had been drawn away by gravitative attraction from the masses of material constituting other clusters, and of course were governed by the laws of attraction and revolution pervading all other systems of matter in space.

"Another class of facts greatly perplexed him, and has not in all cases been satisfactorily settled to this day. Besides these star clusters, he saw many little spots of shining white, which appeared through the telescope much as hose other shining white spots appear to the naked eye, which are resolved by the telescope into multitudes of stars. These spots were of all imaginable shapes. For the most part they are round or oval, though some are lenticular, or lensshaped, and others annular, or like a stout finger-ring; one is crab-like in appearance, another like an hour-glass, and others of forms that have no likeness in nature.

"The great observer from whom we gather most of these facts, and whose opinion insuch matters has been proved to be in most cases astonishingly correct, supposed these last-described appearances in the heavens might be interpreted in either of three ways; first. these shining spots were only what they appeared to be, *star-cloudlets*, composed of a thin luminous mist, or as he and others called it, star-dust; or second, that, like many other such spots visible to the eye or to a feeble glass as clouds, but resolved into stars by a telescope of sufficient power, these shining spots only await a stronger glass to be also resolved into stars; or third, that they may be distant Milky Ways, like our own, but far outside of ours, and composed of millions and millions of stars whose combined light is barely sufficient to reach us through the interminable distance.

"I mention these facts to show that the greatest possible care and attention have been given to these observations by men most reliable for wisdom and truth. I must also say now that since Sir Wm. Herschel's day these mysterious spots have been examined by telescopes of vastly increased powers, and also by other means than the telescope, and that most of them have been proved to be star-clusters, while others have been as clearly proved to be nothing but star-mist or star-dust, or nebulæ, as astronomers call them; and others still seem to be | In looking upon the heavens on a clear

a singular compound of solid masses intermingled with luminous mist."

Just here the dominie observed that several faces assumed an expression of inquiry. He paused a moment; then said, "Speak out, boys. I think I know what you wish to ask; but let us all hear the question, that all may hear the answer too."

"You sai'l just now," replied Walter Branham, speaking for the rest, "that some of these spots are 'proved to be nothing but shining mist.' How could this be proved ?"

"I was about to tell you," the dominie answered, " that I would explain this more fully in our next talk, when we inquire into the constitution of the starry universe, or the materials of which it is composed. Can you wait till then, or shall I tell you now?"

"Wait ! wait !" was the unanimous response.

"Thank you," said the dominie. " You must take the statement on trust; but I think the proof of it is perfect.

"I have not much more to say on the subject to-day, except merely to bring all things to a point. As for the extent of the starry universe, you may yourself judge, from the facts given, that it is beyond all measuring, and even beyond all conjecturing. Its limits are pushed visibly farther and farther away with every increase of telescopic power. Indeed we can not be sure that it has any boundary; for, as it has been remarked by a celebrated lecturer on the heavens, 'The only question for us is between an infinity of occupied space and an infinity of vacant space surrounding a finite universe. Either idea is equally incomprehencible; but the former is merely beyond, the latter seems contrary to reason.'

"And now as to the ' configuration of the universe,' we must keep in mind the fact that if it has no boundary it can have no configuration. Yet this fact need not wholly arrest our inquiry; for, although it may be true of the material universe as a whole, it cannot be true of the universe by portions. To answer our question therefore it is only necessary that we confine ourseves to that portion of the universe with which we are connected as a system.