

**ON THE CONNEXION
BETWEEN
REVEALED RELIGION
AND MEDICAL SCIENCE**

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On the connexion between revealed religion and medical science by George Renorden Kingdon

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GEORGE RENORDEN KINGDON

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ON THE
CONNEXION BETWEEN
REVEALED RELIGION
AND
MEDICAL SCIENCE.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ESSAY WHICH
GAINED THE WIX PRIZE

AT
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S COLLEGE, LONDON.
MAY, 1846.

*'Αλλ' εἰπέ μοι ὁ τῶν ἀριῶν λόγῳ ἰατρῶν πότερον χρηματιστής
ἴσται, ἢ τῶν καμίνων θεραπευτής;*

Plato, Respub. I.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

SINCE the award of the prize, some additions have been made to the Essay, which are here enclosed in brackets ; and some passages have been omitted, especially at the beginning of the second part (there further alluded to), which, though certainly bearing on the subject in hand, seemed perhaps slightly alien from the special scope of the paper. The writer trusts that this scope will not be mistaken, that the tone of the essay will be seen to be rather suggestive than argumentative, as consisting rather of written meditations on the subject than logical demonstrations of it. Things strained beyond their power lose even their original efficacy.

G. R. K.

AMICO
ET
EXEMPLO MEO
T.F.K.

ESSAY, &c.

WE live in an age when, whatever may be thought of the state of Christian feeling, yet certainly the Christian argument against the infidel is becoming daily stronger. And this additional strength accrues to it from the co-operation of those very sciences whose devotees were erewhile its most dangerous enemies. It was ever thus. The Church and the World have always been antagonist powers, but during the progress of the time-long contest the Church has ever been wresting from her adversary's hand the weapons in which he most trusted, and has turned their efficacy against himself. The war-cry of the foremost of the world's champions was "Understanding before belief;" and though the counter-cry "Believe that ye may understand," rose feebly at first, and but excited scorn, yet in those words there was a life and charm that made all nature echo them as divine. For the first is the very principle of disunion, the latter of harmony. Each man believes *as* he understands—here the standard of belief is internal, and as no two men understand alike, the belief of each is different. *Quot homines tot sententiæ.* Each man believes certain definite propositions as being God's truth, and to these he makes everything else conform; here, the standard of belief being external, every

man believes alike; and, more than this, he is assured that every thing, however appearances may go, must really be confirmatory of his belief, because both have God for their author. Who would doubt the result of a collision between two such systems? Who can wonder at the increase of the one by the gradual absorption of the other? Faith without sight is an ever-acting external force, a very trade-wind in the sails of the Church's vessel, while the separate canoes of her adversaries seem without oar or helm drifted about at the caprice of the varying currents. What wonder that they stand not the shock of the encounter, but are dragged on in her vortex and help to swell her momentum? The "crede ut intelligas," has won over science after science, as though their true import had never been divined till then—has not only disarmed opponents, but changed active and malignant foes into able and willing friends. This fact, while it accounts for, is at the same time confirmed by, the present character of modern infidelity. The dress she had appeared in fitted her not, for it was stolen; and now, stript of her spoils, and having nought else to boast her of, she glories in her naked deformity. She pretends now to no sure basis of science—every thing objective has been won from her, and she has been forced to the open avowal of what has always been her actuating principle since the first dawn of the sceptick's character,—the making SELF at once the standard and judge of all things.*

* *Ἰδίῳν μέτρον ἄβυσσος.* (Anglice 'Private Judgment.') This pithy maxim—the impregnable stronghold of human pride—the fruitful

The true connexion of the sciences with Revealed Religion, as one after another of these noblest of God's gifts has been vindicated from its unholy alliance with His enemies, has been descanted on in a published series of lectures; * but as the author has confined himself to their defensive and confirmatory connexion, his mention of the medical sciences is very short and meagre. For in the case of Medicine this seems by far the smallest and least important feature in the connexion, which may well bear a three-fold division; one in which it is considered as the fellow-worker, another as the defender, and a third as the partial embodier of Revealed Religion.

I. The estimation of Medicine was wonderfully different in the two great nations of antiquity: in Greece it had its god-authors, as Apollo and Æsculapius—the practice of it was hereditary, being mainly confined to the family of the Asclepiads, † who traced their origin to the son of Apollo,—and particular physicians (as Hippocrates ‡ of Cos the seventeenth in descent from Æsculapius, and Democedes

source of all heresy and error, was promulgated, though perhaps in its physical rather than its moral application, in the sixth century, s.c., by Protagoras of Abdera, whom Sextus Empiricus claims as the earliest sceptick.

* Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion, by Nicholas Wiseman, D.D., Bishop of Melipotamus.

† Galen *περί ἀνατομικῶν ἐγχειρησέων*. Lib. II. sub init. quoted by Whewell, *Hist. Ind. Sci.* vol. iii. p. 386; and Blakeley, *Life of Aristotle*, p. 14.

‡ Hippocrates and Galen, who lived at an interval of six hundred years from each other, were almost the only authorities in medieval medicine, which accounts for the preservation of so many of their writings to us.