

ed as overflowed with water, and its atmosphere so turbid that extreme gloominess prevailed. "Darkness was upon the face of the deep," the "waters" mentioned just before. Both this deluge, from the flowing in of a sea or rivers, and the darkness, would be the effect of an extensive subsidence. The Hebrew word does not necessarily mean the absolute privation of light: it is used in relation to various circumstances of partial darkness: and we know that conditions of the atmosphere have locally happened, in ancient and in recent times, in which the noon-day has become dark as an ordinary night. The divine power acted through the laws of gravity and molecular attraction; and, where requisite, in an immediate, extraordinary, or miraculous manner. The atmosphere over the region became so far cleared as to be pervious to light, though not yet perfectly transparent. In this process, the watery vapour collected into floating masses, the clouds; which, as we have seen, the ancient Hebrews expressed by the phrase "waters above the firmament." Elevations of land took place, by upheaving igneous force; and consequently the waters flowed into the lower parts, producing lakes and probably the Caspian Sea, which manifestly belonged to the very region. The elevated land was now clothed with vegetation instantly created.*

* Gen. i. 11, 12. The enumeration of vegetable kinds here given is both an illustrative example of the earliest botanical distribution, and a confirmation of our *principle* of interpretation, that the language has throughout a simple reference to the wants and conveniences of men. The vegetation intended to be included in this primeval arrangement is put under three descriptions; (1,) grasses, food for cattle; (2,) herbs, for human use, probably referring chiefly to grain and leguminous plants; (3,) trees producing edible fruit: all considered merely in the light of utility to mankind. Of timber-trees and thousands of other important genera, there is no hint. From just analogy we infer, that the first individuals of every other species were produced by an act of immediate creation; but a body of evidence convinces us that these productions took place, respectively at the points of divergence, or centres, of the