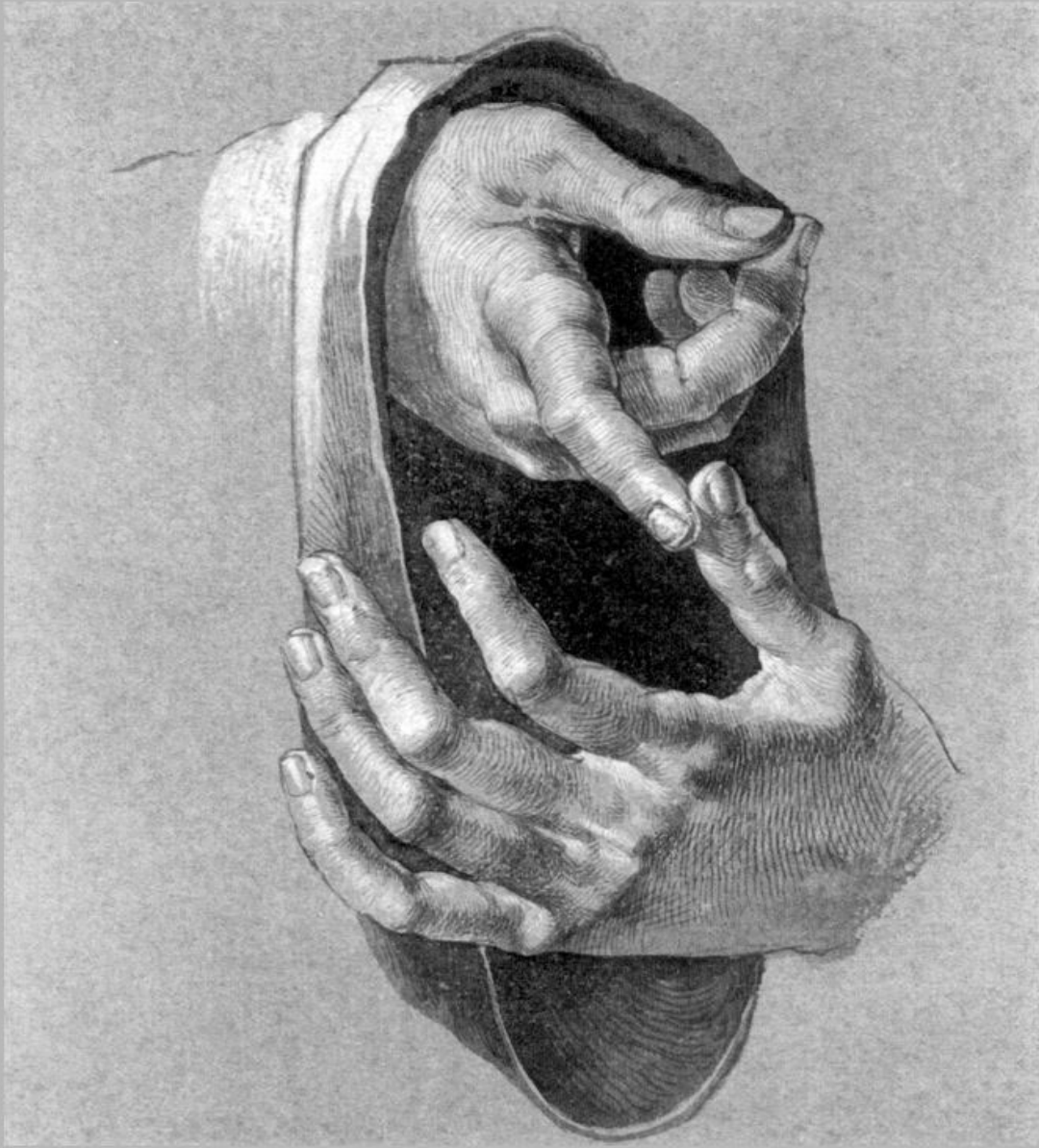


HENRY DRUMMOND



**NATURAL LAW IN
THE SPIRITUAL
WORLD**

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Henry Drummond

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Recollections Of Henry Drummond

BY PROF. DAVID S. CAIRNS, Aberdeen University

I want to give you a short account of Henry Drummond as I remember him; and although I did not belong to the circle of his personal friends, and there is, therefore, little to record that is not already accessible in Principal Smith's admirable life of Drummond and in Professor Simpson's excellent briefer biography, it may be worth while, for those who have read neither, to put these memories into consecutive form. My own University course was broken by a two years' intermission of study, due to illness. In the earlier period there was almost no corporate religious life among students. The weekly prayer meeting was attended by a mere handful and was not of inspiring character; and the prayer meeting was practically all there was. The first great evangelistic movement of the earlier decade, under Moody and Sankey, had apparently spent its force, and attempts which had been made to renew it had not proved very successful. The University at least was quite

untouched. Nor was there any sign that indicated the approach of better things.

When I returned to Edinburgh I found the whole aspect changed. The visit of "the Cambridge seven," itself a result of Mr. Moody's work in England, had made a deep impression on the students. Henry Drummond, a friend and lieutenant of Moody in his work among young men in England, had appeared on the scene, and the memorable Sunday night meetings in the Odd Fellows' Hall were in full flood. No one who attended these meetings can ever forget them—the hall crowded with much of the best life in the University, the tense interest, and Drummond on the platform speaking with absolute simplicity of the common peril and the common salvation; I do not mean by these terms that he used the old language of revivalism. If he had done this he would, I believe, have failed utterly. It was one of the master secrets of his power over us all that he interpreted and mediated the soul of the older evangelism to men who were willing and eager enough to recognize the truth that was in it, if they could hear it freed from elements that did not commend themselves to their best standards of life and thought. A subtle change had passed over the student world in Scotland in the past two or three decades, which has spread far enough since then, and it was one of Drummond's peculiar gifts to have divined and to have met this change; to have had, in fact, that "presentiment of the eve" which is essential for successful appeal to youth whose manhood will be spent in that coming age. But of this I will write later. An intimate friend of Drummond wrote of him once to another friend as "a Bird of Paradise," and it is a good description of him as he was among Scottish students of those days. It was difficult to place him or to account for him in the sober national environment with its steady, Presbyterian ways, and its theological conservatism.

He was, moreover, utterly unlike all that the students associated with the name of "Evangelist," unlike what many of them had come to associate with religion. It would be hard, for instance, to imagine a greater contrast than that between Moody and Drummond, and it is infinitely to the credit of both of them that they understood and loved each other so well. What Moody was like is presumably well known to American students. Drummond, as I remember him, was a slenderly built, tall, graceful man, who walked with a curious springy step, and who was always faultlessly dressed. It is hopeless to describe any human face in words, and I shall not try to describe Drummond's. A friend once told me that he was dining in a London club with Drummond and Richard Holt Hutton, the well-known editor of the Spectator. Drummond had to go early, and when he left Hutton said: "That is the most beautiful face I have ever seen." Certainly I have seen few faces that were so expressive and alive. Sympathy, vitality, tenacity, refinement, and a certain distinction are the characteristics I remember best. First impressions did not give you the real power that was in the eminently courteous and debonair gentleman who stood before you. These won their way into your mind as your knowledge of him grew. A sense of humor lies near the great virtues, if indeed it is not a necessary element in some of them, and this Drummond had in abounding measure. I doubt if he could have influenced a whole generation of students as he did without it. There are many stories of him which illustrate this, and which reveal the sheer joy of life which was one of the springs of his power. Drummond certainly had the student's faith in the place of the pure "lark" in the perfect life.

That this was not simply true of the day of radiant health and success, but of those two dark years of seclusion and pain through which he passed to the great renewal of youth

which knows no aging, those who knew him, as I did not, have borne testimony. There is one story of many which I have heard which illustrates this. It is said that in the last stages of his painful illness, a friend came in to see him. Stealing cautiously to the bed and looking at the prostrate figure, he saw Drummond winking at him. It was his way of assuring him that it was all right. I have seen one of the last photographs of him, a shrunken form in a bath chair, with the penciled inscription in his own hand, "The Descent of Man." To one who remembers him in the splendid beauty and vigor of his genius it seems strange and sad, but these experiences showed the unquenchable vigor of his faith and love and hope as never before, and have forever put to silence the criticisms that used to be made about his teaching that we as students resented, but in the nature of the case could not refute, that his was a gospel only for fair weather and youth, but unequal to the deeper and darker experiences of the soul. They are part of that spell whereby to-day he holds his sacred place in the hearts of the great multitudes of men as a man who came from God, who delivered a message from God to them and then went back to God. Perhaps it was needful that he should thus prove the depth and truth of that which he believed and taught. So at last God has overruled this great trial of His servant.

A singular trait in his character, which at all points was so extraordinarily sympathetic and full of cordiality and humor, was his personal reserve. It may not have been so with his closest friends, but it certainly was the case with most, that this man of many confidences and friends did not seem to need to take with the freedom with which he gave. I recall a picture, given me by a friend, of a student party at a Clyde pier, a whole bevy of students welcoming Drummond and struggling in vain to capture his bag and carry it for him. "I never allow anyone to carry my bag," said he. It is a trifle, but from what I have heard I imagine

it was characteristic. I incline to think that he would have appreciated Kipling's prayer:

"Oh, whatsoever, may spoil or speed, Help me to need no aid from men That I may help such men as need."

Certainly it was a feature of his addresses that, while full of passionate moral earnestness, of faith, and of noble feeling, he almost never made the slightest reference to his own experience.

I am not saying that this aloofness from the need of help for himself, or from the expression of it, was an admirable feature, or one to be imitated. I do not think it was, but certainly it was not a weak trait. I rather imagine that it was due to the very fineness and intensity of his feelings. There are certain natures that protect themselves by this reserve and shyness from giving themselves away with all the heavy cost that this brings. However it be, such reserve did not prevent Drummond from winning not only the admiration but the whole-hearted love of the students of my time.

Many who, like myself, never saw him except in public, and never knew him only through his addresses, and through friendship in later life with the men who were his personal intimates, feel to-day towards him as they feel to their own nearest and personal friends. I take it that that is one of the greatest tributes that one can pay to his memory. But it may be said, what was his message? What did he do for students that other men could not do? Briefly, I would say, he translated the Gospel to many. To many it had become a thing concerned mainly with future salvation or something bound up with a traditional doctrine, the foundations of which they felt were being shaken by the advance of science and progress of criticism, and Drummond showed

them that it was first of all a thing of present life and experience as real science, an actual present possession in the light of which all other forms of life were mean and vulgar and unworthy of a man. Here, as in other respects, he was of the Johannine type. All that is commonplace nowadays, but then it came to many students with all the force of novelty. But while, with all his wonderful powers of exposition and illustration, he brought this truth home he did not, as so many have done, allow the truly evangelistic "note of urgency" to go out of his teaching. He made men feel that they were being already judged by this gift of God; that the difference between having the life and having it not was immeasurable, not the kind of difference that exists between the less and the more desirable, but the kind of difference that there is between right and wrong, the difference that there is between life and death.

I have rarely heard speaking as powerful as was Drummond's in some of these addresses as he pressed the great issue home. And what made it the more powerful was the perfect tact and restraint of the presentation. Many strong speakers lack this. They lose contact time and again with their audiences. They gain it again, of course, but all such losses of touch are both a waste of time and force, for the effect of the best evangelistic speaking is cumulative. Drummond understood his Edinburgh audiences perfectly. I think he was the first man who did. I remember a friend who attended his meetings, and who has since attained a position of scientific eminence, saying that Drummond's addresses showed far greater ability than his books. And I quite agree with him. His sympathy and intuitive knowledge of the men before him were indeed wonderful and fill one with admiration as one looks back. His books were brilliant excursions in mediation between science and religion. "Natural Law," in spite of its immense sale, has left no direct mark on thought. "The Ascent of Man," which is

much the better book of the two, has never, I think, had full justice done it. But neither stand in the front rank to-day. It is quite otherwise with Drummond's work among students. It has stood the test of time. There are men all over the world to-day who remember him with gratitude and love as the man who opened a new world to them, who won them and kept them for religion and for God. I cannot speak for America, but certainly in Scotland Drummond is one of the great personal forces which is working to-day in the University. The great Sunday night meetings have been carried on by his friend and disciple, Dr. Kelman. Still further, his ideal and spirit are working on throughout the country in the Student Christian Movement. This has been reinforced by other streams, but the Movement, as a whole, is exactly the kind of thing that he would have delighted in and rejoiced to serve. The point that I am seeking to make is that Drummond was, above all others, in Scotland at least, the forerunner of the Student Movement. He divined that there was here in the universities a new field of work, a new type of mind, that needed to be studied and spoken to in its own tongue. There are those who deny the soundness of this, but we are not concerned here with whether they are right or wrong. Certainly Drummond did not agree with them. Just as certain men understand the artisan and others the fisherman, so Drummond understood the student, and pioneered the way for the great Movement which was to follow, which since the "eighties" has gone all around the world.

I have spoken of his insistence on the Gospel as the Gift of Life, and on the moral earnestness with which he preached it as an issue between life and death. But one would give a wholly false impression if one stopped there. The central emphasis was already laid on the living Christ as the one way to truth and life. This was the real center of Drummond's Gospel and of his own life. There is no novelty

here, happily, for surely this has always been at the core of Christianity, but with what novelty and beauty he made that great theme shine for the students of his day! The finest thing, in my judgment, that he ever wrote is the little tract called "The Changed Life," which gives the religious side of his teaching to students, as "The Greatest Thing in the World" gives the ethical. I wish that that tract were reprinted and circulated wholesale at our conferences. I believe it would find among the rising generation of students a new mission, it may be, as powerful as the old. I doubt if he ever wrote anything into which he put more of the inner secrets of his life. Its central idea is that the only life which to-day is worth having, inasmuch as it reveals God and slays temptation, comes from personal relationship with the living Christ. The form of Drummond's addresses was singularly good. His manner was quiet and restrained, and he kept our close attention by the simple fact that "he was saying something all the time," and saying it with such simplicity and earnestness that you thought nothing of the speaker but everything about what he was saying, which was exactly what he wished you to do.

To sum up what I have tried to say, Drummond was a man raised up by God, and trained by His Providence to preach the everlasting Gospel to students in an age of transition. And his power came to him through his implicit trust in that Providence and the Father, his devotion to Christ the Son, and his confident faith in the leading of the Holy Spirit. For proof of the second of these one would need to quote practically the whole range of his writings. Jesus Christ was to him the central sun of life. A recent writer has said, "Professor Drummond once remarked to me that he could conceive himself doubting about God, but doubt about Jesus was impossible to him." For proof of the other two elements in his faith I shall, in closing, recount an incident which I once heard him tell, almost the only

occasion on which I ever heard him refer directly to his own experience. He wished to bring out the truth that God's providential guidance extended to the smallest details of our daily life, and he told us that in his early college days Moody had asked him to go with him on one of his evangelistic tours through England in order to carry on the work among young men. Drummond was always very strong in his faith that each man served God along the lines of his own individuality, and, believing that just at that moment God had called him to be a student and not an evangelist, he refused to be persuaded, and went on with his own work. A considerable time passed, and it happened that he was on his way to the Highlands when, at a railway junction, he fell in with a friend who had been suddenly called from a religious convention to the sickbed of another friend and was in numb perplexity between the public and private duty. Drummond at once suggested that they should exchange tickets and offered to take the other's place at the convention. This was agreed to, and without having time for explanations the friends got into their trains and went in different directions. When Drummond got near Elgin he saw a wooden erection in a field near the line. He asked his neighbor what it meant, and was told that Mr. Moody was holding meetings in Elgin.

"Moody!" thought Drummond, "this is more than I bargained for. The whole business will come up again!" On arriving at the station, he took his bag in his hand and made his way to the address which his friend at the junction had given him as his place of abode. Reaching it he rang the bell, and Moody opened the door. "Come, now, Mr. Drummond," he said, "you cannot get away from me. The Lord has sent you here!" "Well," said Drummond, "I throw up my hands. I think you must be right, after all." The upshot was that he went with Moody on the tour, and it was above all, I believe, the wide and deep experience of

youth and its problems that, under Moody's influence, he gained on this tour that was one of the great secrets of his later work in Edinburgh. Of that last fact, of course, he did not say much to the meeting, but he made his point in an unforgettable manner, that in such accidents as these the great counsel of the Father was at work, and that it was life to find your way through experience, guided from point to point of that changing world of Providence by the Spirit of God. Scattered and slight as these memories of Drummond are, they will have done their work if they bear new testimony to the abiding power of his influence, and if they send their readers to a study of his life and of the addresses into which he put his deepest convictions, and which with the lives they influenced are his best title to remembrance.

Natural Law In The Spiritual World

Preface.

No class of works is received with more suspicion, I had almost said derision, than those which deal with Science and Religion. Science is tired of reconciliations between two things which never should have been contrasted; Religion is offended by the patronage of an ally which it professes not to need; and the critics have rightly discovered that, in most cases where Science is either pitted against Religion or fused with it, there is some fatal misconception to begin with as to the scope and province of either. But although no initial protest, probably, will save this work from the unhappy reputation of its class, the thoughtful mind will perceive that the fact of its subject-matter being Law—a property peculiar neither to Science

nor to Religion—at once places it on a somewhat different footing.

The real problem I have set myself may be stated in a sentence. Is there not reason to believe that many of the Laws of the Spiritual World, hitherto regarded as occupying an entirely separate province, are simply the Laws of the Natural World? Can we identify the Natural Laws, or any one of them, in the Spiritual sphere? That vague lines everywhere run through the Spiritual World is already beginning to be recognized. Is it possible to link them with those great lines running through the visible universe which we call the Natural Laws, or are they fundamentally distinct? In a word, Is the Supernatural natural or unnatural?

I may, perhaps, be allowed to answer these questions in the form in which they have answered themselves to myself. And I must apologize at the outset for personal references which, but for the clearness they may lend to the statement, I would surely avoid.

It has been my privilege for some years to address regularly two very different audiences on two very different themes. On week days I have lectured to a class of students on the Natural Sciences, and on Sundays to an audience consisting for the most part of working men on subjects of a moral and religious character. I cannot say that this collocation ever appeared as a difficulty to myself, but to certain of my friends it was more than a problem. It was solved to me, however, at first, by what then seemed the necessities of the case—I must keep the two departments entirely by themselves. They lay at opposite poles of thought; and for a time I succeeded in keeping the Science and the Religion shut off from one another in two separate compartments of my mind. But gradually the wall of

partition showed symptoms of giving way. The two fountains of knowledge also slowly began to overflow, and finally their waters met and mingled. The great change was in the compartment which held the Religion. It was not that the well there was dried; still less that the fermenting waters were washed away by the flood of Science. The actual contents remained the same. But the crystals of former doctrine were dissolved; and as they precipitated themselves once more in definite forms, I observed that the Crystalline System was changed. New channels also for outward expression opened, and some of the old closed up; and I found the truth running out to my audience on the Sundays by the week-day outlets. In other words, the subject-matter Religion had taken on the method of expression of Science, and I discovered myself enunciating Spiritual Law in the exact terms of Biology and Physics.

Now this was not simply a scientific coloring given to Religion, the mere freshening of the theological air with natural facts and illustrations. It was an entire re-casting of truth. And when I came seriously to consider what it involved, I saw, or seemed to see, that it meant essentially the introduction of Natural Law into the Spiritual World. It was not, I repeat, that new and detailed analogies of *Phenomena* rose into view—although material for Parable lies unnoticed and unused on the field of recent Science in inexhaustible profusion. But Law has a still grander function to discharge toward Religion than Parable. There is a deeper unity between the two Kingdoms than the analogy of their Phenomena—a unity which the poet's vision, more quick than the theologian's, has already dimly seen:—

"And verily many thinkers of this age,
Aye, many Christian teachers, half in heaven,
Are wrong in just my sense, who understood

Our natural world too insularly, as if
No spiritual counterpart completed it,
Consummating its meaning, rounding all
To justice and perfection, *line by line,*
Form by form, nothing single nor alone,
The great below clenched by the great above."[\[1\]](#)

The function of Parable in religion is to exhibit "form by form." Law undertakes the profounder task of comparing "line by line." Thus Natural Phenomena serve mainly an illustrative function in Religion. Natural Law, on the other hand, could it be traced in the Spiritual World, would have an important scientific value—it would offer Religion a new credential. The effect of the introduction of Law among the scattered Phenomena of Nature has simply been to make Science, to transform knowledge into eternal truth. The same crystallizing touch is needed in Religion. Can it be said that the Phenomena of the Spiritual World are other than scattered? Can we shut our eyes to the fact that the religious opinions of mankind are in a state of flux? And when we regard the uncertainty of current beliefs, the war of creeds, the havoc of inevitable as well as of idle doubt, the reluctant abandonment of early faith by those who would cherish it longer if they could, is it not plain that the one thing thinking men are waiting for is the introduction of Law among the Phenomena of the Spiritual World? When that comes we shall offer to such men a truly scientific theology. And the Reign of Law will transform the whole Spiritual World as it has already transformed the Natural World.

I confess that even when in the first dim vision, the organizing hand of Law moved among the unordered truths of my Spiritual World, poor and scantily-furnished as it was, there seemed to come over it the beauty of a transfiguration. The change was as great as from the old

chaotic world of Pythagoras to the symmetrical and harmonious universe of Newton. My Spiritual World before was a chaos of facts; my Theology, a Pythagorean system trying to make the best of Phenomena apart from the idea of Law. I make no charge against Theology in general. I speak of my own. And I say that I saw it to be in many essential respects centuries behind every department of Science I knew. It was the one region still unpossessed by Law. I saw then why men of Science distrust Theology; why those who have learned to look upon Law as Authority grow cold to it—it was the Great Exception.

I have alluded to the genesis of the idea in my own mind partly for another reason—to show its naturalness. Certainly I never premeditated anything to myself so objectionable and so unwarrantable in itself, as either to read Theology into Science or Science into Theology. Nothing could be more artificial than to attempt this on the speculative side; and it has been a substantial relief to me throughout that the idea rose up thus in the course of practical work and shaped itself day by day unconsciously. It might be charged, nevertheless, that I was all the time, whether consciously or unconsciously, simply reading my Theology into my Science. And as this would hopelessly vitiate the conclusions arrived at, I must acquit myself at least of the intention. Of nothing have I been more fearful throughout than of making Nature parallel with my own or with any creed. The only legitimate questions one dare put to Nature are those which concern universal human good and the Divine interpretation of things. These I conceive may be there actually studied at first-hand, and before their purity is soiled by human touch. We have Truth in Nature as it came from God. And it has to be read with the same unbiased mind, the same open eye, the same faith, and the same reverence as all other Revelation. All that is found there, whatever its place in Theology, whatever its

orthodoxy or heterodoxy, whatever its narrowness or its breadth, we are bound to accept as Doctrine from which on the lines of Science there is no escape.

When this presented itself to me as a method, I felt it to be due to it—were it only to secure, so far as that was possible, that no former bias should interfere with the integrity of the results—to begin again at the beginning and reconstruct my Spiritual World step by step. The result of that inquiry, so far as its expression in systematic form is concerned, I have not given in this book. To reconstruct a Spiritual Religion, or a department of Spiritual Religion—for this is all the method can pretend to—on the lines of Nature would be an attempt from which one better equipped in both directions might well be pardoned if he shrank. My object at present is the humbler one of venturing a simple contribution to practical Religion along the lines indicated. What Bacon predicates of the Natural World, *Natura enim non nisi parendo vincitur*, is also true, as Christ had already told us, of the Spiritual World. And I present a few samples of the religious teaching referred to formerly as having been prepared under the influence of scientific ideas in the hope that they may be useful first of all in this direction.

I would, however, carefully point out that though their unsystematic arrangement here may create the impression that these papers are merely isolated readings in Religion pointed by casual scientific truths, they are organically connected by a single principle. Nothing could be more false both to Science and to Religion than attempts to adjust the two spheres by making out ingenious points of contact in detail. The solution of this great question of conciliation, if one may still refer to a problem so gratuitous, must be general rather than particular. The basis in a common principle—the Continuity of Law—can

alone save specific applications from ranking as mere coincidences, or exempt them from the reproach of being a hybrid between two things which must be related by the deepest affinities or remain forever separate.

To the objection that even a basis in Law is no warrant for so great a trespass as the intrusion into another field of thought of the principles of Natural Science, I would reply that in this I find I am following a lead which in other departments has not only been allowed but has achieved results as rich as they were unexpected. What is the Physical Politic of Mr. Walter Bagehot but the extension of Natural Law to the Political World? What is the Biological Sociology of Mr. Herbert Spencer but the application of Natural Law to the Social World? Will it be charged that the splendid achievements of such thinkers are hybrids between things which Nature has meant to remain apart? Nature usually solves such problems for herself. Inappropriate hybridism is checked by the Law of Sterility. Judged by this great Law these modern developments of our knowledge stand uncondemned. Within their own sphere the results of Mr. Herbert Spencer are far from sterile—the application of Biology to Political Economy is already revolutionizing the Science. If the introduction of Natural Law into the Social sphere is no violent contradiction but a genuine and permanent contribution, shall its further extension to the Spiritual sphere be counted an extravagance? Does not the Principle of Continuity demand its application in every direction? To carry it as a working principle into so lofty a region may appear impracticable. Difficulties lie on the threshold which may seem, at first sight, insurmountable. But obstacles to a true method only test its validity. And he who honestly faces the task may find relief in feeling that whatever else of crudeness and imperfection mar it, the attempt is at

least in harmony with the thought and movement of his time.

That these papers were not designed to appear in a collective form, or indeed to court the more public light at all, needs no disclosure. They are published out of regard to the wish of known and unknown friends by whom, when in a fugitive form, they were received with so curious an interest as to make one feel already that there are minds which such forms of truth may touch. In making the present selection, partly from manuscript, and partly from articles already published, I have been guided less by the wish to constitute the papers a connected series than to exhibit the application of the principle in various directions. They will be found, therefore, of unequal interest and value, according to the standpoint from which they are regarded. Thus some are designed with a directly practical and popular bearing, others being more expository, and slightly apologetic in tone. The risk of combining two objects so very different is somewhat serious. But, for the reason named, having taken this responsibility, the only compensation I can offer is to indicate which of the papers incline to the one side or to the other. "Degeneration," "Growth," "Mortification," "Conformity to Type," "Semi-Parasitism," and "Parasitism" belong to the more practical order; and while one or two are intermediate, "Biogenesis," "Death," and "Eternal Life" may be offered to those who find the atmosphere of the former uncongenial. It will not disguise itself, however, that, owing to the circumstances in which they were prepared, all the papers are more or less practical in their aim; so that to the merely philosophical reader there is little to be offered except—and that only with the greatest diffidence—the Introductory chapter.

In the Introduction, which the general reader may do well to ignore, I have briefly stated the case for Natural Law in

the Spiritual World. The extension of Analogy to Laws, or rather the extension of the Laws themselves so far as known to me, is new; and I cannot hope to have escaped the mistakes and misadventures of a first exploration in an unsurveyed land. So general has been the survey that I have not even paused to define specially to what departments of the Spiritual World exclusively the principle is to be applied. The danger of making a new principle apply too widely inculcates here the utmost caution. One thing is certain, and I state it pointedly, the application of Natural Law to the Spiritual World has decided and necessary limits. And if elsewhere with undue enthusiasm I seem to magnify the principle at stake, the exaggeration—like the extreme amplification of the moon's disc when near the horizon—must be charged to that almost necessary aberration of light which distorts every new idea while it is yet slowly climbing to its zenith.

In what follows the Introduction, except in the setting there is nothing new. I trust there is nothing new. When I began to follow out these lines, I had no idea where they would lead me. I was prepared, nevertheless, at least for the time, to be loyal to the method throughout, and share with nature whatever consequences might ensue. But in almost every case, after stating what appeared to be the truth in words gathered directly from the lips of Nature, I was sooner or later startled by a certain similarity in the general idea to something I had heard before, and this often developed in a moment, and when I was least expecting it, into recognition of some familiar article of faith. I was not watching for this result. I did not begin by tabulating the doctrines, as I did the Laws of Nature, and then proceed with the attempt to pair them. The majority of them seemed at first too far removed from the natural world even to suggest this. Still less did I begin with doctrines and work downward to find their relations in the

natural sphere. It was the opposite process entirely. I ran up the Natural Law as far as it would go, and the appropriate doctrine seldom even loomed in sight till I had reached the top. Then it burst into view in a single moment.

I can scarcely now say whether in those moments I was more overcome with thankfulness that Nature was so like Revelation, or more filled with wonder that Revelation was so like Nature. Nature, it is true, is a part of Revelation—a much greater part doubtless than is yet believed—and one could have anticipated nothing but harmony here. But that a derived Theology, in spite of the venerable verbiage which has gathered round it, should be at bottom and in all cardinal respects so faithful a transcript of "the truth as it is in Nature" came as a surprise and to me at least as a rebuke. How, under the rigid necessity of incorporating in its system much that seemed nearly unintelligible, and much that was barely credible, Theology has succeeded so perfectly in adhering through good report and ill to what in the main are truly the lines of Nature, awakens a new admiration for those who constructed and kept this faith. But however nobly it has held its ground, Theology must feel to-day that the modern world calls for a further proof. Nor will the best Theology resent this demand; it also demands it. Theology is searching on every hand for another echo of the Voice of which Revelation also is the echo, that out of the mouths of two witnesses its truths should be established. That other echo can only come from Nature. Hitherto its voice has been muffled. But now that Science has made the world around articulate, it speaks to Religion with a twofold purpose. In the first place it offers to corroborate Theology, in the second to purify it.

If the removal of suspicion from Theology is of urgent moment, not less important is the removal of its adulterations. These suspicions, many of them at least, are

new; in a sense they mark progress. But the adulterations are the artificial accumulations of centuries of uncontrolled speculation. They are the necessary result of the old method and the warrant for its revision—they mark the impossibility of progress without the guiding and restraining hand of Law. The felt exhaustion of the former method, the want of corroboration for the old evidence, the protest of reason against the monstrous overgrowths which conceal the real lines of truth, these summon us to the search for a surer and more scientific system. With truths of the theological order, with dogmas which often depend for their existence on a particular exegesis, with propositions which rest for their evidence upon a balance of probabilities, or upon the weight of authority; with doctrines which every age and nation may make or unmake, which each sect may tamper with, and which even the individual may modify for himself, a second court of appeal has become an imperative necessity.

Science, therefore, may yet have to be called upon to arbitrate at some points between conflicting creeds. And while there are some departments of Theology where its jurisdiction cannot be sought, there are others in which Nature may yet have to define the contents as well as the limits of belief.

What I would desire especially is a thoughtful consideration of the method. The applications ventured upon here may be successful or unsuccessful. But they would more than satisfy me if they suggested a method to others whose less clumsy hands might work it out more profitably. For I am convinced of the fertility of such a method at the present time. It is recognized by all that the younger and abler minds of this age find the most serious difficulty in accepting or retaining the ordinary forms of belief. Especially is this true of those whose culture is scientific.

And the reason is palpable. No man can study modern Science without a change coming over his view of truth. What impresses him about Nature is its solidity. He is there standing upon actual things, among fixed laws. And the integrity of the scientific method so seizes him that all other forms of truth begins to appear comparatively unstable. He did not know before that any form of truth could so hold him; and the immediate effect is to lessen his interest in all that stands on other bases. This he feels in spite of himself; he struggles against it in vain; and he finds perhaps to his alarm that he is drifting fast into what looks at first like pure Positivism. This is an inevitable result of the scientific training. It is quite erroneous to suppose that science ever overthrows Faith, if by that is implied that any natural truth can oppose successfully any single spiritual truth. Science cannot overthrow Faith; but it shakes it. Its own doctrines, grounded in Nature, are so certain, that the truths of Religion, resting to most men on Authority, are felt to be strangely insecure. The difficulty, therefore, which men of Science feel about Religion is real and inevitable, and in so far as Doubt is a conscientious tribute to the inviolability of Nature it is entitled to respect.

None but those who have passed through it can appreciate the radical nature of the change wrought by Science in the whole mental attitude of its disciples. What they really cry out for in Religion is a new standpoint—a standpoint like their own. The one hope, therefore, for Science is more Science. Again, to quote Bacon—we shall hear enough from the moderns by-and-by—"This I dare affirm in knowledge of Nature, that a little natural philosophy, and the first entrance into it, doth dispose the opinion to atheism; but, on the other side, much natural philosophy, and wading deep into it, will bring about men's minds to religion."[2]

The application of *similia similibus curantur* was never more in point. If this is a disease, it is the disease of Nature, and the cure is more Nature. For what is this disquiet in the breasts of men but the loyal fear that Nature is being violated? Men must oppose with every energy they possess what seems to them to oppose the eternal course of things. And the first step in their deliverance must be not to "reconcile" Nature and Religion, but to exhibit Nature in Religion. Even to convince them that there is no controversy between Religion and Science is insufficient. A mere flag of truce, in the nature of the case, is here impossible; at least, it is only possible so long as neither party is sincere. No man who knows the splendor of scientific achievement or cares for it, no man who feels the solidity of its method or works with it, can remain neutral with regard to Religion. He must either extend his method into it, or, if that is impossible, oppose it to the knife. On the other hand, no one who knows the content of Christianity, or feels the universal need of a Religion, can stand idly by while the intellect of his age is slowly divorcing itself from it. What is required, therefore, to draw Science and Religion together again—for they began the centuries hand in hand—is the disclosure of the naturalness of the supernatural. Then, and not till then, will men see how true it is, that to be loyal to all of Nature, they must be loyal to the part defined as Spiritual. No science contributes to another without receiving a reciprocal benefit. And even as the contribution of Science to Religion is the vindication of the naturalness of the Supernatural, so the gift of Religion to Science is the demonstration of the supernaturalness of the Natural. Thus, as the Supernatural becomes slowly Natural, will also the Natural become slowly Supernatural, until in the impersonal authority of Law men everywhere recognize the Authority of God.

To those who already find themselves fully nourished on the older forms of truth, I do not commend these pages. They will find them superfluous. Nor is there any reason why they should mingle with light which is already clear the distorting rays of a foreign expression.

But to those who are feeling their way to a Christian life, haunted now by a sense of instability in the foundation of their faith, now brought to bay by specific doubt at one point raising, as all doubt does, the question for the whole, I would hold up a light which has often been kind to me. There is a sense of solidity about a Law of Nature which belongs to nothing else in the world. Here, at last, amid all that is shifting, is one thing sure; one thing outside ourselves, unbiased, unprejudiced, uninfluenced by like or dislike, by doubt or fear; one thing that holds on its way to me eternally, incorruptible, and undefiled. This more than anything else, makes one eager to see the Reign of Law traced in the Spiritual Sphere. And should this seem to some to offer only a surer, but not a higher Faith; should the better ordering of the Spiritual World appear to satisfy the intellect at the sacrifice of reverence, simplicity, or love; especially should it seem to substitute a Reign of Law and a Lawgiver for a Kingdom of Grace and a Personal God, I will say, with Browning,—

"I spoke as I saw.

I report, as a man may of God's work—*all's love, yet all's Law.*

Now I lay down the judgeship He lent me. Each faculty tasked,

To perceive Him, has gained an abyss where a dewdrop was asked."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Aurora Leigh.

[2] "Meditationes Sacræ," x.

Analysis Of Introduction.

PART I.

Natural Law in the Spiritual Sphere.

1. The growth of the Idea of Law.
2. Its gradual extension throughout every department of Knowledge.
3. Except one. Religion hitherto the Great Exception. Why so?
4. Previous attempts to trace analogies between the Natural and Spiritual spheres. These have been limited to analogies between *Phenomena*; and are useful mainly as illustrations. Analogies of *Law* would also have a Scientific value.
5. Wherein that value would consist. (1) The Scientific demand of the age would be met; (2) Greater clearness would be introduced into Religion practically; (3) Theology, instead of resting on Authority, would rest equally on Nature.

PART II.

The Law of Continuity.

A priori argument for Natural Law in the spiritual world.

1. The Law Discovered.

2. " Defined.

3. " Applied.

4. The objection answered that the *material* of the Natural and Spiritual worlds being different they must be under different Laws.

5. The existence of Laws in the Spiritual world other than the Natural Laws (1) improbable, (2) unnecessary, (3) unknown. Qualification.

6. The Spiritual not the projection upward of the Natural; but the Natural the projection downward of the Spiritual.

Introduction.

"This method turns aside from hypotheses not to be tested by any known logical canon familiar to science, whether the hypothesis claims support from intuition, aspiration or general plausibility. And, again, this method turns aside from ideal standards which avow themselves to be lawless, which profess to transcend the field of law. We say, life and conduct shall stand for us wholly on a basis of law, and must rest entirely in that region of science (not physical, but moral and social science), where we are free to use our intelligence in the methods known to us as intelligible

logic, methods which the intellect can analyze. When you confront us with hypotheses, however sublime and however affecting, if they cannot be stated in terms of the rest of our knowledge, if they are disparate to that world of sequence and sensation which to us is the ultimate base of all our real knowledge, then we shake our heads and turn aside."—*Frederick Harrison.*

"Ethical science is already forever completed, so far as her general outline and main principles are concerned, and has been, as it were, waiting for physical science to come up with her."—*Paradoxical Philosophy.*

PART I.

Natural Law is a new word. It is the last and the most magnificent discovery of science. No more telling proof is open to the modern world of the greatness of the idea than the greatness of the attempts which have always been made to justify it. In the earlier centuries, before the birth of science, Phenomena were studied alone. The world then was a chaos, a collection of single, isolated, and independent facts. Deeper thinkers saw, indeed, that relations must subsist between these facts, but the Reign of Law was never more to the ancients than a far-off vision. Their philosophies, conspicuously those of the Stoics and Pythagoreans, heroically sought to marshal the discrete materials of the universe into thinkable form, but from these artificial and fantastic systems nothing remains to us now but an ancient testimony to the grandeur of that harmony which they failed to reach.

With Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler the first regular lines of the universe began to be discerned. When Nature yielded to Newton her great secret, Gravitation was felt to be not greater as a fact in itself than as a revelation that Law was fact. And thenceforth the search for individual Phenomena gave way before the larger study of their relations. The pursuit of Law became the passion of science.

What that discovery of Law has done for Nature, it is impossible to estimate. As a mere spectacle the universe to-day discloses a beauty so transcendent that he who disciplines himself by scientific work finds it an overwhelming reward simply to behold it. In these Laws one stands face to face with truth, solid and unchangeable. Each single Law is an instrument of scientific research,

simple in its adjustments, universal in its application, infallible in its results. And despite the limitations of its sphere on every side Law is still the largest, richest, and surest source of human knowledge.

It is not necessary for the present to more than lightly touch on definitions of Natural Law. The Duke of Argyll^[3] indicates five senses in which the word is used, but we may content ourselves here by taking it in its most simple and obvious significance. The fundamental conception of Law is an ascertained working sequence or constant order among the Phenomena of Nature. This impression of Law as order it is important to receive in its simplicity, for the idea is often corrupted by having attached to it erroneous views of cause and effect. In its true sense Natural Law predicates nothing of causes. The Laws of Nature are simply statements of the orderly condition of things in Nature, what is found in Nature by a sufficient number of competent observers. What these Laws are in themselves is not agreed. That they have any absolute existence even is far from certain. They are relative to man in his many limitations, and represent for him the constant expression of what he may always expect to find in the world around him. But that they have any causal connection with the things around him is not to be conceived. The Natural Laws originate nothing, sustain nothing; they are merely responsible for uniformity in sustaining what has been originated and what is being sustained. They are modes of operation, therefore, not operators; processes, not powers. The Law of Gravitation, for instance, speaks to science only of process. It has no light to offer as to itself. Newton did not discover Gravity—that is not discovered yet. He discovered its Law, which is Gravitation, but tells us nothing of its origin, of its nature or of its cause.