

satisfactory enough in results to embolden an appeal to the country is doubtful—the aged premier seems to hesitate. Most significant of all is the overshadowing conjecture that his parliamentary days are ended. He is needed now as badly as ever his followers needed him—no other leader at present known can hold the discordant elements together. The prospect is not altogether rosy for the liberal party.

THE END OF A WORLD.

It is a favorite idea with a certain class of modern philosophers that the creative processes whereby the universe has attained its present form are always slow in their operations. Between the time when our planetary system existed as a nebula, an immense cloud in space, and the day of the birth of our earth must necessarily, they reason, have elapsed millions and millions of ages, and millions more were required to cool the young world and make it a habitation for living organisms. They seem to argue from the supposition that there are no natural laws except those discovered by man and that from these there are no exceptions. That the fundamental principles underlying this mode of reasoning are wrong has been illustrated recently by a most interesting astronomical observation, an account of which was published in the *Forum* by Edward S. Holden of the Lick Observatory.

A new star was discovered by an amateur astronomer in Edinburgh Jan. 24, 1892. As soon as the announcement was made, telescopic photographs of the part of the sky where the heavenly body appeared were studied for the purpose of learning its first appearance. On a picture taken December 8, 1891, no trace of it could be found, but on another, dated the 10th of the same month, it appeared as a star of the sixth magnitude. In two days the luminous body must therefore have increased at least three degrees, which means that its light was sixteen times greater than two days before. At the end of the first week of March it could be seen with the naked eye, but at the end of that month it was too dim to be photographed and on April 27th, 1892, it passed out of the range of the telescope. On August 17th it was again found, but no longer as a star but a nebula. It was no longer a glowing sun with a system of worlds revolving round it; it was a gaseous mass, a cloud of atoms!

To the question, what had taken place? science answers, that a whole world had perished. It had been crushed and burnt to dust with all its contents in less than a year, in the period from December 8, 1891, to August 17, 1892. In this moment of time, brief when applied to the events of a world, the terrible catastrophe had taken place. The history of a world was finished. It perished before our eyes. That is, it was changed into material of which a new world may be made, by concentration of the atoms and their arrangement according to the plans of

the Almighty Constructor of the universe.

The explanation of the wonderful phenomenon is exceedingly interesting and cannot fail to lead the thoughtful to contemplate the possible fate of our own part of the universe. It shows that the world itself is subject to eventualities and that the end may come without that process of evolution of which some have dreamt. The astronomers tell us that in space exist veritable wrecks of worlds as dangerous as rocks and reefs in the sea to the ship. They are of two kinds. Some are cold and dark planetary systems, still moving in their regular orbits. Others consist of broken fragments, immense clouds of meteors, swimming about in space. It is supposed that the star referred to came too near such an extinct world. From December till February the two sailed together and the violent revolutions which resulted in the formation of a nebula took place. There was perhaps no actual collision of the solid bodies of the two systems. The too near approach of two worlds, whereby the laws of gravitation are disturbed and the equilibrium destroyed, is enough to cause the terrible destruction. The fate that befell this star may await our own sun with its planets and satellites and it is emphatically true that "of that day and hour knoweth no man," for the simple reason that concerning the movements of these extinct worlds science has as yet no certain calculations. But if it is possible that a whole planetary system can in the mere twinkling of an eye be transformed into a cloud of atoms, a luminous nebula, may we not reasonably hold that under certain conditions a nebula may be condensed and a world formed in less time than the countless ages of modern evolutionists?

QUARRELING ABOUT SATAN.

No doubt there are a great many things more profitable than quarrelling about the devil, but there does not seem to be anything more interesting at present to the members of the First Baptist church at Oakland, Cal. The discussion of his satanic majesty has aroused much feeling in the congregation, some of the members thereof taking issue publicly with the teachings of their pastor, Rev. Mr. Hobart.

In order to more firmly establish himself in the position he has taken, the pastor delivered a very caustic sermon on the subject last Sunday. He declared his full belief in the personality of the devil and said: "Satan is constantly spoken of in the Bible as a person. The personal pronoun is constantly used. A physical body is not necessary to a personality. The devil comes to church as much as anybody else, and he is much better acquainted with Scripture than many Christians. There is Spiritualism, whose manifestations are those of the devil. It is not spiritualism, it is demonism. It pleases the devil greatly to have his personality denied."

Then he told his congregation that right in church, sitting beside them, was the devil, and he described him. This was the last straw, on the camel's

back on that occasion. Hugh Craig, a prominent citizen and a teacher in the Sunday school, protested against such teachings. He did not want to be informed that his satanic majesty was sitting beside him in church when it was his wife and daughter who were with him. "There is nothing in this personal devil business," said Mr. Craig, "and there should not be such teachings in the church. I have no time for his satanic majesty. When I am able to overcome my own devilish nature I will leave the parsons to teach all the devil they care for to those who live upon such miserable stuff. My object in going to church is to hear about and be told the way of redemption through Jesus Christ and to obtain the immortality which He promises to those who look to Him as the author and finisher of their faith. I think I can take the Bible and show Mr. Hobart where he is wrong. Of course there is some trash in the Bible and you have to take out the meat."

Mr. Craig was requested by the pastor to resign as Sunday school teacher but refused, and lively times are looked for, as both parties have a goodly following among the congregation.

There may be some question as to whether Mr. Hobart acted judiciously in pressing the subject so strongly upon the attention of his hearers, instead of proceeding more mildly to avoid shocking their sensibilities. But when it comes to the personality of Satan, and of other organized spiritual beings who are known in the Scriptures as devils, but who do not possess fleshly or physical tabernacles of their own, the pastor has decidedly the advantage of Mr. Craig, so far as the Bible is concerned. If the Sunday school teacher throws away as trash all scriptural statements regarding the personality of individuals who exist in the spirit world and who have given themselves over to evil influences to the extent that they become devils, he will have to abandon so much of the Bible as shows that there is a state of condemned beings from which it is desirable to be saved through the plan of redemption which he says he wants to hear about in church. As to the particular pews which theimps of darkness occupied, if any, in the Oakland church, that is an entirely different matter. It will be rather difficult also for the pastor to convince reasonable people that the particular subjects of his present investigation are they of the cloven foot, long tail, horns and fire-spitting class. The absurd views which generally prevail, as the result of teaching a false and superstitious theology, of the form, appearance and existence of beings, good and bad, in the spirit world, are not such as can be easily taken to by thoughtful persons in an age of enlightenment. Some of the Oakland Baptists, through lack of a true comprehension of the subject, are rushing from this to the other extreme of no existence at all for those who give themselves over to wickedness; and by disputing about that which they seem desirous to escape from, they drift still farther under the evil influences which mar the peace of mankind and lead mortals in a direction opposite to that which is desirable. It is just as gratifying to the adversary of the truth to