

had been analyzed for the purpose of creating difficulties, or of building up a favourite speculation; or if facts had been twisted to supply arguments for preconceived conclusions, one would feel not only little disposition to invite a close scrutiny of facts, but also some misgivings as to the propriety of attempting to show one's ingenuity at the expense of truth, by raising needless questions on a subject, which even the careless regard with reverence, and which the reverent approach with awe.

It can, however, be shown to the satisfaction of any candid mind, that the effect of these investigations in supplying a clue to the interpretation of the early portions of holy writ, was the very last thing that was expected or desired, and was not referred to until the subject was forced upon my notice. The Mosaic narrative did not form the basis of any of the conclusions arrived at in the paper on the Festival of the Dead, either as to the year of the Pleiades, the progression of the sidereal year, the tradition of the ancients that the rule for calculating this progression was a gift from the Deity, or as to the connection of the deluge with Time and with the calendar.

THE GREAT YEAR OF MOSAIC CHRONOLOGY.

While it is evident that the year of the Pleiades or of Taurus is the basis of primeval myths, and has become blended with primitive traditions, while it is equally plain that *Time* and the Year seem to have had an exaggerated and almost incredible influence on the religious ideas of primitive antiquity, yet a further fact, still more interesting, substantially arrived at and yet not fully apprehended by myself, is indicated by the note to p. 71. I need not apologize for referring to the course of these investigations to show that the problem had been worked out before there was the least conception entertained by me of its importance in interpreting the early chronology of the Hindoos, and of other races, as well as in affording a clue to peculiarities in the Mosaic history not hitherto suspected by any writers, or at least by myself.

Having found a sidereal year in the Southern Hemisphere, and traces of it among ancient nations, it was apparent that, if the year of the Pleiades was the primeval basis of primitive calendars, *the festivals and months regulated by it must have gradually moved forward, in relation to the seasons or to the tropical year.* I accordingly requested a mathematician to inform me what would be this rate of progression, in order that I might see whether the November new year's Festival of the Dead had in former ages exhibited traces of the progressive tendency of the year of the Pleiades. He gave the following approximation which seemed sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes, viz., that the fixed stars, and hence a year regulated by them, would gain 14 days in 1000 years, and one day in 71 years. The researches, the results of which are contained in from p. 59 to p. 71, were conducted on this rule; when, therefore, I found that the Hindoos believe that "in every 1000 divine ages, or in every day of Brahma,* 14 Menus are successively invested with the sovereignty of the earth; each Menu they suppose transmits his empire to his sons and grandsons, during a period of 71 divine ages; and such a period they call a *menwantara*," it required very little ingenuity to suggest that this myth had reference to the rule, by which I had been endeavoring to trace the

* See p. 71, and note.