

times. Men refused to accept the Copernican theory because it was in conflict with the Bible. The great Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, was one of the most bitter opponents of Copernicus. He called him an "old fool," said he was trying to "upset the whole art of astronomy," and in refutation of his theory appealed to the teachings of the Bible. "The Holy Scriptures show," said he, "that Joshua commanded the sun, and not the earth, to stand still" ("Table Talk"). The antiquity of the earth, now established to the satisfaction of all intelligent men, was violently opposed by the theologians, because it was not in harmony with the notions current among the Jews a few thousand years ago. We cannot estimate to what extent geology has been kept back by the fable of a universal deluge, as recorded in the seventh chapter of Genesis. Geologists themselves, under the influence of Bible teachings, thought the facts disproving such deluge must be illusive. Long after the falsity of the story was absolutely demonstrated, theologians continued to use it to prevent the acceptance by the people of the facts of geological science. Even now, the great mass of the clergy are accustomed to refer to that fable as though it were an actual event, while the more advanced theologians maintain that the flood was confined to Asia Minor, and the animals carried into the ark were simply a few domestic animals, claiming that the Bible can be interpreted to harmonize with this view. They are shameless enough to get a new lease of life for their system by such a statement as this, when the language of the Bible is so clear, so unmistakable, so unequivocal, that no honest man can read the story of the Flood and doubt that the author meant a deluge extending over the whole earth, and destroying all animals not saved in the ark.

As Christianity, by accepting as authoritative the statements of the Bible pertaining to scientific matters, has opposed geology, so has it proscribed and arrested the progress of almost every other science.

"Who," says Huxley, "shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of bibliolaters? Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonize impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party?"

"It is true that, if philosophers have suffered, their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules; and history records that, whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed, if not annihilated; scotched, if not slain. But orthodoxy is the Bourbon of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget; and though at present bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and the