

9. *The six days of creation, in the view of eminent writers, may be used figuratively for indefinite periods.* This opinion found advocates as early as the times of the Christian fathers, Augustine, Origen, etc., and in more modern times has been ably defended by Hahn, De Luc, Professors Lee and Wait of England, and by Professors Silliman and Guyot of this country. They maintain that the word day is used thus figuratively in all languages; that it is so used in Gen. 2-4; that the seventh day, or God's Sabbath, has not yet terminated, and, therefore, the previous days may have been equally long, and that such an interpretation corresponds remarkably with the traditions and cosmogonies of many heathen nations. Yet others object that such a meaning is forced and unnatural in a passage where everything else seems literal, and that the sacred writers have shown what meaning they attached to this word in the fourth commandment, where it is impossible to doubt that the six days in the first part are literal days, because they are days of labor; and so must also be the six days referred to in the latter part, in which the Lord made heaven and earth.

But though it is difficult to believe that Moses had any other than natural days in mind, most reflecting persons who read the whole chapter, will feel that in reality they must be different, and perhaps they will say, like St. Augustine, "it is very difficult to conceive, much less to explain, what sort of days those were." Another view has been proposed which excites unusual interest at the present time. It is the following:

10. *We may understand the days as symbolically representing indefinite periods.* A symbol is the representative of something else. The word is taken in all respects in its literal signification, yet it has a higher meaning. Moses probably understood, and meant his readers should understand, the days of creation as literal days; but they actually symbolize higher periods; just as days, weeks, and times are used in prophecy (which often has a symbolical form) for years.

The great advantage of this view of the subject over that which makes the days a figurative representation of long periods, is, that hereby we can take the scriptural statement in its plain, literal sense, yet those literal days may be stretched by symbolization over the widest periods which geology shows to have separated