mind enter such an almost boundless field of contemplation as this, and not feel itself refreshed, and expanded, and filled with more exalted conceptions of the divine plans and divine bene-

Biblical Repository, especially to the number for October, 1835, p. 261. The progress of science has, indeed, rendered it desirable to change a few sentences in those articles; but all their essential principles I still maintain.