



Time Traveling With Science and the Saints

George A. Erickson

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Using the biblical dictum, "by their fruits shall ye know them" (Mt. 7:20), humanist George Erickson surveys the historical record of the defenders of faith and the proponents of reason. His analysis challenges the commonly held belief that despite its many abuses religion on balance civilized the world. Beginning with the unfettered progress of science in pre-Christian, polytheistic societies, he notes that this progress was soon actively thwarted by the growing Christian throng. Aided by the carrot-and-stick appeal of heaven and hell, missionary passion, superstitions, and miracles, Christianity gradually overwhelmed its religious competitors while simultaneously working to destroy all interest in scientific reasoning.

Yet even amidst these suffocating, often bloody conditions, certain individuals doggedly pursued new and dangerous, frequently heretical scientific research, sometimes at the risk of their lives. Erickson briefly profiles such pioneers as Giordano Bruno, Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, Linnaeus, and others.

While condemning the Christianity that produced such abominations as the Inquisition and witch hunts, Erickson concludes on an optimistic note, emphasizing that science and secular society have broken free from centuries of religious opposition, and continue to benefit the world through mass education, modern medicine, and technological progress.

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