

differing from anything now known to the naturalist. The conclusion was irresistible that the various processes of change on the earth's surface which are now going on, had been going on for an indefinite period of time before man's appearance on it, and that the world, instead of being a few thousand years old, had really existed for long ages, so long that they could hardly be estimated.

It was natural that this conclusion should be compared with the Bible, and the moment the comparison was made difficulty arose. The first chapter of Genesis gives the account of the creation of the world, especially of the steps by which the earth was prepared for man, and the whole is represented as taking place within six days, by the direct command of God. The antagonism seemed to be so sharply marked that many insisted the Bible was utterly discredited, and made this the excuse for repudiating the claims of the Christian religion altogether.

No scientific thinker of any account takes that position now, nor indeed is any one much troubled by the apparent contradiction. As in the case of astronomy, the conflict between the Bible and geology is practically a dead issue. The only difference is that as yet there is not complete agreement as to the mode of reconciliation which will be found permanently most satisfactory.

The methods suggested for removing the difficulty have been various, and the history of the discussion is instructive.

1. One large school insisted for a long time that the conclusions of geology were far from being certain, that the science was still too young to speak with authority as having reached finality; that there were too many different opinions among geologists, even on matters that were elementary, to make it necessary for the theologian to deal with the difficulties they raised, and that when they agreed among themselves it would be time enough to consider what answer was to be made.