

that is to say, they have been seen to be no real difficulties at all, but to have depended, as in the case of astronomy, on the erroneous principles of interpretation which had been applied to Scripture. Such difficulties as remain will, in all probability, receive the same solution; and thus the progress of truth in one department contributes to its progress in another, for surely no unimportant advantage is attained when new light is cast on the conditions under which the literal terms of Scripture narrative or parable are to be understood. It may be well, however, in closing this lecture, to say a few words on the general result of geological science as a whole, and the prevailing impressions which it leaves upon the mind. And, first, looking outwards, as it were, the first idea which it presents, almost with overpowering force, is *time*—illimitable lapse of time. Years cease to measure it; cycles of ages appear too small a unit with which to measure its duration. When we think of it we may repeat with some nearer approach to an understanding of their meaning, the words of David—“In thy sight a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.” (Applause.) The next idea which is brought forcibly before our mind is this—that, during that enormous lapse of time, a progressive series of events has been directed to a definite and foreseen result. Here again old and familiar words seem to bear a new sense—to be deeper and truer than we ever knew before—“The sea is his and he made it; and his hands have PREPARED the dry land.” What a long preparation that has been! How many worlds succeeding worlds have been required to produce our existing earth, with its variety of surface and of climate—its stores of coal, of lime and iron—the indispensable materials of human industry and wealth! And then, that wonderful history of animal life, in which we see it built up from low beginnings, through the dreadful dragons and monsters of the middle ages of geology to the higher races which now minister to the wants of man! Of all this, no other word than the word “Prepare” gives the explanation or the meaning; for it must be always remembered that what are called natural laws are not really explanatory. They define the rules according to which certain effects are produced; but they do not explain to us either the how or the why. Yet these are the ultimate questions which the human mind is ever asking, and without an answer to which nothing can be fully understood; because it is in the answer of these questions that we can alone recognise the creating and directing will. Causes are not reasons; but the reason of a thing is its only real explanation to a reasoning mind; there is nothing intelligible except intelligence.—And now looking inwards at ourselves in the light of this science, the first idea that must strike us is that which is first by the mere force of contrast, the almost infinite smallness of our own term of life. ‘Behold thou hast made our days as a handbreadth, and our age as nothing before Thee.’ But then comes a contrast of another kind—a contrast between our littleness in one aspect and our greatness in another. Our desire to know, and our capacities of knowledge, how large and wide they are as compared with our power of finding out! We can discover, and we have discovered much—we seem to see what passed for ages before we were born, or our race began. But the deepest and highest truths which we long to know are inaccessible to our researches. At moments we may be beguiled with the hope that we are on the point of seeing something of the mysteries of creation; but they recede as we advance. The Creator eludes our search. What, then, is the last and prevailing impression left upon our mind by this general review of the results of science? What but this, the reasonableness of expecting that those truths which we have faculties impelling us to seek, but no faculties enabling us to discover, should be given us by direct revelation. Science leads us to a point where our interest is most excited, and then she drops our hand, intimating that she has reached her goal, and if we would go farther it must be under another guide. It is thus that the Sciences becomes the vestibule of the Church, and Knowledge the handmaid of Religion. The Duke concluded his lecture, which occupied fully one hour and a half in delivery amidst the cheers of the audience.

Sir A. Alison, in the name of the directors of the Athenæum, presented his Grace with a life membership ticket, and adverted to the eminent abilities and eminent public services of the Duke of Argyll.

His Grace having replied, the thanks of the meeting were formally voted to the Duke, and the audience dispersed.

THE ADULTERATION OF CONFECTIONERY.—The *Lancet* has published two important reports on the adulteration of sugar confectionery, a subject which has excited much interest in consequence of the recent poisonings at Bradford and the trial arising out