

J.A. Macdonald

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OF THE

SUN AND MOON

CONSIDERED.

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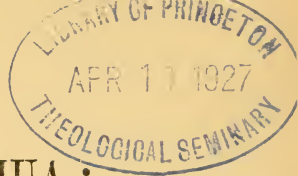
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THE record of the celebrated astronomical miracle of Joshua is given in our authorized version of the Scriptures in the following words :—

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher ? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.” (Jos. x. 12, 13.)

Since the revival of the Pythagorean System of Astronomy, by Copernicus, this passage has been constantly urged by sceptics as a conclusive disproof of the Divine Inspiration of the Bible. Their argument is, that “the account given of this miracle supposes the *earth* to be the centre of the system, and the sun *moveable*; and as this is demonstrably a false philosophy, consequently the history was never dictated by the Spirit of Truth.”

To this the votaries of Inspiration have usually replied, that in reality it was the *earth*, and not the sun that "stood still," but that Joshua used the language of the vulgar, or the language of appearances, forasmuch as revelation is not given to teach astronomy, but theology; and had he spoken in the more precise language of philosophy, he would have been unintelligible to the people.

This view is advocated by Archdeacon PRATT, in his "Scripture and Science not at Variance," as the following quotation from page 25 of that work will show:—

"The accomplishment of this miracle is supposed by some to have been by arresting the earth in its rotation. In what other words, then, could the miracle have been expressed? Should it have been said, 'So the earth ceased to revolve, and made the sun appear to stand still in the midst of heaven?' This is not the language we should use, even in these days of scientific light. Were so great a wonder again to appear, would even an astronomer, as he looked into the heavens, exclaim, 'The earth stands still!?' Would he not be laughed at as a pedant? Whereas, to use the language of appearances, and thus to imitate the style of the Holy Scriptures themselves, would be most natural and intelligible."

This explanation, however, is far from being satisfactory to the mind of the Bishop of Natal, who thus handles the argument:—

"It will be observed that Archdeacon PRATT does not commit *himself* to maintaining the above view; he says, 'It is supposed by some to have been accomplished thus. But he argues as if this explanation were possible, and not improbable; that is to say, he lends the weight of his high position and mathematical celebrity to the support of a view which every natural philosopher will know to be wholly untenable. For, not to speak of the fact that if the earth's motion were suddenly stopped, a man's *feet* would be arrested while his *body* was moving at the rate (on the equator) of 1,000 miles an hour, (or rather, 1,000 miles a *minute*, since the earth's diurnal rotation on its axis must not only be stopped, but also its annual motion through space), so that every human being and animal would be dashed to pieces in a moment, and a mighty deluge overwhelm the earth, unless all this were prevented by a profusion of miraculous interferences—one point is at once fatal to the above solution. Archdeacon PRATT quotes only the words, 'So the sun stood still in the midst

of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day,' and although this is surely one of the most prominent questions, in respect of which it is asserted that 'Scripture and science are at variance,' he dismisses the whole subject in a short note, and never even mentions the *moon*. But the Bible says, '*The sun stood still and the moon stayed* (Jos. x. 13); and the arresting of the earth's motion, while it might cause the appearance of the sun 'standing still,' would not account for the moon 'staying.'"

The prelate then concludes his observations by moralizing as follows:—

"It is impossible not to feel the force of Archdeacon PRATT's own observation (page 30), 'The lesson we learn from this example is this:—How possible it is that, even while we are contending for truth, our minds may be enslaved to error by long-cherished prepossessions!'"

We observe here,—

1. That Mr. COLENSO does not dispute the possibility of a miracle. There is no intimation to this effect in the foregoing observations, or indeed in any part of his book; but on the contrary he explicitly states, (page 10) that "The notion of miraculous or supernatural interferences does not present to his mind the difficulties which it seems to present to some."

2. Nor does he appear to object to the assumption of Archdeacon PRATT, viz., That, abstractedly considered, there would be no impropriety in Joshua using the language of appearances. Indeed, this could scarcely be seriously disputed, forasmuch as this language is commonly adopted in our ephemerides and scientific works, without in anywise misleading those by whom they are consulted.

3. The real point of his objection seems to be, that the supposition of the Archdeacon necessitates a prodigious multitude of secondary miraculous interferences. Thus,—

(1.) Were the motions of the earth to be suddenly arrested so as to cause the apparent motion of the sun to cease, millions of interpositions would be necessary to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from being knocked about and dashed to pieces, and to keep the sea from flowing over the land—in fact, to neutralize or suspend the *vis inertiae* of everything upon the surface of the planet.

(2.) Then seeing that the "*moon stayed*," a further inter-

ference would be necessary, for, having an excursive motion of her own, the arrestment of the motions of the earth would not make her appear to "stay." It would therefore be necessary to arrest the motion of the moon as well as that of the earth.

(3.) But forasmuch as every body in the solar system influences every other body, with a force 'directly as their masses and inversely as the squares of their distances,' disturbances must inevitably be introduced into the system unless prevented by further miraculous interference. The arrestment of the earth and moon, therefore, would involve the simultaneous arrestment of every planet and satellite related to our sun. To prevent these disturbances by any other means would necessitate interferences equally stupendous and universal.

(4.) Finally, the arrestment of the projectile motion of the planets and satellites would also require the suspension of gravitation, else the satellites must drop down upon their primaries, and the primaries with their satellites all find their way to a common centre in the sun.

These are the consequences apparently legitimately involved in the explanation espoused by the Archdeacon, in consideration of which Dr. COLENSO regards the miracle as not only "improbable," but "impossible," and such that "every natural philosopher will know to be wholly untenable."

The question, however, does not properly belong to the "natural philosopher," but to the theologian; for an individual may be an admirable physicist, yet an unscrupulous sceptic in matters of religion. And we venture to affirm that no sound theologian would for a moment maintain the "impossibility" of any exertion of Divine power which does not involve contradiction or absurdity. Dr. COLENSO himself acknowledges that "the notion of miraculous or supernatural interferences does not present to his mind the difficulties which it seems to present to some." He does not dispute the possibility of a miracle, abstractedly considered; the *stupendousness* of the miracle in the present case, then, apparently, is that which to his mind renders it "impossible." But surely, to employ the expressions of Dr. Adam Clarke, "God is such an infinitely FREE AGENT that He can, when His unerring wisdom sees good, alter, suspend, or even annihilate all secondary causes and their effects: for it would be degrading to the perfections of His nature to suppose that He had *so bound Himself* by the laws which He has given for

the preservation and direction of universal nature, that He could not change them, alter their effects, or suspend their operations when greater and better effects, in a certain *time* or *place*, might be produced by such temporary change or suspension." It may be fairly argued that a miracle upon the most stupendous scale would be as easy to Omnipotence as one upon a platform the most circumscribed. Therefore if the possibility of a miracle, under any circumstances, be admitted, there can be no miracle against which "impossibility" can be logically objected, providing only that contradiction and absurdity be avoided.

The whole subject is now narrowed down to the question of PROBABILITY.

It will be argued that "It scarcely seems to quadrature with our ideas of probability, that the whole universe should be arrested, and all its gigantic forces suspended, simply that a Hebrew army upon a particular occasion might crush an army of idolaters."

But after all, "our ideas of probability" may be very erroneous; and the purposes of the miracle were doubtless of far greater consequence than simply the "crushing of an army of idolaters." "I consider," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "that the miracle wrought on this occasion served greatly to confirm the Israelites, not only in a belief of the being and perfections of God, but also in the doctrine of an especial providence, and in the nullity of the whole system of idolatry and superstition." And if these views are legitimate, as we can scarcely dispute that they are, surely here were ends sufficiently noble to justify the probability of almost any miracle.

Forasmuch, however, as the Divine proceedings everywhere evince an economy of power, and as these purposes, however noble (and eternity alone can reveal the magnitude of their importance) *might*, for ought we know to the contrary, be effected without interrupting the motions of the whole cosmos, it may be proper carefully to review the entire question in quest of a yet more satisfactory solution.

What if it should appear, after all, that Joshua never commanded either the "sun" or the "moon" to stand still, but simply the solar and lunar LIGHT to remain?

The record of the miracle, as rendered in our English version of the Bible, certainly represents the Hebrew captain as commanding the "sun" and the "moon" to "stand still;" but this may be satisfactorily proved to be an error in the translation.

The original expresses no such thing, but simply that Joshua commanded the *light of the sun* and the *light of the moon* to shine on. This may have escaped our translators, they not being in quest of philosophy, but divinity; they were also doubtless prepossessed in favour of the PTOLEMAIC system of the world, that being in the ascendant in the days of King JAMES I. But if we can make this point clear, the usual objections will be completely met. For in that case it is evident that nothing whatever is predicated respecting the *motion* either of the "sun" or of the "earth"; for the *light* might be supernaturally sustained in Gibeon, and in the valley of Ajalon, and the motions of the universe proceed without interruption. Any objection which prejudice may urge against the use of the "language of appearances," will also be obviated in this explanation.

There are three distinct Hebrew words, viz., SHEMESH (שמש), CHAMAH (חמה), and CHERES (חרס), which are in our version promiscuously translated *sun*. There are also *two* words, viz., YARACH (ירח), and LEVANAH (לבנה), which are indiscriminately rendered *moon*. Now there is no reason to imagine that Revelation gives us two or three distinct words for precisely the same idea. And though there is no distinction made by the translators, there is a very marked distinction observed by the Hebrew writers; for they invariably couple the same pairs of these words. Thus, SHEMESH and YARACH are constantly associated, and so are CHAMAH and LEVANAH; but we never find SHEMESH associated with LEVANAH, nor do we find CHAMAH associated with YARACH. This circumstance is so significant that it suggests at once that while one couple denotes the *bodies* of the sun and moon, the other expresses the *light* which emanates from them. And this hint will be found to receive abundant confirmation from a careful consideration of the places in which the words occur.

(1.) In the overwhelming majority of the passages in which the SHEMESH is mentioned, it is described in our version as *rising* and *setting*; but the terms in the original convey a widely different sense. The first is ZERAH (זרח), and literally signifies *to spring out*, or *be diffused abroad*; and the second, BOA (בוא), properly denotes *to go in*, or *go off*. This criticism will be found abundantly sustained by reference to the lexicon of the truly learned Mr. PARKHURST. Forasmuch, then, as the SHEMESH is in scores of passages said to "spring out" or, "be

diffused abroad," viz., in the morning upon the face of the earth, and to "go in," or "go off" in the evening, it is obvious that the term must denote the *solar light*. For it will scarcely be contended that the sacred writers believed that the body of the sun "springs out" and "diffuses itself" every morning, and collects again its scattered substance every evening.

It is further worthy of observation that while the SHEMESH is said to "spring out" and "diffuse itself" in the morning, and to "go off" again, viz., at the evening edge of the earth, this is never said of the CHAMAH—the second Hebrew term in our version translated *sun*.

Of the CHERES, the third term, and which is properly rendered sun, it is explicitly asserted that it "*riseth not*"—"He commandeth the sun, and it *riseth not*," or more literally, is not diffused, or dissipated. (Job ix. 7.) And this is truly wonderful, that whereas common fuel is soon consumed, the body of the sun has for thousands of years supported the solar flame, and yet retains its magnitude undiminished.

And if the SHEMESH is thus proved to denote the *light of the sun*, its companion term, YARACH, will be naturally understood to denote the *light of the moon*.

(2.) Moses speaks of the SHEMESH, YARACH, and COCABEEM, which the Lord "hath *divided* unto all nations under the whole heaven." (Deut. iv. 19.) Nothing can be more evident than that the *fluxes* or *rays* of the sun, moon, and stars, are expressed by these terms. Moses surely never could have meant that the *bodies* of the "sun, moon, and stars" were thus "divided," as our translation would teach. There is no difficulty when the *rays of light* emanating from those bodies are understood; but the other interpretation makes palpable nonsense of the passage.

(3.) Speaking of the manna in the wilderness, Moses says, "When the SHEMESH *waxed hot*, it melted." (Exod. xvi. 21.) Saul said to the men of Jabesh Gilead, "To-morrow by that time the SHEMESH *be hot*, ye shall have help." (1 Sam. xi. 9.) And Nehemiah said to the Jews, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the SHEMESH *be hot*." (Neh. viii. 3.) Now it must be evident that the SHEMESH in these passages denotes the *rays of the sun*. These are heated by friction when they fall perpendicularly upon the earth at *noon*. It will scarcely be imagined that the sacred writers dreamt that the solar *orb* itself "waxed hot" as it mounted to its meridian altitude.

(4.) The Psalmist says, "The SHEMESH shall not *smite* thee by day, nor the YARACH by night." (Psalm cxxi. 6.) In Isaiah

also we read, "Neither shall the *heat* nor the *SHEMESH smite* them." (Isa. xlix. 10.) And we are informed that "the *SHEMESH* beat upon the head of Jonah." (Jon. iv. 8.) Surely nothing can be more evident than that the *SHEMESH* and *YARACH* in these passages designate the *rays* of the sun and of the moon. For while there is the greatest propriety in understanding that these might "smite" the inhabitants of the earth, it would be most unnatural and incongruous to understand this of the solar and lunar *orbs*.

(5.) In blessing Joseph, Moses mentions "the precious fruits brought forth by the *SHEMESH*, and the precious things put forth [Marg. thrust forth] by the *YARECHIM*." (Deut. xxxiii. 14.) Few would be simple enough to contend that the *bodies* of the sun and moon exerted any influence upon the growth of vegetables; but that the solar and lunar *rays* enable the earth to "put forth," or "thrust forth" its foliage, will not be contested. The *SHEMESH* and *YARECHIM* here, therefore, obviously denote not the bodies of the sun and moon, but their *fluxes*. And it is a most significant fact that the latter term is in the plural form (יָרֵיחַ), and is therefore rendered *moons* in the margin of our Bible. In commenting on this expression, the learned *SPEARMAN* well observes:—"This shows that it cannot be the body or orb of the moon; for this is but one and singular; but the fluxes or streams of reflected light are several, and are severally reflected to us from the several phases of the moon."

(6.) The Psalmist says, "Thou hast prepared the *MAUR* (מֵאֹר) and the *SHEMESH* (Psa. lxxiv. 16). Here it is evident that the *SHEMESH* is something different from the *MAUR*. But the *luminaries* upon the fourth day of the Creation week made to rule over the day and over the night, and to give light upon the earth, are by Moses styled *MAURETH*. (Gen. i. 14—19.) What then can the *SHEMESH* be in contradistinction to the *MAUR*, but the *light*, for the production of which the solar orb is the instrument?

(7.) Again the Psalmist speaks of a "tabernacle," or tent set in the heavens for the *SHEMESH* whence it issues forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, to make its excursions to the extremities of the heavens. (Psalm xix. 4—6.) The heavens themselves are not the tabernacle of the *SHEMESH*, but something "set in them," which is compared to a "chamber." If then this is the solar *orb*, the *SHEMESH* issuing from it can be nothing else than the solar *light*.

(8.) It is also remarkable that the *YARACH* is said to have no *fixed* tent in the heavens.—"Behold the *YARACH*, and He hath not fixed its tent. (Job xxv. 5.) For the orb which reflects the lunar light revolves in company with the earth round the sun, and from this complex motion is to the inhabitants of the earth sometimes luminous, sometimes partly dark, and sometimes totally so. Therefore, unlike the *SHEMESH*, the *YARACH* has no *fixed* tabernacle.

(9.) The etymology of the words under consideration will also be found to strengthen and confirm the argument.*

Having now fully shown that the *SHEMESH* and *YARACH* properly denote the *LIGHT of the sun* and the *LIGHT of the moon*, it will be time to observe that these were what Joshua commanded to "stand still." The solar and lunar *light*, therefore, and not the "sun" and "moon," were concerned in the miracle. What Joshua required was *light*, that he might push his victory to a complete issue, and render it impossible for the enemy to rally and meet him again in the field. The *light*, accordingly, was supernaturally sustained in Gibeon and in the valley of Ajalon, without in any way necessitating the arrestment of motion either in the earth or sun. The motions of the universe might proceed in the same orderly succession during the continuance of the miracle as before its commencement.

Sufficient has been said to show that the normal meaning of the terms *SHEMESH* and *YARACH* is *solar light* and *lunar light*; and, therefore, should these terms appear in any passage to denote the solar and lunar *orbs*, it must be understood as in *metonymy*. I have examined every place in which the words occur, and deem it right to say that in a few passages out of about one hundred and twenty they appear to be so applied. But even were the occurrences in this sense considerably more numerous, that would in nowise conclude that the terms should be so construed in the history before us. It is sufficient for our argument that the terms are commonly used to denote the *light* of the sun and moon, which we have amply proved, and the onus lies upon those who impeach the inspiration of the Scriptures to show that this is *not* the sense in which they are employed by Joshua.

There happens, however, to be a circumstance distinctly noted

* The following comprehensive note is taken from the lexicon of Mr. PARKHURST, under the root חם:—"As a N. fem. חמה, the solar flame, or fire, as distinguished both from חרס, the orb of the sun, and from שמש, the light flowing from it. And from this latter reason it is, in the only three passages where it is used in this sense, constantly joined with לבנה, the white of the moon, never with ירח, the stream from it. Occ. Cant. vi. 10.; Isa. xxiv. 23; xxx. 26. And האור, the light, הלבנה, of the white illuminated disc of the moon shall be as the light, החמה, of the solar fire, and the light, החמה, of the solar fire shall be seven-fold."

We nowhere read of the light of the *SHEMESH*. Such an expression would be manifestly tautological, and therefore improper.

in the record which surely ought to set this question at rest for ever. We read that Joshua commanded the SHEMESH to "stand still" in Gibeon, and the YARACH in the valley of Ajalon. What he arrested, therefore, clearly, was in those specified places,* and not removed millions or hundreds of thousand of miles away in the heavens. It will scarcely be pleaded that Joshua imagined that the solar orb was in "Gibeon," and the lunar orb was "in the valley of Ajalon." The rays of those luminaries, indeed, were in those places; these, therefore, and these only, he, under the Divine afflatus, commanded to remain.

It may be proper here to observe that, beside the obvious theological reason for arresting the lunar light as well as the solar, viz., to confound idolaters who worshipped the moon and her fluxes as well as the sun and his rays, there may also have been a reason of utility. For it would seem that if the body of the sun was visible at all, it was on the point of disappearance behind the hills of Gibeon, and therefore the lunar light would, probably, be of considerable service to the combatants in the vale of Ajalon. The rendering in our version of the expression BACHATSI HASHAMAYIM (בַּחֲצֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם), "in the midst of heaven," would suggest that the sun was in the meridian of Gibeon. But, to quote again from Dr. ADAM CLARKE: "If, with Mr. Bate, we translate (חֲצָה) CHATSAH, to part, divide asunder, it may refer to the horizon, which is the apparent division of the heavens into the upper and lower hemisphere; and thus the whole verse has been understood by some eminently learned men, who have translated it thus: *And the sun stood still in the (upper) hemisphere of heaven, and hastened not to go down when the day was complete; that is, though the day was then complete, the sun being on the horizon—the line that to the eye constituted the mid-heaven, yet it hastened not to go down—was miraculously sustained in its almost setting position; and this seems still more evident from the moon appearing at that time, which it is not reasonable to suppose could be visible in the glare of light occasioned by a noon-day sun.*"

* The same objection brought against the miracle of Joshua has also been urged against the miracle upon the sun-dial of Ahaz (Isa. xxxviii. 8); and the same answer will serve in both cases. It was the SHEMESH or solar light which "went back ten degrees upon the dial," and nothing whatever is predicted of the motion either of the sun or earth. The SHEMESH was "ON the dial," that is, the LIGHT of the sun; for the solar ORB certainly was not there.

We shall now proceed to confirm the foregoing argument by proving that the system of the universe accepted by the inspired writers, was precisely that recently recovered, and now universally received, viz., that the sun is the great central orb, and that the earth is a planetary body.

(1.) The planetary nature of the earth is expressed in the meaning of its usual and most ancient Hebrew name *ARETZ*, (אֶרֶץ), whence probably our English *earth* is derived. This is traced to the root *RETZ* (רָץ) by the Rev. BENJAMIN HOLLOWAY, LL.D., the author of a work entitled, "Originals, Physical and Theological, Sacred and Profane," in which he examines and elucidates a variety of Hebrew terms with singular and various learning. The Rev. Alex. Pirie, the author of a very curious and able treatise on Hebrew roots, also traces it to the same radix. Now *RETZ* is a verb which expresses the idea of *running*, so that the *RUNNER* would be the primitive name of the earth, which obviously would be singularly inappropriate should that body have been regarded as stationary.

(2.) The figure of the earth is in Scripture described as *round*, which is the proper figure of a body made to move. Wisdom, speaking of the Creator, says, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He set a *compass* (marg. *circle*) over the face of the depth," or chaos. (Prov. viii. 27.) And Isaiah speaks of the most High as sitting "upon the *circle*" circumference, or sphere "of the earth." (Isa. xl. 22.) And the word *CHUG* (חֹג) rendered *compass* and *circle*, may, with the greatest propriety, be rendered *orb* or *sphere*.

In those passages which speak of "the ends of the earth," it may be demonstrated that the shores are intended q. d., where the earth or dry land *ends* by running into the sea, unless in those places where they are put by metonymy for the inhabitants of those countries separated from Palestine by the sea.

(3.) The planetary nature of the earth is further expressed under the phrase, "wings of the earth," which twice occurs in the margins of our Bible, where the original is truly rendered. The passages are these:—"His light is upon the *wings of the earth*." (Job xxxvii. 3.) "Hast thou considered the morning since thy days, or caused the day-spring to know his place, to take hold on the *wings of the earth*, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?" (Job xxxviii. 12, 13.) Now, "wings" are

instruments of *motion*, and unless the earth was regarded as moving or flying in the heavens, it would be difficult to discern any propriety in the figure.

(4.) In two places we read, "Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth will be glad." (1 Chron. xvi. 31 ; Psalm xcvi. 11.) This translation is figurative, and, as such, sufficiently just, but a literal rendering would be preferable, as the connection speaks of physical phenomena. Literally it is, "Let the heavens *shine*,"—vibrate, move backwards and forwards,—“and the earth shall REVOLVE,” or roll round. Here, not only is the motion of the earth declared, but the cause of that motion is also indicated.

(5.) Speaking of the admirable works of God, Job says, "He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof [viz., the ethereal pillars upon which it is supported in its positions, elsewhere called by Job, the 'pillars of heaven,' or pillars of the heavens] tremble. He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not." (Job ix. 6, 7.) The patriarch is not here discoursing of anything miraculous, but of the ordinary procedure of Deity in his manifold wonderful works. The only supernatural event to which these words could be conceived to have the remotest allusion, is the miracle of Joshua as now vulgarly interpreted. But this is out of the question, as Job is acknowledged to have flourished long before the captain of Israel. Here, therefore, is asserted, not only that the earth is a planet, but also that the sun is at rest.

(6.) Moses says, "But it shall be that when $\pi\tau$," (the part of the earth in which the person addressed was located) "*turneth towards the evening*," &c. (Deut. xxiii. 11.) The men of Timnath said to Samson, "On the seventh day when $\pi\tau$," (the part of the earth on which the city stood) "*turneth towards the sun*," &c. (Jud. xiv. 18.) The original in these passages is here faithfully rendered. Now, observe, it is not said that the evening turned towards the segment of the earth, as it should have been to express motion in the heavens ; neither is it said that the sun turned towards the segment of the earth, as it should have been to express motion in the sun. The reverse in both cases is expressed, whence the inference is irresistible that in the opinion of the inspired authors, *motion resides in the earth*. And the word PENEH (פִּנֵּה), in both the foregoing passages, translated "turned," properly signifies "to obvert successively, or turn up a new face or segment," which is admirably descriptive of the axial motion in our planet.

(7.) The orbital motion of the earth is also expressed in the phrase "revolution of the year." (Exod. xxxiv. 22 ; 2 Chron. xxiv. 23.) And should it be objected that "the revolution of the year" might be conceived by the sacred writers to be in the heavens, the reply is that the year is not in the heavens, but in the earth.

The "foundations of the earth," which the psalmist informs us are so "established" that "they cannot be moved," are the inner parts of its spherical crust, so that their stability cannot interfere with the motions of the globe. The reader will find this fully elucidated in the second part of my work, entitled "The Principia and the Bible," from which much of the foregoing argument is drawn.

Since, then, it appears that the planetary nature of the earth, and the fixed position of the sun in the centre of the system, was the physical creed of the Biblical writers, we may reasonably conclude that this also was the physical creed of Joshua ; and if so, it may well be seriously doubted that he commanded the *sun* to "stand still." But we have already shown, by proving that it was the *solar light* and *lunar light* that he arrested, that the question is not started whether he believed the sun or the earth to be the centre of the system. The defence of the miracle set forth by Archdeacon PRATT, so unsatisfactory to Dr. COLENSO, therefore, is altogether unnecessary : and the objections drawn from modern science, of which the Bishop has so adroitly availed himself, are completely irrelevant.

To apprehend the true nature of the miracle of Joshua, it is only necessary to assume the existence of a subtile ether universally diffused through space, which becomes luminiferous when thrown into particular vibrations or waves. The heavenly bodies are the most stupendous agents in nature for exciting these vibrations ; but the fluid can be artificially excited and light produced, by means of any description of flame, by electrical agency, and otherwise in a variety of ways. But in the present case the vibrations of this ether were miraculously sustained over the localities mentioned in the history, and the motions of the solar system, of course, continued as usual.

It will be no impeachment of the miracle, as now interpreted, that it is favourable to the undulatory theory of light, in reference to which the late Professor BADEN POWELL has the following expressions :—"Propounded in the first instance to

explain a limited range of optical phenomena then known, this theory, with a few modifications, has been found in the hands of subsequent philosophers to afford by far the most complete and satisfactory representation of nearly all the varied and complicated results which optical experiments have disclosed." "It is a theory," says HERSCHEL, "which, if not founded in nature, is certainly one of the happiest fictions that the genius of man has yet invented to group together natural phenomena. as well as the most fortunate in the support it has received from all classes of new phenomena, which, at their discovery, seemed in irreconcilable opposition to it. It is, in fact, in all its applications and details, one succession of *felicities*, insomuch that we may almost be induced to say, if it be not true it deserves to be so."

The redoubtable philosophical argument against the miracle of Joshua, usually regarded as one of the most stubborn difficulties with which the votaries of inspiration have to deal, has been fairly examined and refuted. May we not reasonably presume that all kindred arguments only require to be tested in order to be exploded; for the celestial origin of the Bible is triumphantly established by the ever accumulating independent evidence of PROPHECY.

We cannot better conclude this essay than with the prayer of the illustrious BACON :—

"This also we humbly and earnestly beg—that human things may not prejudice such as are divine;—neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, anything may arise of incredulity or intellectual night towards Divine mysteries; but rather that by our minds, thoroughly purged and cleansed from fancy and vanity, and yet subject and perfectly given up to the Divine oracles, there may be given unto faith the things that are faith's."

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