

## THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

the "renaissance" of science in company with that of art. Indeed, certain very important advances were made in the knowledge of nature during the first half of the sixteenth century, which shook the prevailing system to its very foundations. Such were the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan in 1522, which afforded empirical proof of its rotundity, and the founding of the new system of the world by Copernicus in 1543.

Yet the 31st of October in the year 1517, the day on which Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the wooden door of Wittenburg Cathedral, must be regarded as the commencement of a new epoch; for on that day was forced the iron door of the prison in which the Papal Church had detained fettered reason for twelve hundred years. The merits of the great reformer have been partly exaggerated, partly underestimated. It has been justly pointed out that Luther, like all the other reformers, remained in manifold subjection to the deepest superstition. Thus he was throughout life a supporter of the rigid dogma of the verbal inspiration of the Bible; he zealously maintained the doctrines of the resurrection, original sin, predestination, justification by faith, etc. He rejected as folly the great discovery of Copernicus, because in the Bible "Joshua bade the sun, not the earth, stand still." He utterly failed to appreciate the great political revolutions of his time, especially the profound and just agitation of the peasantry. Worse still was the fanatical Calvin, of Geneva, who had the talented Spanish physician, Serveto, burned alive in 1553, because he rejected the absurd dogma of the Trinity. The fanatical "true believers" of the reformed Church followed only too frequently in the blood-stained footsteps of their papal enemies; as they do even in our own day.