

gonist of the eighteenth century, that the "whole terrestrial globe was taken to pieces and dissolved at the flood, and the strata settled down from this promiscuous mass, as any earthy sediment from a fluid." During that century, many works appeared upon cosmogony, defending similar views, by such men as Burnet, Scheuchzer, and Catcott. Some of these works exhibited no little ability, mixed however, with hypotheses so extravagant that they have ever since been the butt of ridicule. The very title of Burnet's work cannot but provoke a smile. It is called 'The Sacred Theory of the Earth, containing an account of the original of the earth, and of all the general Changes it hath already undergone, or is to undergo, till the Consummation of all Things.' He maintained that the primitive earth was only "an orbicular crust, smooth, regular, and uniform, without mountains, and without a sea." This crust rested on the surface of a watery abyss, and being heated by the sun, became chinky; and in consequence of the rarefaction of the included vapours, it burst asunder, and fell down into the waters, and so was comminuted and dissolved, while the inhabitants perished. Catcott's work was confined exclusively to the deluge, and exhibited a good deal of ability. He endeavoured to show, that this dissolution of the earth by the deluge was taught in the Scriptures, and his reasoning on that point is a fine example of the state of biblical interpretation in his day. "As there are other texts," says he, "which mention the dissolution of the earth, it may be proper to cite them. Ps. xlvi, 2. 'God is our refuge; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed,' [be changed, be quite altered, as it was at the deluge.] 'God uttered his voice, the earth melted,' [flowed, dissolved to atoms.] Again, Job, xxviii, 9. 'He sent his hand' [the expansion, his instrument, or the agent by which he worked] 'against the rock, he overturned the mountains by the roots, he caused the rivers to burst forth from between the rocks,' [or broke open the fountains of the abyss.] 'His eye' [symbolically placed for light] 'saw' [passed through, or between] 'every minute thing,' [every atom, and so dissolved the whole.] 'He' [at last] 'bound up the waters from weeping,' [that is, from pressing through the shell of the earth, as tears make their way through the orb of the eye, or, as it is related, (Gen. viii, 2,) 'He stopped the fountains of the abyss and the windows of heaven,'] and brought out the light