

**THE IRRECONCILABLE
RECORDS; OR, GENESIS
AND GEOLOGY**

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The Irreconcilable Records; Or, Genesis and Geology by William Denton

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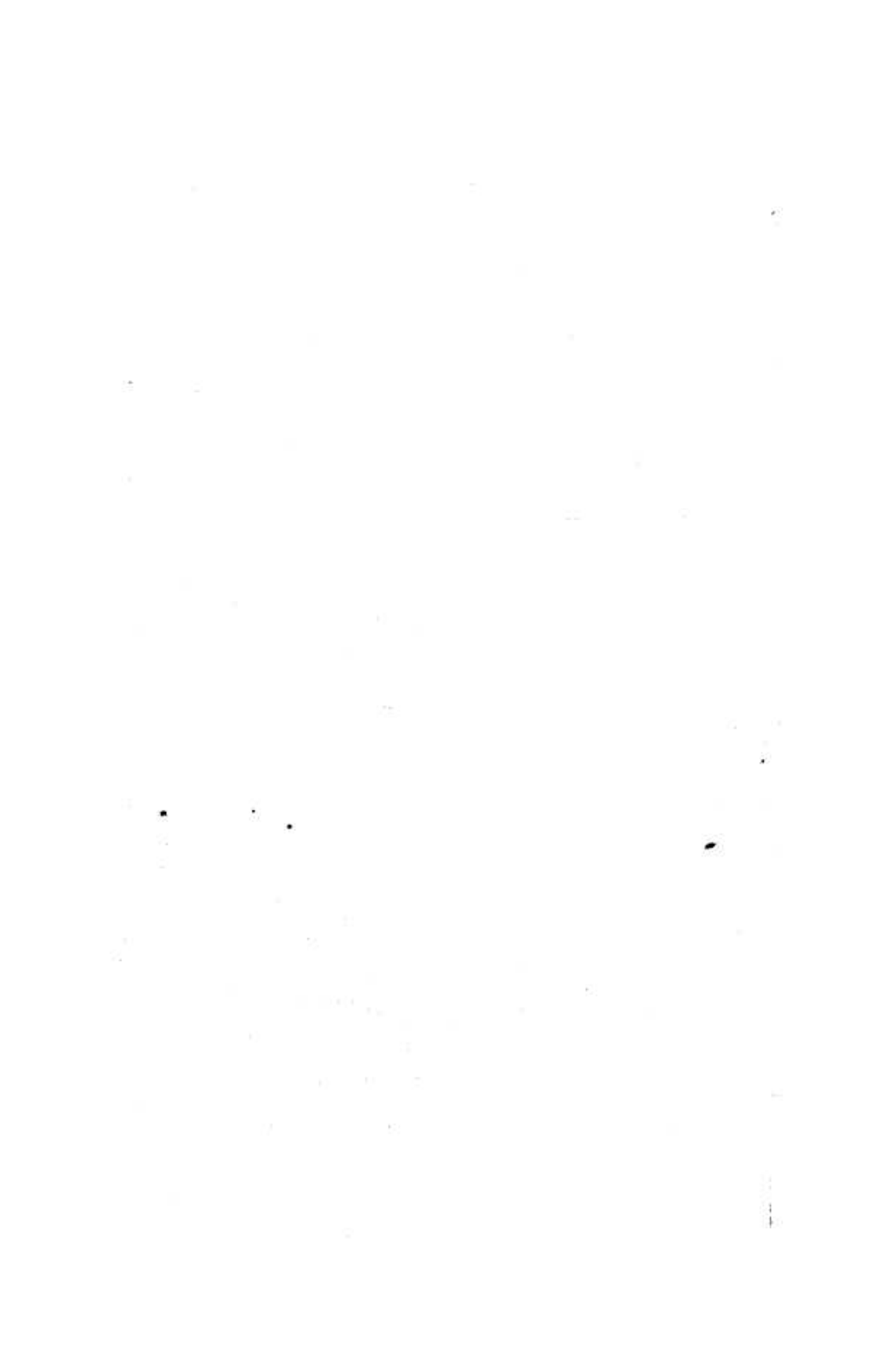
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THE IRRECONCILABLE RECORDS ;

OR,

GENESIS AND GEOLOGY.

WE live in the nineteenth century, when science is abroad knocking at every door, not excepting the church door ; flashing light into the dark corners of superstition and bigotry, regardless of the hooting of the owls and the screaming of the bats that inhabit them. It is useless to lock and bolt the door ; for science carries the club that can demolish every barrier. In vain you hide in the dark ; for her lamp makes day of the blackest night. Build *tu*, the skies, she will soar and scan the very top stone ; dig centre deep, she will dive to the foundation. Heaven is not too high for her fetterless wing, nor the fires of hell hot enough to prevent her most searching examination.

Stimulated by her example, we are no longer content to crawl at a snail's pace, but have put on the "seven-leagued boots," and are striding with the pace of a giant. We have left slavery behind us, with its terrible curses, — old notions of the earth and heavens, which lie like bowlders by the wayside, as we still go marching on. It is vain for the cynic to sneer

at, the conservative to lament over, or the sceptic to deny, the progressive tendency of the age. It is true as the sun, and resistless as the motion of the planets.

Go, bid the ocean cease to heave,
The rivers cease to flow ;
Bid smiling spring retrace her steps,
And flow'rets cease to blow.
Go, drive the wild winds to their home,
The lightning to its nest, —
Then bid the car of Progress stay,
Whose coursers never rest.

This progressive spirit now manifests itself in theological investigations which can be no longer postponed. We boldly take up to-day what yesterday refused to touch. The Bible can no longer say, "You must not look at me save to bless. I am too sacred to be investigated." For we now say, "What better are you than others till you are tested? All pretended sacred books will claim exemption from criticism on the same grounds."

"The Bible," we are told, "is from God. It is all true, all divine; given to man to be his unerring guide. He who made the universe made this book; he who wrote his name in blazing suns upon the sky wrote this Bible, or inspired men to write it, who infallibly recorded what he desired that man should know." What might we not expect from it, if put in our hands for the first time? What grand revelations of truth, — as much superior to any thing that man can write as the solar system is superior to our clumsy machinery for representing it; surpassing man's highest unassisted efforts as a living landscape does a picture, or a

breathing, moving man his marble representative. We say, "It will, perhaps, tell us the story of the earth, its fiery birth, and how, during the myriad ages, it grew to be the noble tree, whose fruit is living, loving men and women. It may inform us of the orbs in space, of the universe lying beyond the range of the most powerful telescope. It will reveal to us the laws of health; so that we may secure sound bodies, without which sound minds are next to impossible. Its revelations will be as much grander, truer, and more sublime than man's science, as the laws of nature are superior to our knowledge of them; and, as far as we are acquainted with them, we shall find its statements exactly to agree." Stand aside, vain babblers, God speaks: be silent, listen, and learn.

We commence with the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis. "*In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.*"

Our knowledge of Nature and her operations compels us to object to this. Here is Miracle, whom no man knows, taking the place of Nature, with which we are all more or less acquainted. Here is the great miracle-worker, God, making out of nothing, as the word *bara* is generally supposed to mean, all that exists. Grant this, and we have only solved one problem by creating a greater. Whence came this wonderful Being, who did what in the nature of things seems to be absolutely impossible? We cannot help asking, "What was he doing for that eternity before he resolved to commence the work of creation?" For there must have been an eternity of duration before the beginning, when there was no heaven, no earth, no any thing. When, as the "Rig-Veda" says, —

“Nor aught, nor naught, existed: yon bright sky
Was not, nor heaven’s broad roof outstretched above.”

Accept a beginning, and you accept an eternity of idleness preceding it, when nothing was done because there was nothing with which it might be done. A solitary monarch for an eternity, considering the sort of kingdom he should make, and how that kingdom rule.

We can conceive of a boundary to the solar system, but none to the universe. So we can conceive of a beginning to the solar system, but none to the matter of which it is composed; and, when we are introduced to a beginning, it is as unnatural as for some one to take us out of the universe, and introduce us to its commencement.

As far as we can see, the universe is self-sufficient. It does not need winding up by some outside power, like a clock, neither did it require some one to make it originally; and only ignorance of the operation of natural law ever led any one to talk of a “beginning,” or dream of a God who stands outside of nature, and makes all things by days’ works.

But when was this beginning? One modern would-be harmonizer of Genesis and geology assures us that “there is here no limitation of time, and, therefore, the expansion of astronomical and geological eons, cycle upon cycle, finds here the most ample scope. There was time enough in that ‘beginning’ for the evolution of the entire solar system from a single nebulous mass,—supposing that to have been the condition in which matter was first produced.”* But

* *Man in Genesis and Geology*, p. 13.

