the chaos from thoſe which were opake, and, on this hypotheſis, conſolidate them in one globe, diffuſing an obſcure light through the planetary ſyſtem ; but if the earth’s atmoſphere continued till the fourth day loaded with vapours, as from the narrative of Moles it appears to have done, the ſun could not till *that day* have been *ſeen* from the earth, and may therefore, in popular language, be ſaid with ſufficient propriety to have been *formed* on the fourth day, as it was then firſt made to *appear.* (See Creation, n⁰ 13. and Earth, n⁰ 108, 174, 175). But though this ſolution of the difficulty ſerves to remove the infidel objection, and to ſecure the credit of the sacred hiſtorian, candour compels us to confess that it appears not to be the true ſolution.

The difficulty itſelf ariſes entirely from ſuppoſing the ſun to be the ſole fountain of light ; but the truth of this opi­nion is not ſelf-evident, nor has it ever been eſtabliſhed by satisfactory proof. It is indped to a mind diveſted of undue deference to great names, and conſidering the matter with impartiality, an opinion extremely improbable. The light of a candle placed upon an eminence may in a dark night be ſeen in every direction at the diſtance of at leaſt three miles. But if this ſmall body be rendered viſible by means of rays emitted from itſelf, the flame of a candle, which cannot be ſuppoſed more than an inch in diameter, muſt, during eve­ry inſtant that it continues to burn, throw from its own ſubstance luminous matter ſufficient to fill a ſpherical ſpace of six miles in diameter. This phenomenon, if real, is certain­ly ſurpriſing ; but if we purſue the reflection a little farther, our wonder will be greatly increaſed. The matter which, when convertd into flame, is an inch in diameter, is not, when of the conſiſtence of cotton and tallow, of the dimenſions of the 20th part of an inch ; and therefore, upon the com­mon hypotheſis, the 20th part of an inch of tallow may be ſo rarefied as to fill a ſpace of 113,0976 cubic miles ! a ra­refaction which to us appears altogether incredible. We have indeed heard much of the diviſibility of matter *ad infinitum,* and think we underſtand what are uſually called *demonstrations* of the truth of that propoſition ; but theſe demonstrations prove not the actual diviſibility of real ſolid ſubſtances, but only that upon trial we ſhall find no end of the ideal proceſs of dividing and ſubdividing imaginary extension.

Upon the whole, therefore, we are much more inclined to believe that the matter of light is an extremely ſubtile fluid, diffuſed through the corporeal univerſe, and only ex­cited to agency by the ſun and other fiery bodies, than that it consiſts of ſtreams continually issuing from the ſubſtance of theſe bodies. It is indeed an opinion pretty generally received, and certainly not improbable in itſelf, that light and electricity are one and the ſame ſubſtance (ſee *Electricity-Index) ;* but we know that the electrical fluid, though pervading the whole of corporeal nature, and, as experiments ſhow, capable of acting with great violence, yet lies dormant and unperceived till its agency be excited by ſome foreign cauſe. Juſt ſo it may be with the matter of light. That ſubſtance may be “ diffuſed from one end of the creation@@\* to the other, it may traverſe the whole univerſe, form a communication between the moſt remote ſpheres, penetrate into the inmoſt receſſes of the earth, and only wait to be put in a proper motion to communicate vi­ſible ſenſations to the eye. Light is to the organ of sight what the air is to the organ of hearing. Air is the medium which, vibrating on the ear, cauſes the ſenſation of sound ; but it equally exiſts round us at all times, though there be no ſonorous body to put it in motion. In like manner, light may be equally extended at all times, by night as well as by day, from the muſt diſtant fixed ſtars to this earth, tho’ it then only ſtrikes our eyes so as to excite viſible ſenſations when impelled by the ſun or ſome other maſs of fire.” Nor let any one imagine that this hypotheſis interferes with any of the known laws of optics ; for if the rays of light be im­pelled in ſtraight lines, and in the ſame direction in which they are ſuppoſed to be emitted, the phenomena of viſion muſt necessarily be the ſame.

Moſes therefore was probably a more accurate philoſopher than he is ſometimes ſuppoſed to be. The element of light was doubtleſs created, as he informs us, on the firſt day ; but whether it was then put in that ſtate in which it is the medium of viſion, we cannot know, and we need not in­quire, since there was neither man nor inferior animal with organs fitted to receive its impressions. For the firſt three days it may have been uſed only as a powerful inſtrument to reduce into order the jarring chaos. Or if it was from the beginning capable of communicating viſible ſenſations, and dividing the day from the night, its agency muſt have been immediately excited by the Divine power till the fourth day, when the ſun was formed, and endowed with proper qualities for inſtrumentally discharging that office. This was indeed miraculous, as being contrary to the preſent laws of nature : but the whole creation was miraculous ; and we ſurely need not heſitate to admit a leſs miracle where we are under the neceſſity of admitting a greater. The power which called light and all other things into exiſtence, could give them their proper motions by ten thouſand different means ; and to attempt to ſolve the difficulties of creation by philoſophic theories reſpecting the laws of nature, is to trifle with the common ſenſe as well as the piety of man­kind : it is to conſider as ſubſervient to a law that vary power by whoſe continued exertion the law is eſtabliſhed.

Having thus proved that the univerſe derives its being, as well as the form and adjuſtment of its ſeveral parts, from the one ſupreme and ſelf-exiſtent God, let us here pauſe, and reflect on the ſublime conceptions which ſuch aſtoniſhing works are fitted to give us of the Divine per­fections.

And, in the firſt place, how ſtrongly do the works of creation impreſs upon our minds a conviction of the infinite power of their Author ? He ſpoke, and the univerſe ſtarted into being ; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt. How migh­ty is the arm which “ ſtretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth ; which removeth the moun­tains, and they know it not ; which overturneth them in his anger ; which ſhaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble! How powerful the word which commandeth the ſun, and it riſeth not ; and which ſealeth up the stars ;” which ſuſtaineth numberleſs worlds of ama­zing bulk ſuſpended in the regions of empty ſpace, and di­rects their various and inconceivably rapid motions with the utmoſt regularity ! “ Lift up your eyes on high, and be­hold, who hath created all these things ? By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the North over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He has meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a ſpan ; and comprehended the dust of the earth in a mealure ; and weighed the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance. Behold ! the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the ſmall dust of the balance ; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him leſs than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeneſs will ye com­pare unto him@@\*?”

As the works of creation are the effects of God’s power, they likewiſe in the moſt eminent manner diſplay his wiſdom. This was ſo apparent to Cicero, even from the

@@@[m]\* Nature displayed.

@@@[m]\* Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. ; Job ix. 4, &c. xxvi. 6. ; Isa xii. 12.