

that region of Asia where the ark rested. At one period the chronicles of the Chinese were triumphantly adduced as evidence that the human race has been visited by no such judgment as the flood for cycles of ages. But the extreme antiquity of these chronicles is now abandoned by sceptics themselves; and this shows how cautious we should be in attaching importance to specious objections, which may do incalculable mischief, and then be entirely exploded.\*

\* The various and discordant speculations respecting the antiquity of ancient monuments, afford an instructive lesson as to the danger of drawing conclusions from negative or uncertain premises. In no instance is this more apparent than in the history of discussions respecting some points of Hindoo antiquity, and concerning the date of the Zodiacs found in the temples of Upper Egypt. The astronomers and scholars of Europe were long perplexed in fixing the date of the construction of the Zodiacs of Esné and Dendera. It was imagined that these Zodiacs represented the state of the heavenly bodies at a very remote epoch. By some they were supposed to indicate the extravagant antiquity of fifteen thousand years; others were more cautious, and inferred the comparatively limited age of four thousand years before the Christian era; while another believed they were no older than the battle of Actium. As Cuvier has justly remarked, all these conjectures became useless, when people ended where they should have begun, by studying the Greek inscriptions sculptured on the monuments, and when Champollion deciphered their hieroglyphics. It is now ascertained that these supposed ancient temples were erected dur-