

them ; concentrate its heat as it impinged molecule by molecule upon or about that center of motion ; form fiery suns of immeasurable dimensions, which, in their turn would throw off from their circumference smaller suns of fluid white-hot consistency ; these, gathering into systems or groups, must take upon themselves astronomical revolutions, the less about the greater ; as the matter grouped itself about separate centers of motion, and less fuel was furnished these, they must, by degrees and in proportion to their size, cool down and solidify into suns, planets, moons, fixed and wandering stars, meteors, nebulae, and star-dust. If, I say, our minds can grasp something of the stretch of time required for this process, we will see that four, six—yes, a hundred thousand years would be but a drop in the bucket of calculation. The best proof that this gradual process of formation took place and that God did not miraculously “rush the work” in these early stages of creation, is to be found in the showing of astronomy now—such processes as I have described being now visible in the heavens—and, from the showing of geology, under the guidance of which we can, as it were, turn back over the history of earth’s history alone, for ages and ages that can hardly be expressed in years. “Give me a rest upon which to stand,” said the old Greek, Archimedes, “and with my lever I will move the world.” Give us a starting-point and we will in science reconstruct the universe,” said Laplace and his followers. We have it here—“in the beginning * * * earth.” This is the first fact of history, ante-dating, indeed, by millions of years everything we call history ; it is the first revelation of Almighty God ; to us the starting-point of time, and in the incomprehensible grandeur of its statement, it is like God. “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep” “Without form and void,” in fact, there was no earth. In the beginning earth was in the womb of undeveloped matter, like the oak in the embryo of the buried acorn. And all that vast expanse of attenuated matter—gaseous, we say, because we know no higher state of matter, was dark. Darkness was its law, and what does that mean to you students of science? Absence of all