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THE FARADAY BENZENE CENTENARY¹

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AN indescribable feeling of deepest reverence thrills those who know that they are within a holy of holies when standing at this table whence Davy and Faraday and Dewar disclosed their discoveries to the world.

Consider the immensity of outlook it commands. A few days ago, the glories of Tut-ankh-Amen's most wonderful tomb were depicted, in minute detail, upon the screen behind me. We could realize that man stood higher, in the decorative arts, several thousand years ago, than he does to-day—that man was then deeply reverent in his beliefs. In stark contrast is the change in our civilization—we call it advance—made within the past century, through the application of the discoveries discoursed of within these walls: in large measure fired by the tiny spark first shown to the world, at this table in 1831. What reverence have we for such a discovery? Our men of letters pay no heed to it. The public at large has no knowledge thereof.

Chemists desire to show, by this commemoration, that they are persons mindful of the words of the ancient poet and preacher:

Let us now praise famous men
And our fathers that begat us.
The Lord hath wrought great glory by them
Through His great power from the beginning.
Such as did bear in their kingdoms,
Men renowned for their power,
Giving counsel by their understanding
And declaring prophecies:
Leaders of the people by their counsels
And by their knowledge of learning meet for the people,
Wise and eloquent in their instructions.

"Of them that have left a name behind them," Faraday is one of the greatest, certainly the greatest experimental philosopher the world has yet known. A Sandemanian, deeply religious, from his childhood upwards, throughout life, he advisedly kept his "science" apart from his religion but his moral faith was ever the background of his scientific productivity. His work was all conceived and executed in a deeply religious spirit. It will only be by following his example that wisdom will be made the religion of the

¹ Address delivered at the Royal Institution on June 16, at the celebration of the centenary of the discovery of benzene, by Faraday, and printed in *Nature*.

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