

LITERARY.

CREATION.

A LECTURE,—DELIVERED BEFORE THE HALIFAX MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, ON DEC. 12, 1838.

By THE REV. C. CHURCHILL.

ONE of the most striking confirmations of the Mosaic history of the creation, from heathen sources, is the general adoption of the division of time into weeks, which extends from the christian states of Europe to the remote shores of Hindostan, and has equally prevailed among the Hebrews, the Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and Northern Barbarians. The other divisions of time rise from natural causes respecting the sun and moon. The division into weeks, on the contrary, seems perfectly arbitrary, and to have been derived from some remote tradition, (as that of the creation) which was never totally obliterated from the memory of the Gentiles.—T. H. HORNE.

(Concluded.)

CUVIER says—“By a careful investigation of what has taken place on the surface of the globe, since it has been laid dry for the last time, and its continents have assumed their present form, at least in such parts as are somewhat elevated above the level of the ocean, it may be clearly seen, that this revolution—and consequently the establishment of our existing societies—could not have been very ancient.”

D'Aubisson remarks—“That the soils of all the plains, were deposited in the bosom of a tranquil water; that their actual order, is only to be dated from the retreat of that water; and that the date of that period is not very ancient.” And in addition to this testimony, and in support of the same theory, Professor Jamieson, reasoning from accessible analogies, observes—“That the front of Salisbury Craigs, near Edinburgh, affords a fine example of the natural chronometer, alluded to by Cuvier. The acclivity is covered with loose masses, that have fallen from the hill itself; and the quantity of *debris*, is in proportion to the time which has elapsed, since the waters of the ocean covered the surrounding country. If a vast period of time had elapsed, since the surface of the earth had assumed its present aspect, it is evident that, long ere now, the whole of this hill would have been enveloped in its own *debris*. We have here then a proof,” says the Professor, “of the comparatively short period, since the waters left the surface of the globe: a period not exceeding a few thousand years.”

It may be asked, why we have left for a moment, the subject of the Creation, to refer to the period of the Deluge: our answer cannot be better presented than in the words of Watson—

“From the absence of all counter evidence, in the records of ancient nations, as well as from philosophical conclusions, which are to be considered in the light of concessions, made to the chronology of the Pentateuch, we may therefore conclude, that, as to the origin of nations and the creation of the world, as well as to the period of the general deluge, the testimony of Scripture remains unshaken.

But it may be advanced, that there has been counter evidence, offered in the discoveries of modern science, which yet remains unanswered and unassailed.

Let us examine two points in particular: one argument is this—

That those strata, or beds of fossil fuel, which are found so extensively in various parts have been form-

ed by decayed vegetable matter, which, being reduced to a mass, has, in the process of time, been changed by bituminous fermentation and subsequent solidification, into the bright, shining, and useful substance, which we call coal, and that in many districts in England, where this is extensively found, large beds of turf or peat have been discovered, covering some of the largest and most valuable beds of coal: and in dividing and examining a section of this, the material has been found in every shape of vegetable decomposition, from the surface to the interior, where the process of fermentation was then carrying on, and from thence to the lower stratum, of perfect coal formation.

Now, what has been the reasoning founded upon this? It has been, that the process of decomposition and fermentation, being necessarily slow,—a certain number of years were necessary to produce, first, the material, then its decay, then decomposition, then a stratum of coal, even of the smallest thickness: and, viewing the amazing extent of the coal districts, in different parts of the world, it is utterly impossible—this is the conclusion formed—it is utterly impossible, that such results could have been accomplished, except during the lapse of a series of ages, far more extensive than those which are said to have elapsed, since the reputed period assigned to Creation in the Bible.

Again: Taking up a piece of granite—one of the most durable and least pervious substances—we are told that this is a primary formation, the first or lowest layer in the stratifications of the earth, and that, from the circumstance of its being found intersected in a remarkable manner, between other strata, as well as from other circumstances, it must, originally, have existed in a fluid state—and that the process of hardening, must necessarily have been carrying on, for ages long prior to the historical record of the world's formation; nay, that the fact of its being found out of its organic position, in large masses on the very surface of the earth, is a proof, that mighty volcanic changes, and vastly extended subterranean processes, must have been carrying on, long prior to the formation of the human race.

Cowper said truly—

“Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That he who made it, and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.”

We notice, then, that the assertion that changes, such as are now found, could only be produced by secondary causes, is no proof at all that they were not produced otherwise; and though, in argument, it may be advanced, that the laws of nature are unalterable,—while we admit it in one sense, yet we cannot in another; while we see those laws suspended by their Author, in the creation of Man—for divine purposes created at once, without passing through the several stages of infancy, youth, and incipient manhood—we are prepared to admit, that the same principle which is applicable, under these views, to the two great divisions of natural history—the animal and vegetable kingdoms,—is applicable, likewise, to the mineral world. None but an Infidel, will deny the power of God so to do; and allowing, as we do, the union of