

## GENERAL SCIENCE

# Theories Denounced

Velikovsky's theories attempting to correlate astronomical and other scientific phenomena with Biblical happenings is denounced as "apologetic procedure".

➤ USING such phrases as "nonsense and rubbish", top astronomers, geologists, historians, archaeologists and theologians denounced statements by Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky to the effect that in 1500 B.C., the world stopped revolving for a few days and that this happened because the planet Venus was at that time a comet which passed very close to the earth.

Dr. Velikovsky's statements appear in Collier's (Feb. 25), have also appeared in Harper's (Jan.) and will be published in several volumes by Macmillan. The magazine articles were taken from the first of these books, to be published in a few weeks, called *WORLDS IN COLLISION*.

Quoting copiously from the Bible and other ancient records, Dr. Velikovsky claims that at the time of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the earth passed through the "comet" Venus' tail, that this caused not only the Red Sea to open up for the Israelites but also mountainous tides which swept over all of the continents. "The presence of a celestial body near by," he says in Collier's "caused the earth to form new mountains, to open volcanoes and also to let lava flow from fissures in the ground."

To this, Dr. David Delo, executive director of the American Geological Institute, said that the world's mountains were formed millions of years ago, that it took them hundreds of thousands of years, not a few days, to form and that they would look entirely different if they were formed by such an upheaval as Dr. Velikovsky describes.

"He appears to be bypassing all the sound, scientific observations of a multitude of geologists made during the past 100 years," said Dr. Delo.

Although most men of learning, when informed that Dr. Velikovsky's work is actually to be published in several volumes, appear to be amazed, it is the astronomers who express their thoughts most definitely.

Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of the Harvard Observatory, who said that he was speaking for his fellow astronomers, called Dr. Velikovsky's theory that Venus, in the guise of a comet, had made the earth stand still for a few days, "rubbish and nonsense."

He pointed out that there are written records of the observation of the planet Venus 500 to 1,000 years before the Exodus, that Venus has a mass approximately a million times greater than any comet.

Noted historian Carl Kraeling, director of the Oriental Institute of the University

of Chicago, said that Dr. Velikovsky's work is "another example of the apologetic procedure which helps us not at all in our understanding of history." The apologetic procedure, he explained, is the method of taking a statement of alleged fact and then looking around for things to prove the statement true.

"When he cites Egyptian references to the sun standing still," Dr. Kraeling went on, "he shows he doesn't know about oriental imagination and poetry. Historians generally try to stick to the laws of probability in examining old records."

Dr. Kraeling concluded, "There is nothing we as historians can do about Dr. Velikovsky's work other than smile and go about our business."

Dr. Henry Field, anthropologist and archaeologist, who has studied the Near East area extensively, declared that it doesn't matter whether the waters of the Red Sea parted, the Israelites didn't cross that body of water in any case. It has been rather well proven, he said, that the Israelites crossed, instead, the Sea of Reeds. A strong wind, he said, could have created a path across this shallow body of water.

President Nelson Glueck of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, declared that "Dr. Velikovsky can get absolutely nowhere by referring to biblical material because it lends itself to too many different kinds of interpretations." Dr. Velikovsky also refers to ancient Rabbinical writings, Dr. Glueck pointed out that most of these were written years after the events they describe.

"Although there is a historical basis for much that is in the Bible," said Dr. Glueck, "if you want to, you can prove almost anything by the Bible. I am disinclined to use obscure texts to prove a point which can only be proved by definite, concrete, physical evidence."

Science News Letter, February 25, 1950

## GEOLOGY

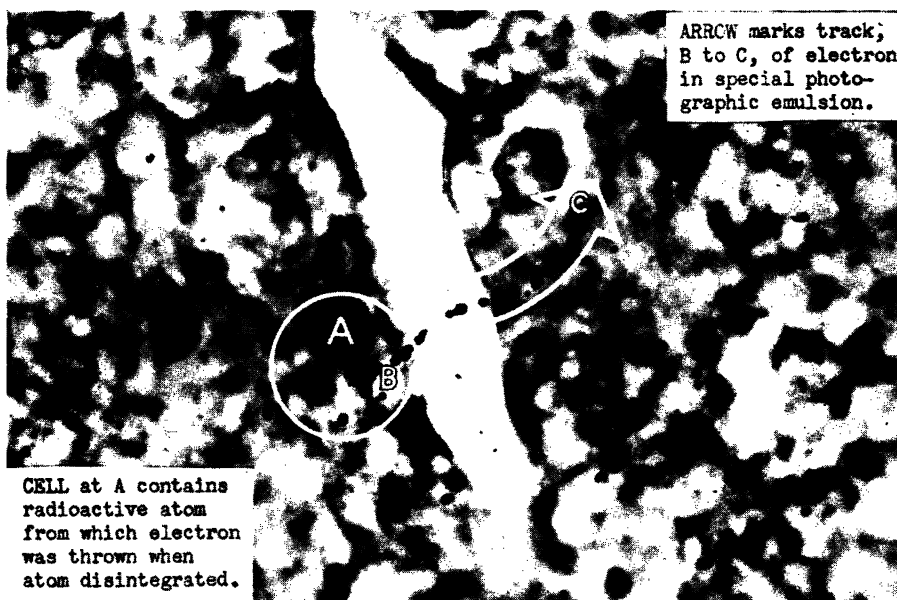
## Japan Has 200 Volcanoes, Mount Azuma Is Active

➤ MOUNT Azuma in Japan is one of those seemingly quiet volcanoes that suddenly bursts into violent and possibly disastrous activity.

Japan is one of the most mountainous and geologically restless countries in the world. Many of its volcanoes are active or only recently extinct. Japan is an important part of the volcanic belt which encircles the Pacific Ocean.

On the various islands there are about 200 volcanoes. Of these 18 smoke all year round, and about 50 of them are considered more or less active.

Science News Letter, February 25, 1950



**NEW ATOMIC TRACK**—The trail of the tiny nuclear particle known as a beta particle has been photographed for the first time as it speeds from a single radioactive cell in a rat's liver. The picture is magnified about 700 times. Such photography will enable scientists studying growth and deterioration of tissue to locate single body cells which have absorbed a radioactive isotope.