

into an opaque, though a melted, incandescent mass. Several analogies certainly throw an air of plausibility over this hypothesis. And if such was, indeed, the earliest condition of the earth, the time requisite to condense it into melted matter must have been longer than any other period of its history.

Who, now, at all familiar with the dynamics of geological agencies, shall undertake to give an arithmetical expression to the periods that make up the world's entire history? Not only does the reasoning faculty fail to grasp the entire sum, but even imagination, as she flies backwards through period after period, tires in the effort, and brings back not even a conjectural result. The same feeling does, in fact, come over the mind, which she experiences when astronomy has hurried her from world to world, from sun to sun, from system to system, from nebula to nebula, and yet she seems no nearer to the limits of creation than when she started. We know certainly that there are limits; because matter cannot be infinite. But we cannot conjecture where they are fixed. We know, also that there was a time when this world did not exist, an epoch when its entire mass was spoken into existence by the fiat of Jehovah; because the Bible expressly declares it. But that epoch is unrevealed. If there is any truth in geology, it was certainly more than six thousand years ago. Nay, that science carries us as far back into the arcana of time as astronomy does into the arcana of space. Neither the distance in the one case, nor the duration in the other, can be estimated. But there is a sublime inspiration in the effort to grasp the subject; and I see not why there is not as much grandeur and high gratification in the idea of vast duration as of vast expansion. And I see not why we do not gain as much enlargement of our conceptions of the plans of Jehovah respecting the universe in the one case as in the other. We cannot but infer, from the pre-Adamic state of our world, that it must have subserved other purposes than to sustain its present inhabitants.

2. In the second place, geology gives us impressive examples of the extent of organic life on the globe since its creation.

I shall not contend, with some geologists, that even the primary crystalline rocks may once have been filled with organic remains, which have been obliterated by heat; and that, in this way, there may have been a number of creations of organized beings on the globe, of which no trace now remains. I take as