

Concerning the origin of the universe various, discordant, contradictory theories have been advanced. The opinion, that it had no beginning, which has been held by certain Pagan philosophers, militates against the principles of sound philosophy no less than the doctrines of revelation. Even among those, who reject, as antisciptural and irrational, the supposition of the eternity of it, there is no small diversity of opinion. Of its great antiquity, ideas, manifestly fabulous, have been entertained; especially by the Chinese; the Chaldeans and the Egyptians. On this subject, christian writers, as well as pagan, have formed a variety of speculations. Were we, for a moment, to put revelation out of the question, and, in our inquiries concerning the antiquity of the world, proceed entirely on rational principles, we would find reason to conclude, that it is not of so great antiquity, as many philosophers and several divines have imagined. Let us recollect the general traditions of the most ancient nations; the concurring testimonies of the earliest philosophers and poets; the total deficiency of history prior to the Mosaic; the manifold absurdities and contradictions of those few accounts which pretend to great antiquity; the continued discoveries of new countries; the late invention of many useful arts and sciences, &c. Do not these considerations render it, in a high degree, probable, though not infallibly certain, that the world is not of a very great duration? But, without revelation, all speculations on this subject, are precarious and unsatisfactory. In the books of Moses, and the subsequent sacred writings, and in them alone, is an authentic, consistent, satisfactory account of the origin of all things to be found. That God, at the time, and in the manner, related by Moses, created the heavens and the earth, ever has been an article of the creed of both Jews and Christians.

The chronology of the world, which our best writers have almost universally adopted, is that of the celebrated Archbishop Usher. This computation, conformably