

it, it becomes necessary to ask, what does modern science teach with regard to the relative ages of the earth and the sun? The answer is, nothing, absolutely nothing as a scientific certainty. Whether sun and earth were created simultaneously, and in their present relations—or, whether the earth, already created, wandered within the range of solar attraction, or whether after the sun existed, the earth was called forth within that range, science does not know. It has, however, without any reference to the Book of Genesis, proposed a theory, which has been accepted by some of the most scientific men of these days as highly probable; had it been devised for the express purpose of removing the supposed difficulties of the Mosaic account, it could hardly have been more to the purpose. It supposes that the whole solar system was originally one mass of vapoury or nebulous matter, which according to the laws of gravitation, assumed the form of an immense sphere. This sphere received (from without) an impulse which caused it to revolve on its axis from west to east. In consequence of this revolving motion, it became flattened at the poles and swollen in the equatorial region, and in consequence of the greatness of the centrifugal force at the equator, and the contemporaneous condensation and contraction of the nebulous mass, a free revolving ring, similar to that of Saturn, detached itself in the region of the equator. This ring not being of uniform density, and in consequence of contraction, broke in one or more places, and these fragments, in obedience to the laws of gravitation, became a sphere or spheres, that is a planet or planets, all necessarily revolving from west to east, round the parent mass. Another ring was formed in like manner, and another planet came into existence, and so on until the whole solar system was complete. A similar process took place with regard to some of the planets, and thus they got their moons.

Now, according to this theory, not only the earth, but all the planets of our system, existed before the sun in its present condition. As these planets are now not self-illuminating, it may be supposed that the rings, when detached from the original nebulous mass, were dark also, and therefore that the equatorial matter of the parent nebulous sphere of which they were composed, was also devoid of light—that therefore the sun did not receive its luminous atmosphere until all the planets had been detached. But until this luminous atmosphere existed, they could not derive their light from the sun. If, on the other hand, it be supposed that these detached rings were luminous, and that the planets formed from them were luminous also, then the planets had a light of their own independent of the sun. But, however that be, so much follows from this theory, that the earth existed before the residuary parent globe could be called the sun, or could perform its office of luminary to the system. If the earth therefore had light during this period, it must have been derived from some other source. That this is possible cannot now be denied. The discoveries with regard to heat, combustion, electricity, and galvanism, show that there may be light independent of the sun. It is now also generally received that the sun itself is an opaque body, and that solar light proceeds from a luminous atmosphere by which it is surrounded.