

of a difficulty, to supposititious, unrecorded miracle. Creation cannot take place without miracle ; but it would be a strange reversal of all our previous conclusions on the subject, should we have to hold that the dead, dark blank out of which creation arose was miraculous also. And if, rejecting miracle, we cast ourselves on the purely natural, we find that the local darknesses dependent on known causes, of which we have any record in history, were always either very imperfect, like the darkness of your London fogs, or very temporary, like the darkness described by Pliny as occasioned by a cloud of volcanic ashes ; and so, altogether inadequate to meet the demands of a hypothesis such as that of Dr Smith. And yet further, I am disposed, I must add, to look for a broader and more general meaning in that grand description of the creation of all things with which the Divine record so appropriately opens, than I could recognise it as forming were I assured it referred to but one of many existing creations,—a creation restricted to mayhap a few hundred square miles of country, and to mayhap a few scores of animals and plants. What, then, is the scheme of reconciliation which I would venture to propound ?

Let me first remark, in reply, that I come before you this evening, not as a philologist, but simply as a student of geological fact, who, believing his Bible, believes also that, though theologians have at various times striven hard to pledge it to false science, geographical, astronomical, and geological, it has been pledged by its Divine Author to no falsehood whatever. I occupy exactly the position now, with respect to geology, that the mere Christian geographer would have occupied with respect to geography in the days of those doctors of Salamanca who deemed it unscriptural to hold with Columbus that the world is round,—not flat ; or exactly the position which the mere Christian astronomer would have occupied with respect to astronomy in the days of that Francis Turretine who deemed it unscriptural to