

Church of Rome strove hard, in the days of Galileo, to settle an astronomical question theologically; and did its utmost to commit the Bible to the belief that the earth occupies a central position in the system, and that the sun performs a daily revolution around it: but the astronomical question, maugre the Inquisition, refused to be settled other than astronomically. And all now believe that the central position is occupied, not by the earth, but by the sun; and that it is the lesser body that moves round the larger, — not the larger that moves round the lesser. What would have been the result, had Rome, backed by the Franciscan, succeeded in pledging the verity of Scripture to a false astronomy? The astronomical facts of the case would have, of course, remained unchanged. The severe truth of geometry would have lent its demonstrative aid to establish their real character. All the higher minds would have become convinced for themselves, and the great bulk of the lower, at second hand, that the Scripture pledge had been given, not to scientific truth, but to scientific error; and the Bible, *to the extent to which it stood committed*, would be justly regarded as occupying no higher a level than the Shaster or Koran. Infidelity never yet succeeded in placing Revelation in a position so essentially false as that in which it was placed by Rome, to the extent of Rome's ability, in the case of Galileo.

Now, ultimately at least, as men have yielded to astronomy the right of decision in all astronomical questions, must they resign to geology the settlement of all geological ones. I do not merely speak of what *ought*, but of what assuredly *must* and will be. The successive geologic systems and formations, with all their organic contents, are as real existences as the sun itself; and it is quite as possible to demonstrate their true place and position, relative and absolute. And so long as certain fixed laws control and regulate human belief, certain inevitable