

the result. But how vain are all such fears and predictions! It is the fiftieth time in which Christianity has seemed to the sanguine sceptic and the timorous believer to be in great peril; and yet not even an outpost has been lost in this guerilla warfare. Discoveries in astronomy, geology, chemistry, and physiology have often looked threatening for a while; but how entirely have they melted away before brighter light and more careful study! Moreover, every new assault upon Christianity seems to develop its inherent strength, and to weaken the power of its adversaries; because, once discomfited, they can never rise again. It will be time for the infidel to begin to hope, when he shall see, what he has not yet seen, a single stone struck from one of the bastions of this massive fortress by his artillery. And strange that any believer should be anxious for the future, when the history of the past shows him that every science, which for a time has been forced into the ranks of the enemy, and made to assume a hostile attitude, has, in the end, turned out to be an efficient ally.

History and observation sustain us in going further than this; they show us that, as a general rule, the more threatening have been the developments of any science in its earlier periods in respect to Christianity, the more strong and abundant have been its ultimate support and illustration of religion. The introduction of the Copernican system of astronomy seemed, to the divines of that day, utterly irreconcilable to revelation; and they contended against it as if the life of religion were at stake. Nevertheless, the demonstrations of physics triumphed over councils and decrees; but instead of proving the death of religion, what Christian does not rejoice in the rich illustrations and auxiliary support which revelation has derived from astronomy? especially in furnishing to the