

is received extensively, not only by those who hold the former position, but by many who disallow it, is this: that, the state of the earth's surface, immediately before its being brought, by the wisdom and power of God, into the condition destined for the reception of man and his contemporaneous living creatures and plants, was one of universal dissolution from a former condition; and which consisted in a mixture of water and much earthy matter, producing an ocean of muddy substance, half liquid half solid, completely enveloping the globe: and that also the atmosphere was perfectly dark, or nearly so; either because its constitution as a regulated compound of nitrogen and oxygen, and endowed with the properties of transmitting and refracting the rays of light, was not yet effected; or because it was so filled with the densest watery vapour as scarcely to allow a passage to the light, so that, if not absolutely, yet comparatively and sensibly, had a human being existed to employ his eye upon it, it might be called "darkness." This sentiment has been supposed to be contained in the words of the sacred record; "And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. i. 2.

Now this interpretation will not consist with facts briefly stated in the preceding lecture. Those statements I am happy in being enabled to confirm and illustrate by the authority of one whom talent and science, unwearied personal toil in the exploring of many of the most important districts of Great Britain and Ireland, and a mind disciplined by severe studies, have formed into an eminently accomplished Geologist.

"The earliest forms of life known to Geology are not, as might perhaps be expected, *plants*, but *animals*; they are not of the lowest grade of organization merely; [but] zoophyta far advanced in structure, (lamelliferous corals.) Brachiopodous bivalves, of three gene-