

their own ideas of the science of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, &c. &c.; no real inconvenience will result. We may assign to these people the intelligence and wisdom of the moderns, but we can borrow nothing from them; for either they had nothing to leave, or have left nothing. Astronomers will never draw from the ancients any thing of the smallest utility. Let us then leave to the learned vain conjectures, and confess our positive ignorance of things useless in themselves, and of which there is not a single existing record.

“The limits of the constellations vary according to the authors that we consult. We see these limits expand or contract where they impress, from Hipparchus to Tycho, from Tycho to Hevelius, from Hevelius to Flamstead, Lacaille, Bradley, or Piazzi.

“I have said elsewhere, that the constellations were of no use, only that at best they enable us more easily to find out the stars, whilst the stars themselves point out particularly the fixed points whence we may refer the motions of the colures or the planets. Astronomy only began at the period when Hipparchus made the first catalogue of stars, measured the revolution of the sun, the moon, and their principal inequalities. All the rest is involved in darkness, uncertainty, and gross errors. It would be lost time to endeavour to explain or search into the chaos.

“Excepting a few particulars, I have said all that I think on the subject. I do not pretend to make converts: it is of little consequence who may or may not adopt my opinions; but if my arguments be compared with the speculations of Newton, Herschel, Bailly, and many others, it is not impossible