

men was practically universal, and is to be interpreted in accordance with that fact. The account of the sun and moon standing still¹ also belongs to a time when men had no strictly scientific conception either of the nature of a miracle or of the constitution of the universe; so that, consistently with its true character, the best modern expositors regard the phenomenon it describes as a prolongation of the daylight by the ordinary laws of atmospheric refraction.

The parenthetic passage which contains the account of this extraordinary phenomenon is cited from the book of Jasher, a well-known collection of national songs, and gives a poetic description of a remarkable victory gained by Joshua over the Amorites through the intervention of natural means. Being part of an ancient poem, the citation must be interpreted as Oriental poetry.

The explanation of the passage given in the "Critical Commentary" is worth reproducing here. "The language of a poem is not to be literally interpreted, and, therefore, when the sun

¹ Josh. x. 12-15.