

deep shadows of inaccuracy and doubt upon the records of scripture.

Cowper has ironically informed us that,

"Some dig and bore the solid earth,  
And from the strata there,  
Extract a register,  
By which we learn that He who made it  
And revealed its date to Moses  
Was mistaken in its age."

The chief item of discrepancy is in regard to time. The skeptic says it is impossible that the events recorded in the opening chapter of Genesis, could have been brought about in the space of six days; and others, believing this, though disliking to openly avow their doubts as to the accuracy of Holy writ, claim that the term "day," as used in Genesis, refers to vast and indefinite periods of time. It is true that this word is used by the sacred historian in more than one sense: yet he who denies the power of a Creator to accomplish the formation of a world in any specified time, talks as the foolish man who presumes to judge a matter while in ignorance of its bearings. What can man know of creation? What does the babe who lies gazing upon the fixtures of the room in which it first opens its eyes to the scenes of earth, know of the rules of architecture and the processes of masonry by which that house was built?

Most, perhaps all, of our conclusions are founded upon comparisons. In the days of our grand-parents every household was dependent upon the industry of its members for the clothing of the family. The sheep were reared and fleeced; the wool was corded and spun; the cloth woven, and the garments made all by the family themselves. The fabrics necessary for a single suit often required weeks in the making. Contrast this with the recent achievements of a large English factory; the test having been purposely arranged to show what could be done in such an undertaking. A number of sheep were shorn on the morning of a certain day; the wool was taken to the factory; and in the evening, the proprietor appeared in a suit of clothes made from those same fleeces. If an industrious dame of by-gone days could rise from her grave and examine such cloth, she would doubtlessly say, if questioned on the subject, that to make it needed months; and if she was told that it took but as many hours, she would be righteously shocked at the untruthfulness of her descendants; and if the Bible declared the fact, her confidence in that sacred volume would be greatly shaken.

Man is unwise in his thought that he knows all of the forces at his Great Parent's command. Let us be willing to ascribe any discrepancies between inspired or revealed history, and the results of our own researches, as probably due to the imperfections of our reasoning, and the weakness of our powers. We are not all masters in the science of creation, and he alone will make sure progress in his studies who submits himself to the direction of the Supreme Teacher. With this care and caution let us proceed to examine some of the stony pages of our globe.

[At this point the lights were extinguished, and the remarks which followed were illustrated by stereopticon pictures as before described.—Ed.]

It is an almost universal belief founded upon observation and analogy, that the matter now composing this earth once existed in a finely divided condition—as nebulous dust in fact. In this state of chaos, the material probably occupied a vastly larger space than that now filled by the earth and its enveloping atmosphere. With telescopic aid, we are able to look now far out in space, and there to see just such cloudy nebulae—perhaps other systems of worlds passing through their preparatory systems of growth. The picture upon the canvas (figure 1) is a

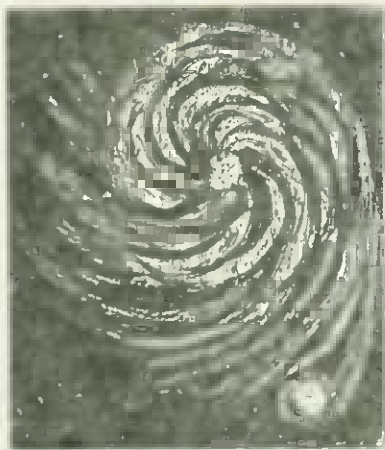


Fig. 1.

photograph of such a mass now existing in the constellation of Canes Venatici. Believers in the "Nebular Hypothesis," for the modern form of which we are mostly indebted to La Place, suppose that by the action of gravitation these cosmic particles attracted one another; and thus motion was established, and light and heat resulted. Wherever such attraction was strongest, condensation would be most marked; and a denser nucleus would be formed, all perhaps moving about the established centre, giving in many cases the whirlpool or spiral

form here depicted. The processes of condensation would continue, till from a gaseous condition, the nuclei would assume a liquid state, and from that the transition would be gradual but sure to a solid condition. In obedience to that law by which a drop of dew pendant on a grass blade assumes a spherical form, by which, in fact, all liquid bodies tend to become spheres, these condensing masses would take on each a globular shape; and every one would tend to move about its centre in an orbit determined by the position of the mass at the time of the primary condensation. During such stage it must have been that:

"In His hand, God took the Golden compasses

Prepared in His almighty store  
To circumscribe the world.

One foot He planted, and the other turned  
Round through the vast profundity, obscure,  
And said "Thus far extend, these are thy bounds,

This is thy just circumference, Oh! world!"

When this was, if ever, with regard to the earth, we have no means of knowing. We are only told: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Nothing can write its own beginning.

In the process of time, this cooling globe would become surrounded with a solid crust, at first very thin, like the earliest ice of winter upon the breasts of lakes, and gradually thickening by additions of solid matter below. Until recent times, it has been taught that at present this crust is but an egg shell covering, the interior mass being still molten throughout, and that the earth is practically a liquid body covered with an extremely fragile shell. The view upon the screen illustrates this idea. A dark rim shows the supposed crust, while the colored disc indicates the molten interior. In all probability this is an error. The formation upon which the supposition is based, is the fact that the temperature rises as we descend below the surface of the earth. The rate of increase is variable, but the average is about 1° F. for every fifty-three feet; or say 100° for every mile of depth. At this rate a temperature of 3,000° would be reached at a depth of thirty miles; and this heat is sufficient to fuse nearly all rocks with which we are acquainted. Therefore, it has been thought, that below this depth of thirty miles, the entire earth must of necessity be fluid. It should be remembered, however, that the melting point of any substance is variable, depending upon certain external conditions, but