ner, superintended the printing of the work *De Revolutionibus*, and who, although he makes no express declaration of any religious scruples, appears nevertheless to have thought it expedient to speak of the new views as of an hypothesis, and not, like Copernicus, as of demonstrated truth.

The founder of our present system of the universe (for to him incontestably belong the most important parts of it, and the grandest features of the design) was almost more distinguished, if possible, by the intrepidity and confidence with which he expressed his opinions, than for the knowledge to which they owed their origin. He deserves to a high degree the fine eulogium passed upon him by Kepler, who, in the introduction to the Rudolphine Tables, says of him, "*Vir fuit maximo ingenio et quod in hoc exercitio* (combating prejudices) *magni momenti est, animo liber.*" When Copernicus is describing, in his dedication to the pope, the origin of his work, he does not scruple to term the opinion generally expressed among theologians of the immobility and central position of the earth "an absurd acroama," and to attack the stupidity of those who adhere to so erroneous a doctrine. "If even," he writes, "any empty-headed babblers (*ματαιολόγοι*), ignorant of all mathematical science, should take upon themselves to pronounce judgment on his work through an intentional distortion of any passage in the Holy Scriptures (*propter aliquem locum scripturæ male ad suum propositum detortum*), he should despise so presumptuous an attack. It was, indeed, universally known that the celebrated Lactantius, who, however, could not be reckoned among mathematicians, had spoken childishly (*pueriliter*) of the form of the earth, deriding those who held it to be spherical. On mathematical subjects one should write only to mathematicians. In order to show that, deeply penetrated with the truth of his own deductions, he had no cause to fear the judgment that might be passed upon him, he turned his prayers from a remote corner of the earth to the head of the Church, begging that he would protect him from the assaults of calumny, since the Church itself would derive advantage from his investigations on the length of the year and the movements of the moon." Astrology and improvements in the calendar long procured protection for astronomy from the secular and ecclesiastical powers, as chemistry and botany were long esteemed as purely subservient auxiliaries to the science of medicine.

The strong and free expressions employed by Copernicus sufficiently refute the old opinion that he advanced the sys-