

the infancy of the human race. We behold the world peopled by degrees. We ascend to the origin of those useful and necessary arts, without the knowledge of which mankind could hardly subsist. We discern society and civilization arising from rude beginnings, in every corner of the earth; and gradually advancing to the state in which we now find them: All which afford plain evidence, that there was a period, when mankind began to inhabit and cultivate the earth. What is very remarkable, the most authentic chronology and history of most nations, coincides with the account of Scripture; and makes the period during which the world has been inhabited by the race of men, not to extend beyond five thousand years.

To the ancient Philosophers, creation from nothing appeared an unintelligible idea. They maintained the eternal existence of matter, which they supposed to be modelled by the sovereign mind of the universe, into the form which the earth now exhibits. But there is nothing in this opinion which gives it any title to be opposed to the authority of revelation. The doctrine of two self-existent, independent principles, God and matter, the one active, the other passive, is a hypothesis which presents difficulties to human reason, at least as great as the creation of matter from nothing. Adhering then to the testimony of Scripture, we believe, that *in the beginning God created, or from unexistence, brought into being, the Heaven and the Earth.*

But though there was a period when this globe, with all that we see upon it, did not exist, we have no reason to think, that the wisdom and power of the Almighty were then without exercise or employment. Boundless is the extent of his dominion. Other globes and worlds, enlightened by other suns, may then have occupied, as they still appear to occupy, the immense regions of space. Numberless orders of beings, to us unknown, people the wide extent of the universe; and afford an endless variety of objects to the ruling care of the great Father of