

## LECTURE XIV.

SCIENTIFIC TRUTH, RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD, IS RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

THE connection between science and religion has ever been a subject of deep interest to enlightened and reflecting minds. Too often, however, up to the present time, has the theologian, on the one hand, looked with jealousy upon science, fearful that its influence was hurtful to the cause of true religion; while, on the other hand, the philosopher, in the pride of a sceptical spirit, has scorned an alliance between science and theology, and even fancied many a discrepancy. Both these opinions are erroneous; and disastrously have they operated, as well upon science as upon religion. The position which I take, and which I shall endeavour to maintain, is, that *scientific truth, rightly understood, is religious truth.*

The proposition may be misunderstood at its first announcement, but I hope, ere its examination be finished, to satisfy you that it is true; and if so, that it ought to reconcile religion to science, and science to religion.

In arriving at correct conclusions concerning this statement, much will depend on the meaning which we attach to the phrase *religious truth*. Religion is properly defined to be piety towards God. This piety implies two things: first, a correct knowledge of God; and secondly, the exercise of proper affections in view of that knowledge. The former constitutes the theoretic part of religion, and is investigated solely by the understanding. The latter constitutes the practical part of religion, and depends much upon the will, the heart, or the moral powers of man. All truth, therefore, which illustrates the divine character or government, or which tends to produce right affections towards God, is properly denominated religious truth. If, then, I can show that all scientific truth, rightly understood, has one or both of these effects, it will follow that it is strictly religious truth.