

on to the earth; whereas, in the latter, the light of the sun goes first to the planet and is then reflected from the planet to the earth. In the case of a superior planet therefore it does not appear practicable, if we entertain the hypothesis that light may have a velocity, to ascertain, by direct observation, the precise moment of the coincidence of the centres of the earth and of the planet in a verticle plane joining also the centre of the sun, independently of that hypothesis.* But, will this difficulty apply equally to the case of an inferior planet; will it, for example, apply to the case of the planet Venus? Have we, in this case, the means of determining the actual moment of coincidence, and, thereby of obtaining a direct and decisive solution of the question?

Referring to authoritative works on Astronomy to obtain the record of the observed facts, we find evidence of apparent error or oversight of a very serious nature, with which the record itself is so involved, that in order to separate the observed facts from the assumptions and conclusions, which we suspect to be unsound, it becomes necessary to examine that general explanation which, at the present time, is accepted as the correct teaching, throughout. To do this, it will suffice to take the works of the same two teachers, from whom we have hitherto mainly taken our quotations. We will, therefore, in the first place, examine the explanation given by Lardner, and, then compare Herschel's explanation therewith, in order to ascertain whether any error or apparent error occurring in the one is attributable to the one teacher only, or, whether it is of a general character and belongs to what is considered the approved scientific teaching on the subject.

* Because the supporters of the theory expressly reject the testimony of sight as evidencing that what appears to take place at a certain time does actually take place at that time.

We are told...No: your sight deceives you; you are reading only the record of the past; what appears to you to be now taking place has *in fact* taken place some time since.