

fully ten years previous, Professor David Gregory, nephew of the inventor of the Gregorian telescope, had begun to teach, from his chair in the University of Edinburgh, the doctrine of gravitation and the true mechanism of the heavens, as unfolded in the Newtonian philosophy. The learned theologian, had he applied himself to astronomical science, could have found at the time very enlightened teachers ; but falling into exactly the mistake of the sailor of my illustration, or into that which, two centuries before, the doctors of Salamanca had fallen, he set himself, instead, to contend with the astronomers, and, to the extent of his influence, laboured to pledge revelation to an astronomy as false as that of the Buddhist, Hindu, or old Teuton. His mistake, I repeat, was exactly that of the sailor. Though in the Scriptures only the fact of the *authorship* of the great chronometer set in the heavens, "to be a sign for seasons, and for days and years," is revealed, he regarded himself as also informed respecting the principles on which the chronometer was constructed, or at least respecting the true nature of its movements ; and several very important deductions may, I think, be drawn from the carefully constructed passage in which he so unwittingly records his error, and the grounds of it. In the first place, we may safely hold that the texts of Scripture quoted by so able a theologian are those which have most the appearance of being revelations to men respecting the motions of the heavenly bodies. We may conclusively infer, that if *they* do not reveal the character of those motions, then nowhere in Scripture is their character revealed. In the second place, it is obvious that the cited texts do *not* reveal the nature of the motions. It would be as rational to hold that our best almanacs reveal the Ptolemaic astronomy. In the scientific portion of our almanacs there occur many phrases which are perfectly well understood, and indicate very definitely what the writer really intends to express by them, that yet, taken