

even *obliged* to suppose that the account was communicated by revelation to Moses. Genesis i. to ii. 3 and ii. 4 to ii. 25 may have been two traditions of creation. There is nothing in the account we have of what was revealed to Moses on the mount that relates to creation, except the allusion in the fourth commandment; and that might have been an allusion to an existing tradition, which was adopted as substantially correct for the purpose intended. It is not, I think, safe to attempt to make a nineteenth century miracle out of Genesis i.

The expression, "the windows of heaven were opened," in Genesis vii. 2, may well have been a poetical mode of describing a tremendous rain. It cannot, I think, be taken to *prove* that the readers of the book supposed that there was a reservoir with physical holes, through which the waters poured down in rain.

Yours sincerely,

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PROFESSOR PRITCHARD'S REPLY.

II.

I HAVE given much thought to Prof. Stokes's remarks.

He gives a philosophical account of what he, in common with the best-instructed physicists of this day, would give: it is the one commonly accepted now by the very few men competent to give an opinion thereon; that is, on the genesis of the material worlds, considered as apart from their living occupants. Virtually, it amounts to this:

1. Light existed before the consolidation of the earth.
2. The earth, he thinks, may have been consolidated before the concentration of solar matter into a sun.
3. He implies, also, and truly, that the moon was consolidated before the earth.

Prof. Stokes then goes on to say that *he is in utter dis-*

accord with any literal interpretation of the account in Genesis, but that he is himself satisfied with this account, and would be, even if it were more literally inexact.

In my opinion this way of looking at the question does not touch, but practically evades, the point at issue.

The real points are two.

I. Is Genesis i. *intended*, by means of Divine arrangement or interposition, to be a true description of the genesis of the earth and its inhabitants? If it be, then I for one am utterly unable to understand it as such, so long as I retain my reliance on certain knowledge and certain logic. I cannot understand how "water" could have existed before the consolidation of the earth. "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters." Neither can I understand how fruit trees and grass could have flourished before the concentration and visibility of the sun on the earth.

II. If Genesis i. was not derived through Divine aid as an intentional description of actual creative processes in their actual order, then I am myself driven to regard the account as probably the tradition of a series of visions vouchsafed to some ancient saint or seer, intended to represent the creation as the sole work of God, and not intended to describe either the order thereof or the *modus operandi*. Such visions I find were *the* (or at least *a*) method adopted for Divine communications to saints and prophets. (See what I have said in the *Guardian* of February 10th, 1886.)

P.S.—As regards the "firmament," I have no manner of doubt but that the writer of Genesis i. supposed, as men did suppose in ancient times, that there were crystallized spheres, or spherical shells, revolving round the earth, and holding up the planets and stars.¹ Through the nearest of these firmaments the upper waters poured down in rain.

C. P.

¹ But see my note on Gen. i. 6 in *THE EXPOSITOR* for November, 1890, p. 327.—J. J. S. P.