

We cannot see that this consequence follows. The sabbath is a moral enactment; all that precedes was physical, relating merely to the creation and arrangement of matter, and to irrational organized beings; the sabbath could have no relation to rocks and waters: it was ordained for man, as a rational being, and in mercy as a day of rest to the animal races that were to labor for him: it was a new dispensation and although the same word is applied both to this period and to those that preceded, it does not appear to follow that they are necessarily of the same length. The first three days that preceded the establishment of the relation between the sun and the earth could have no measure of time in common with our present experience, and it appears to be no unwarrantable liberty to suppose that they may have been of any length which the subject matter may require, although those three days were also verbally limited by morning and evening, and that at a period of the creation when there could have been no morning and evening, in the sense in which those words are now used.

The revolution of the earth on its axis in presence of an illuminated sun, was necessary to constitute morning and evening, and it must revolve with the same degree of rapidity as now, in order to have constituted such a natural day, with its morning and evening as we at present enjoy. But the sun was not ordained to rule the day until the fourth of those periods, and it is not certain that the early revolutions of the earth on its axis were as rapid as now. May we not therefore suppose that the historian, as he must employ some term for his divisions of time, adopted one that he found in familiar use, but that it is not necessarily restricted to the common acceptation of the word.

Is it asked whether Moses had any mental reservation, a double sense for the word day—one for the common people and one for geologists; we answer that it is very possible he had no geological knowledge beyond the order of time in the creation which his history exhibits. It is very probable that fossil and entombed organized remains and fragmentary rocks and indeed most of the facts which geology has developed were unknown to him and that, as he told a story for mankind at large, he told it in the same spirit and with the same understanding with which it is commonly received. This however decides nothing more than in the case of all the sacred writers who relate astronomical events, or who allude to astronomical appearances in the vulgar sense, which is in direct contradiction to the actual state of facts in astronomy; whereas geology contradicts nothing contained in the scripture account of the creation; on the contrary, it confirms the order of time and requires only that the time should be sufficiently extended to render it