

CHAPTER IV.

LANGUAGE.

IN one period of the world's history all mankind spoke one language. We read of a distinct period when the language at that time universally spoken was confounded, and dialects were multiplied. How this was effected, whether suddenly and immediately by the direct interposition of God, or gradually and instrumentally, and by the concurrence of circumstances, has been matter of much speculation, conjecture, and dispute among learned men. Dr. Shuckford argues the latter position.* Be this as it may, it is highly rational and probable to suppose, that several great branches were formed, as Hebrew, Chinese, Slavonic, Teutonic, &c. These great branches, stript of additions and improvements, would all of them have many words similar to each other, and consequently to the Hebrew. Thus it is said that the Welch language has many words very similar to it. From this circumstance it doubtless is that some ingenious men, having observed some similarity between some words in the Indian and the Hebrew languages, have made it an argument for their origin having been Jewish. There have been learned treatises written on the assimilation of languages, in which have been traced some similarity in the roots of words among all nations: and this may easily be accounted for on the above supposition. These great branches of language formed at Babel, would afterwards, from a variety of causes, be again divided and subdivided, as we know has happened in

* Sac. and Prof. Hist. Con. Book 2,