

mind in the course of the investigation. The interest excited by these singular monuments of the olden times, naturally led to animated discussions, both in lecture-rooms and in the columns of the daily journals of Pennsylvania, during which the high antiquity of the earth, and the doctrine of former changes in the species of animals and plants inhabiting this planet before the creation of man, were assumed as established truths. But these views were so new and startling, and so opposed to popular prepossessions, that they drew down much obloquy upon their promulgators, who incurred the censures not only of the multitude, but also of some of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran clergy. The social persecution was even carried so far as to injure professionally the practice of some medical men, who had given publicity to the obnoxious doctrines. Several of the ministers of the Lutheran church, who had studied for years in German universities, were too well informed not to believe in the conclusions established by geologists, respecting the immensity of past time and former vicissitudes, both in animal and vegetable life; but although taking a lively interest in discoveries made at their own door, and joining in the investigations, they were compelled by prudence to conceal their opinions from their congregations, or they would have lost all influence over them, and might perhaps have seen their churches deserted. Yet by maintaining silence in deference to the opinions of the more ignorant, they become, in some degree, the instruments of countenancing error; nay, they are rearing up the rising generation to be, in their turn, the persecutors of many of their contemporaries, who may hereafter be far in advance in their scientific knowledge.

“To nothing but error,” says a popular writer of our times, “can any truth be dangerous; and I know not,” he exclaims, “where else there is seen so altogether tragical a spectacle, as that religion should be found standing in the highways, to say, ‘Let no man learn the simplest laws of the universe, lest they mislearn the highest. In the name of God the Maker, who said, and hourly yet says, *Let there be light*, we command that you continue in darkness!’ ”\*

\* Letter on Secular Education, by T. Carlyle, July, 1848.