

as large a proportion of the votaries of science are pious men as of any other class. It is not to be denied, however, that they have been so under some disadvantages, both on account of the constant efforts of infidels and popular agitators to wrest science to their own uses, and of the intolerance, errors in matters of fact, and unwise concessions of Christian teachers, who should practice in such matters the same wise reticence that appears in Christ himself.

Much stress has been laid on the alleged retreat of religion before the advance of science, and of the persecutions said to have been suffered by scientific innovators. This depends partly on the error already referred to of supposing that the reference of effects to natural causes withdraws them from the domain of the Creator. It also results from misapprehension of historical facts. Even quite recently, the old story of the persecution of Galileo, and of the alleged adherence of theologians, and even of the Bible, to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, have been paraded as examples of the supposed defeats of religion. Now, without insisting on the facts that it was antichrist rather than Christianity that persecuted Galileo, and that Copernicus seems to have been as much a Christian as some of his assailants, we may explicitly deny that Christianity as represented in the Bible has ever maintained any special astronomical theory. The Hebrew word represented by *firmament* in the first chapter of Genesis is well known to have the meaning of "expanse"; and it is quite as suitable to express an atmospheric or ethereal expanse as one of a solid nature. The Greek and Latin translators, in rendering it by *stereoma* and *firmamentum*, no doubt supposed that they were conforming the statement to science as held in their time, and did not stop to reflect that the Ptolemaic system originated centuries after the time of Moses, and that a solid sky below the clouds is impossible, though even our revisers were so much under the control of old figments that they have merely ventured to place the true meaning in the margin. To our present knowledge