

## CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

## THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

THERE are no snakes in Ireland, is said to be the opening sentence of a work on "The snakes of Ireland." So in commencing an article on the antagonism between religion and science we affirm—"There is no antagonism between science and religion." It would be a sorry thing for religion were it ever to be proved that science is its natural enemy, for that would seal its doom. Science is knowledge, science is the truth, religion also is knowledge, religion also is the truth. That which is false cannot be either science or religion. To predicate antagonism between religion and science is to affirm an impossible relation, it would be like describing two parallel lines crossing each other. Wherever then science and religion seem opposed, it is because something has been superimposed upon one or the other, which is not of its own nature. The Apostle speaks with sarcasm of "the oppositions of science, falsely so-called," a phrase which anticipates a necessary discrimination in modern days between science proper and speculative theories, falsely called science.

We regard the assumption of antagonism between science and religion as most deplorable, it concedes to infidelity, the truth of its most insolent charge, that religion is based upon ignorance. Some years ago the Rev. Dr. Stewart, a Baptist preacher, spoke of Geology sitting enthroned on a rock and hurling defiance at the Creator. This utterance was cheered to the echo at a Bible Society meeting in a city of colleges! We entered an indignant protest at the time against so inconceivably stupid a picture of the attitude of Geology, a picture far more in harmony with the blasphemies of Tom Paine or Voltaire, than with the faith of a Christian. We deeply lament that another similar sneering attack upon Geology and geological students was recently made by Bishop Baldwin.

Geology seems to be peculiarly obnoxious to those to whom science is a sealed book. But one science is no more antagonistic to religion than another in itself—how can it be? Why do not haters of science fly their arrows of scorn at astronomy? Taking the worst view possible of Geology, as sometimes stated by anti-Christian theorists, it presents no greater difficulties than astronomy. Surely there are none so ignorant as not to know that the Earth is included in the same system as that of which the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." To use then astronomy in the defence of the faith, as is so general and so effective, and to place a ban upon Geology, is not rational, it is to say in effect that bodies in remote space needing a telescope for observation may be studied with advantage to faith, but that objects discernible by the naked eye are a dangerous study. If "the undevout astronomer is mad," the geologist who sees not the work of an Almighty intelligence is a fool. Even Mill, in his attack upon Paley's design

argument, admits that, "the adaptations in Nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence, and the argument is greatly strengthened by the properly inductive considerations that there is some connection through causation between the origin of the arrangements of nature and the ends they fulfil." Were Geology as dangerous as those fancy to whom it is a *terra incognita* indeed, still it would be folly for Christian teachers to denounce its study, for such an attitude would justify the scorn of infidels when they declare that science is antagonistic to religion, that is, that religion cannot be true for it is contrary to the truths of science.

The position alone truly Christian is that of boundless confidence—"I know in Whom I have believed." Against such knowledge science has no weapons, what is more, science cannot even be conceived of as opposing such a position, for when science comes into conflict with *knowledge* it ceases to be science, it is degraded into charlatanism.

We have then, deeply to deplore some remarks made by Bishop Baldwin at a mission meeting at Montréal, which are certain to prove highly mischievous to young people. He launched out into an attack upon Geology and geologists as though they were the natural foes of religion. He is reported to have said that "the geologists of to-day considered those of the last generation to be pigmies, and those of the century hence would so regard the geologists of to-day." Now the prophecy we cannot discuss, forecasts based on heated fancy have no value. But the "pigmy" statement is utterly without foundation. No one having the slightest knowledge of geological research would so slander the geological students of to-day by charging them with slandering their predecessors. One having no knowledge of either Geology or its followers, should avoid, for truth's sake, making baseless statements that are certain to convey to the minds of young men the idea that in studying one phase of Creative wisdom, they are endangering their religious principles! We, to whom Geology, in days of ampler leisure, was a fascinating study, know that the distinguished geologists of the last generation were not pigmies, but giants. Every student of this science to-day honors the pioneers of days gone by. We are higher in knowledge because we stand on their shoulders. No greater success, no nobler record, do the geologists of to-day covet than that those who a century hence shall have carried geological research far beyond the goal of this generation, will recognise that the work we did was *true* work, done faithfully, as all scientific labor must be done, to be worthy of science. Coming generations may cast some of our theories to the moles and bats as we do some of past days, if incorrect, the sooner the better. But sure we are that the lovers of science will never breathe a word of disparagement on the memory of those who collected and collated facts in the spirit, and with the accuracy of Murchison and other geologists of the last generation, whose praise is in all the camps of science.

"Pigmies," indeed! O! no, Dr. Baldwin, the humblest toiler in the field of science can never be a pigmy! We have seen colliers, hardly able to read, denying themselves necessities in their enthusiasm for geological study, and thereby raised to a far higher moral and intellectual plane than can be reached by the man whose passion is merely worldly success. Yes, and we have seen classes of young men drawn from the lowest ranks, who in studying Geology have felt their lives sweetened and elevated, and their religious convictions vivified and established by considering the works and ways of God under the illumination of the Lamp of Geology.

All Thy works praise Thee O! God—the rocks as well as the heavens declare Thy glory, and this earth on which we stand, as well as the firmament, showeth Thy handiwork. The notion that Science and Religion are antagonistic, is both unscientific and irreligious. Science is not speculation, nor religion ignorance, they are each facets of the crystal of Divine Truth.

## THE LATE BISHOP FRASER ON THE CHURCH.

THE following is taken from the Parochial Sermons by the late Bishop Fraser, just published.

To no living church in this day, as it seems to me, is God giving grander opportunities, or a larger capacity for serving Him. A simple and intelligible creed, a reverent and sober ritual, hierarchical order, such as its main outlines prevailed in the Apostolic age, a discipline sufficient to direct, but not aspiring to enslave, the conscience, a spirit of free inquiry encouraged, an open Bible put fearlessly into her children's hands, a pure and scriptural liturgy of which it is hard to say whether the devotion or the sobriety is most to be admired, a constitutional system of government only requiring to be released from the trammels of a few obsolete laws to be adequate to deal with the spiritual and social phenomena of the age—these are the features which seems to me to constitute, I will not say the glory of the Church of England—because as she has received them, they are not fit subjects for glory—but which do mark her out, in a way and to an extent in which no other existing religious community amongst us is marked out, to be the expression of the nation's spiritual life, and to transmit the faith of our forefathers to the generations of them that are yet for to come. It is a noble mission this that seems laid upon us, if only we are worthy to discharge it. The course which the order of Providence seems to have marked out for the Church of England has often been called a middle-way. It is as truly so now as it was in the Reformation age. She takes it, as has been alleged, in the cold and calculating spirit of compromise, but as really believing, as Aristotle thought of virtue, that truth lies in it. On one side dogmatizing, on the other free thought; here an intolerant bigotry, there an indifferent pseudo-liberalism; to the right extravagant ecclesiastical claims, to the left an Erastian conception of the church