

heavier or denser ones. They would gravitate towards Venus, which lies inside our orbit, and be the first to fall on it, whilst the denser fragments, metalloids and metals, would be the last.

Dr. Brewster favors the theory of meteoroids being fragments of a large planet similarly as the asteroids, the previous existence of which was long ago suggested by the vast chasm between Mars and Jupiter, where only asteroids have as yet been observed. Dr. Olbers, the discoverer of three of the known asteroids, held the same idea, and that the lesser fragments, coming within the attractive power of a planet would fall towards it, and when entering its atmosphere would go through all the conditions referred to, fusion, luminosity, etc. Sir John Herschel, however, differs from this theory. The diameter of Jupiter, the largest known body in our planetary system, is 80,000 miles, whilst that of Clio, one of the smallest, is only 16 miles. Chladin, a philosopher, at the end of the last century, thought that bodies might exist as much smaller in comparison as Clio to Jupiter, having only 16 feet diameter, and in the same ratio we come down to 1-25th of an inch, mere cosmic dust. To this cosmic dust has been attributed that peculiar fleecy brightness known as the Zodiacal light. Any observer of the western sky at this season of the year (the early spring) for about an hour after sunset, may see a soft, faint cone-shaped glow light extending about 40 degrees, following nearly the sun's path in the heavens. Near the equator, where the elliptic rises high above the horizon, it can be seen nearly all the year round, and in a very clear atmosphere in the tropics has been traced all the way across the heavens from east to west, forming a complete ring. The theory that now prevails is that the light from the sun when below our horizon reflected on the cosmical atoms of floating star-dust and meteoroids, is the cause of the soft celestial glow that now lingers evening after evening in our western sky. An illustration of this is offered by a ray of light which finds its way into a darkened room through a small orifice, revealing as motes dancing in the sunbeam the particles of dust floating in the air of the room, but visible only where the entering ray of light falls athwart them.

In this connection, the recent deep sea soundings of the "Challenger" have brought to light a curious fact. Sir Wyville Thomson found that beds of sediment were being slowly formed on the deepest ocean floors, but so slow was the rate of deposition