

ing the public on another subject altogether, and making only incidental references to the ordinary facts of nature. It must be at once obvious, that if the sacred writers had been required to anticipate the results of modern discovery and to speak in their terms, they would have prejudiced their own age hopelessly against the religious truth they were anxious to impress, and would thus have defeated the main end they had in view. The course they took was really the only one open to them. So long as they adhere to appearances, and refrain from insisting that positive errors shall be accepted as facts, all criticism from the scientific point of view is entirely beside the mark.

So far as the general question of astronomical references is concerned, all is easy and plain. One or two minor points, however, call for more particular notice.

1: And first as to the statement apparently made in Gen. 1:14-16, that the sun, moon, and stars were created after the earth came into something like its present condition, for the purpose of giving it light and marking its seasons.

Such a statement of the matter hardly does justice to the sacred writer; for, in the very first verse of the same chapter, he represents the heavens as having been made at the beginning along with the earth. He had a right to assume that the one statement would be read in the light of the other. But even supposing it had been his intention so to represent the matter, his statement would have been sufficiently accurate for the end he had in view. Along the lines already indicated, the significance of that statement is readily explained. The most obvious service rendered to man by the heavenly bodies, is to give him light and mark his seasons for him. The writer was chiefly interested in making clear that this beneficent arrangement was due to God, so as to cut away the ground from beneath the widespread worship of these luminaries. Beyond that he had no object in referring to the matter at all. That object was as completely attained by this brief touch, as if he had given a whole treatise on astronomy.