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RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

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"An honest confession is good for the soul." So thought Professor Tyndal when in his inaugural address as President of the British Association, he frankly made this declaration: "Abandoning all disguise, the confession that I feel bound to make before you is, that I prolong the vision backward across the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that matter which we in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator have hitherto covered with opprobium, the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." When the complaint is so often heard, "why do not the scientists tell us plainly what they mean, and what are the results which they conceive themselves to have established, it is fit that we should testify a cordial recognition of the intellectual honesty and fearless independence which prompted the above confession. Aware that the open avowal of his convictions, while it invited the honest criticism of the fairminded exposed him to the unreasoning denunciation of the bigoted, he nevertheless stood boldly forward, and in justice to his hearers as well as in duty to himself, proclaimed what he regarded as the truth. And let the friends of religion be well assured that they will best aid the cause they profess to serve, by encouraging their opponents to speak what they think, by showing them that such outspoken utterances will be met on their part not by vituperation but by argument.

The address embraces an historical sketch of the rise and development of the scientific mode of thought. It is shown that to the popular apprehension in its earliest developments, the various movements and changes in nature were due to the direct intervention of the gods. The character of the divine action as thus conceived marked by caprice. And as no mortal could tell what whim might next sway these celestial beings, no one could venture to anticipate what the course of affairs might be in the future. As little, from seeing what has transpired in nature around us in our day, could one attain to any well-founded conviction as to what had occurred in the past. It would be very evident that if the phenomena of the world were subject to perpetual interference by vacillating and frequently contending divinities, the only basis on which science could rest would be wanting.

It was not till prolonged observation revealed the fact that in many departments of nature, a regulated mode of action prevailed, which, when once ascertained, could be predicted, that human thought, when directed to the study of the Universe, attained the character of coherence and certitude which justified it in assuming the name of science. With Democritus (B. C. 460,) as claimed by Professor Tyndal, began a true scientific method. The various stages through which that method passed on its way to the marvellous accuracy which characterizes it in our day, are then indicated. In this review appear the names of Empedocles, Epicurus, Lucretius, Copernicus, Geordano Bruno, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton. Aristotle is condemned for having hindered men in attaining to a correct scientific