

taught (perhaps in order that the activity of the human mind may not pause or languish) that our powers do not enable us to comprehend the works of His hands. May success therefore attend this intellectual exercise, thus permitted and appointed for us; by which we recognize and admire the greatness of God the more, in proportion as we find ourselves the less able to penetrate the profound abysses of his wisdom." And that this train of thought was habitual to the philosopher we have abundant evidence in many other parts of his writings. He had already said in the same dialogue, "Nature (or God, as he elsewhere speaks) employs means in an admirable and inconceivable manner; admirable, that is, and inconceivable to us, but not to her, who brings about with consummate facility and simplicity things which affect our intellect with infinite astonishment. That which is to us most difficult to understand is to her most easy to execute."

The establishment of the Copernican and Newtonian views of the motions of the solar system and their causes, were probably the occasions on which religious but unphilosophical men entertained the strongest apprehensions that the belief in the government of God may be weakened when we thus "thrust some mechanic cause into his place." It is therefore fortunate that we can show, not only that this ought not to occur, from the reason of the thing, but also that in fact the persons who are the leading characters in the progress of these opinions were men of clear and fervent piety.

In the case of Copernicus himself it does not appear that, originally, any apprehensions were entertained of any dangerous discrepancy between his doctrines and the truths of religion, either natural or revealed. The work which contains these memorable discoveries was addressed to Pope Paul III., the head, at that time, (1543) of the religious world; and was published, as the author states in the preface, at the urgent entreaty of friends, one of whom was a