

are now temperate or extremely cold climates, there prevailed, during the periods of the earlier secondary rocks, a mean of temperature equal to that of the hottest region upon the present surface of the globe, or probably greater. It is also shown, by such evidence as every physiologist and every chemist knows to be satisfactory, that, at the periods referred to, the earth's atmosphere (by being loaded with carbonic acid) must have been so different from that which we possess, that the present kinds of animals breathing by lungs and many kinds which do not so breathe, could not have existed. Now, the evidence, from various points of physical reasoning and from well-known historical facts, is ample, that the same state that now subsists, as to temperature and the constitution of the atmosphere, has belonged to our planet ever since the day that God created man and the animals connected with man. An objection may arise from the recollection that some commentators have supposed, as the mediate cause of the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs a peculiarly salubrious quality in the atmosphere, which they also suppose to have been destroyed by the deluge, or in consequence of it. But this is an imaginary hypothesis, involving heavier difficulties than what it professes to remove: and, if it were to be accepted, it would add to the weight of reason for the interposition of an immensity of time between the deposition of the carboniferous limestone, for instance, and the present epoch; because the condition of the atmosphere which geological evidence evinces to have belonged to the remote period of which we have been speaking, was the reverse of salubrious, or better fitted to support life than *our present common air*; it would have been instantly, or in a few moments, fatal to man, or to any lung-breathing animal, such as now exist.

But while the general evidence for an antiquity of the