

entists, of course, have often been wrong in their conclusions, and have accepted theories on very insufficient evidence. But the discussions which follow will make it abundantly evident that the reconciliation between them and the Bible has come most frequently from a modification in the current interpretation of its meaning. We would fain cherish the belief that every such modification has brought us somewhat nearer the truth. The history of the conflict teaches a lesson of modesty to the exegetes of the Scriptures; but it can hardly do other than increase our confidence in the ultimate victory of the Scriptures themselves, over all attacks from the side of the modern sciences.

If the supposed antagonism of Astronomy to the Old Testament is selected as the first to be dealt with, in this series of brief articles, it is not because the conflict is felt to be specially pressing at this point now. It is rather because it furnishes us with an interesting study of a typical battlefield, after the conflict is over. It affords the best object lesson as to the lines along which the reconciliation may be sought for in other departments, where the issue is not yet so clear. This is due solely to the fact that astronomy was the earliest of the sciences to be placed on anything like its present basis, and hence was the first to provoke discussion.

It began shortly after the Reformation, with the discoveries of Copernicus. So long as the Ptolemaic theory prevailed, which supposed the earth to be the centre of the universe, no difficulty was felt whatever. That theory took appearances for realities, and the language of Scripture, wherever it touched on such matters, conformed to appearances. It spoke of the sun rising and setting. The sun, moon, and stars are supposed to exist for the earth's sake, and move round it for the purpose of giving it their light. The difficulty arose when Copernicus broached the theory that, instead of all this, the apparent motion of the sun was caused by the earth revolving on its axis and circling about the sun, as the centre of its orbit. It took a hundred years or more to establish this, even