

tronomers, Jews and Mohammedans, Greeks and Latins ; excepting one or two of the ancients, and the modern followers of Copernicus.”* It is in no small degree curious, but it conveys also a serious lesson to us, to observe what was a very great stretch of candour and charity, one hundred and fifty years ago. “That the sun moves and that the earth is at rest,” wrote another of that class of learned men, “is testified in Scripture :—that the earth also cannot be moved, being as it were founded and fixed upon bases, pedestals, and pillars. Some philosophers, indeed, both ancient and modern, and Copernicus the most distinguished among them, have maintained the contrary. Gemma Frisius has taken pains to explain this opinion of Copernicus in the most favourable manner that he could ; and some celebrated philosophers have endeavoured to reconcile it to the Bible, by considerations drawn from the ambiguity and various use of language. Others have recourse to the condescension of the style of Scripture, which, upon matters that do not affect faith and religion, is wont to lisp and prattle (*συμπελλίξειν*) like a father with his babes. But our pious reverence for the Scripture, the word of truth, will not allow us to depart from the strict propriety of the words ; as, by so doing, we should be setting to infidels an example of wresting the Scriptures : unless we were convinced by sure and irrefragable arguments ; as perhaps there may be a few so convinced, but they are ambitious persons, though professing to be devoted to sacred studies.”*

The length to which these observations has gone appeared necessary, in order to establish the broad and strong foundation of that principle of Bible-interpretation which, to my full conviction, will liberate us from difficulty, in relation to the supposed discrepance between the

* Gish. Voetii Disput. Theol. Vol. I. p. 637 ; Utrecht, 1648.

† Joh. Henr. Heideggeri Med. Theol. Christ. p. 136 ; Zurich, 1696.