

# Natural Law in the Spiritual World

by Henry Drummond

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*The sermon argues that introducing natural law into the spiritual world can transform it and make it more scientific, providing a new credential for religion.*

**Scripture:** Job 12:7, Psalm 19:1, Proverbs 3:5, John 1:3, Romans 1:20, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 11:3  
**Topics:** "Science And Faith", "Natural Law"

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## Description

Henry Drummond preaches about the potential unity of Natural Law in the Spiritual World, challenging the traditional separation between the two realms. He argues that just as the laws of nature have transformed knowledge into science, the spiritual laws should also be subject to the same scrutiny and integration. By seeking to understand and apply natural laws to the spiritual realm, Drummond aims to provide a scientific basis for faith and morality, bridging the gap between science and religion. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing the harmony and continuity between the natural and spiritual worlds, suggesting that a deeper understanding of spiritual truths can be achieved through the lens of scientific principles.

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## Transcript

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS. "We have no hesitation in saying that this is one of the most able and interesting books on the relations which exist between natural science and spiritual life that has appeared. Mr. Drummond writes perfect English - his ideas are fresh, and expressed with admirable felicity. His book is one to fertilize the mind, to open to it fresh fields of thought, and to stimulate its activity."--LITERARY CHURCHMAN. "This is one of the most impressive and suggestive books on religion that we have read for a long time.

Indeed, with the exception of Dr. Mozley's University Sermons, we can recall no book of our time which showed such a power of restating the moral and practical truths of religion so as to make them take fresh hold of the mind and vividly impress the imagination. No one who reads the papers entitled, "Biogenesis", "Degeneration", "Eternal Life", and "Classification", to say nothing of the others in this volume, will fail to recognise in Mr. Drummond a new and powerful teacher, impressive both from the scientific calmness and accuracy of his view of law, and from the deep religious earnestness with which he traces the workings of law in the moral and spiritual sphere."--SPECTATOR.

"The reader is left with the depths of his spiritual nature stirred, pondering upon the great foundation truths of the Gospel and illuminated with the fresh light which only a thoughtful, reverent, and lofty mind can pour upon the ancient message of Redemption."-- CHURCH QUARTERLY REVIEW. "A most remarkable

volume. It is perfectly delightful to turn to the calm, judicial, scholarly, and pre-eminently tolerant work of Professor Drummond. His obviously great personal familiarity with biological science enables him to derive some of his most telling illustrations from the more recondite phenomena of the development of life.

His style is charming, his diction essentially that of a scholar and a man of refined taste. Hence his book is an eminently readable one."--KNOWLEDGE. "The extraordinary success of the work is due to its merits. Its form and its leading ideas are quite original; it is one of the most suggestive books we have ever read; its style is admirable."--BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW. "This is a remarkable and important book. The theory it enounces may without exaggeration, be termed a discovery.

It is difficult to say whether the scientific or the religious reader will be the most surprised and delighted as he reads a volume which must stir a new hope into the minds of each."--ABERDEEN FREE PRESS. "A very clever and well written book which has rapidly won a wide reputation. There is much in this book which is striking, original, suggestive, at once finely conceived and eloquently expressed; much, which will be most helpful to both cleric and layman; and we strongly recommend our readers to peruse and judge it for themselves."-- EXPOSITOR.

"This is a pioneer book. It breaks the way into a territory supposed to be more hostile than any other to religion. It is full of the germs and seeds of things. It will not be long before its fresh and brilliant illustrations of the oldest truths will become the property of the religious mind of the country, and many a minister, longing to enter fresh fields and pastures new, will find in it a novel method and a trustworthy guide. Merely as religious discourses, giving the fine ore of evangelical truth, adorned with the freshest illustrations, and set forth in language of subtle and sinewy eloquence, these chapters will take a high place in sermon literature."--DAILY REVIEW.

"The enchantments of an unspeakably fascinating volume by Professor Drummond have had an exhilarating effect each time we have opened its pages, or thought over its delightful contents. It is not too much to say that of its kind it is one of the most important books of the year."--CLERGYMAN'S MAGAZINE. "This is a most original and ingenious book, instructive and suggestive in the highest degree. Its speculative subtilty is unequalled by its extensive range of scientific knowledge, and all is permeated by the force and validity of the religious intuitions from which the author has made its departure.

It is wholly out of our power to do justice to the many points in this book that press for notice. It is the boldest effort yet made to turn the tables on agnostic science, and to not a few of the arguments agnostics will find it hard to reply."--NONCONFORMIST.

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NATURAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

BY

HENRY DRUMMOND, F.R.S.E.; F.G.S.

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PREFACE

No class of works is received with more suspicion, I had almost said derision, than that which deals 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 recognised. 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 apologise 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 weekday 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 colouring 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 towards 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 crystallising 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 unbiassed 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 for ever 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 risks 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 specifically 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 downwards 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 recognised 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 begin 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."<sup>[2]</sup> 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 splendour 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 recognise 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 foundations 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, unbiassed, 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."

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PARASITISM

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ANALYSIS OF INTRODUCTION.

[For the sake of the general reader who may desire to pass at once to the practical applications, the following outline of the Introduction--devoted rather to general principles--is here presented.]

PART I.

NATURAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL SPHERE.

1. The growth of the Idea of Law.
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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 will 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 analyse. 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 for ever 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.

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<sup>[3]</sup> 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 that tells us nothing of its origin, of its nature, or of its cause. The Natural Laws then are great lines running not only through the world, but, as we now know, through the universe, reducing it like parallels of latitude to intelligent order.

In themselves, be it once more repeated, they may have no more absolute existence than parallels of latitude. But they exist for us. They are drawn for us to understand the part by some Hand that drew the whole; so drawn, perhaps, that, understanding the part, we too in time may learn to understand the whole. Now the inquiry we propose to ourselves resolves itself into the simple question, Do these lines stop with what we call the Natural sphere? Is it not possible that they may lead further?

Is it probable that the Hand which ruled them gave up the work where most of all they were required? Did that Hand divide the world into two, a cosmos and a chaos, the higher being the chaos? With Nature as the symbol of all of harmony and beauty that is known to man, must we still talk of the super-natural, not as a convenient word, but as a different order of world, an unintelligible world, where the Reign of Mystery supersedes the Reign of Law? This question, let it be carefully observed, applies to Laws not to Phenomena.

That the Phenomena of the Spiritual World are in analogy with the Phenomena of the Natural World requires no restatement. Since Plato enunciated his doctrine of the Cave or of the twice-divided line; since Christ spake in parables; since Plotinus wrote of the world as an imaged image; since the mysticism of Swedenborg; since Bacon and Pascal; since "Sartor Resartus" and "In Memoriam," it has been all but a commonplace with thinkers that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Milton's question-- "What if earth Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein Each to other like more than on earth is thought? "

is now superfluous. "In our doctrine of representations and correspondences," says Swedenborg, "we shall treat of both these symbolical and typical resemblances, and of the astonishing things that occur, I will not say in the living body only, but throughout Nature, and which correspond so entirely to supreme and spiritual things, that one would swear that the physical world was purely symbolical of the spiritual world.[4]" And Carlyle: "All visible things are emblems. What thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly speaking is not there at all.

Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body it forth." [5] But the analogies of Law are a totally different thing from the analogies of Phenomena and have a very different value. To say generally, with Pascal, that "La nature est une image de la grace," is merely to be poetical. The function of Hervey's "Meditations in a Flower Garden," or, Flavel's "Husbandry Spiritualized," is mainly homiletical. That such works have an interest is not to be denied. The place of parable in teaching, and especially after the sanction of the greatest of Teachers, must always be recognised.

The very necessities of language indeed demand this method of presenting truth. The temporal is the husk and framework of the eternal, and thoughts can be uttered only through things.[6] But analogies between Phenomena bear the same relation to analogies of Law that Phenomena themselves bear to Law. The light of Law on truth, as we have seen, is an immense advance upon the light of Phenomena. The discovery of Law is simply the discovery of Science. And if the analogies of Natural Law can be extended to the Spiritual World, that whole region at once falls within the domain of science and secures a basis as well as an illumination in the constitution and course of Nature.

All, therefore, that has been claimed for parable can be predicated a fortiori of this--with the addition that a proof on the basis of Law would want no criterion possessed by the most advanced science. That the validity of analogy generally has been seriously questioned one must frankly own. Doubtless there is much difficulty and even liability to gross error in attempting to establish analogy in specific cases. The

value of the likeness appears differently to different minds, and in discussing an individual instance questions of relevancy will invariably crop up.

Of course, in the language of John Stuart Mill, "when the analogy can be proved, the argument founded upon it cannot be resisted." [7] But so great is the difficulty of proof that many are compelled to attach the most inferior weight to analogy as a method of reasoning." Analogical evidence is generally more successful in silencing objections than in evincing truth. Though it rarely refutes it frequently repels refutation; like those weapons which though they cannot kill the enemy, will ward his blows. . . .

It must be allowed that analogical evidence is at least but a feeble support, and is hardly ever honoured with the name of proof." [8] Other authorities on the other hand, such as Sir William Hamilton, admit analogy to a primary place in logic and regard it as the very basis of induction. But, fortunately, we are spared all discussion on this worn subject, for two cogent reasons. For one thing, we do not demand of Nature directly to prove Religion. That was never its function.

Its function is to interpret. And this, after all, is possibly the most fruitful proof. The best proof of a thing is that we see it; if we do not see it, perhaps proof will not convince us of it. It is the want of the discerning faculty, the clairvoyant power of seeing the eternal in the temporal, rather than the failure of the reason, that begets the sceptic. But secondly, and more particularly, a significant circumstance has to be taken into account, which, though it will appear more clearly afterwards, may be stated here at once.

The position we have been led to take up is not that the Spiritual Laws are analogous to the Natural Laws, but that, they are the same Laws. It is not a question of analogy but of Identity. The Natural Laws are not the shadows or images of the Spiritual in the same sense as autumn is emblematical of Decay, or the falling leaf of Death. The Natural Laws, as the Law of Continuity might well warn us, do not stop with the visible and then give place to a new set of Laws bearing a strong similitude to them.

The Laws of the invisible are the same Laws, projections of the natural not supernatural. Analogous Phenomena are not the fruit of parallel Laws, but of the same Laws--Laws which at one end, as it were, may be dealing with Matter, at the other end with Spirit. As there will be some inconvenience, however, in dispensing with the word analogy, we shall continue occasionally to employ it. Those who apprehend the real relation will mentally substitute the larger term. Let us now look for a moment at the present state of the question.

Can it be said that the Laws of the Spiritual World are in any sense considered even to have analogies with the Natural World? Here and there certainly one finds an attempt, and a successful attempt, to exhibit on a rational basis one or two of the great Moral Principles of the Spiritual World. But the Physical World has not been appealed to. Its magnificent system of Laws remains outside, and its contribution meanwhile is either silently ignored or purposely set aside. The Physical, it is said, is too remote from the Spiritual.

The Moral World may afford a basis for religious truth, but even this is often the baldest concession; while the appeal to the Physical universe is everywhere dismissed as, on the face of it, irrelevant and unfruitful. From the scientific side, again, nothing has been done to court a closer fellowship. Science has taken theology at its own estimate. It is a thing apart. The Spiritual World is not only a different world, but a different kind of world, a world arranged on a totally different principle, under a different governmental scheme.

The Reign of Law has gradually crept into every department of Nature, transforming knowledge everywhere into Science. The process goes on, and Nature slowly appears to us as one great unity, until the borders of the Spiritual World are reached. There the Law of Continuity ceases, and the harmony breaks down. And men who have learned their elementary lessons truly from the alphabet of the lower Laws, going on to seek a higher knowledge, are suddenly confronted with the Great Exception.

Even those who have examined most carefully the relations of the Natural and the Spiritual, seem to have committed themselves deliberately to a final separation in matters of Law. It is a surprise to find such a writer as Horace Bushnell, for instance, describing the Spiritual World as "another system of nature incommunicably separate from ours," and further defining it thus: "God has, in fact, erected another and higher system, that of spiritual being and government for which nature exists; a system not under the law of cause and effect, but ruled and marshalled under other kinds of laws." [9] Few men have shown more insight than Bushnell in illustrating Spiritual truth from the Natural World; but he has not only failed to perceive the analogy with regard to Law, but emphatically denies it.

In the recent literature of this whole region there nowhere seems any advance upon the position of "Nature and the Supernatural." All are agreed in speaking of Nature and the Supernatural. Nature in the Supernatural, so far as Laws are concerned, is still an unknown truth. "The Scientific Basis of Faith" is a suggestive title. The accomplished author announces that the object of his investigation is to show that "the world of nature and mind, as made known by science, constitute a basis and a preparation for that highest moral and spiritual life of man, which is evoked by the self-revelation of God." [10] On the whole, Mr.

Murphy seems to be more philosophical and more profound in his view of the relation of science and religion than any writer of modern times. His conception of religion is broad and lofty, his acquaintance with science adequate. He makes constant, admirable, and often original use of analogy; and yet, in spite of the promise of this quotation, he has failed to find any analogy in that department of Law where surely, of all others, it might most reasonably be looked for. In the broad subject even of the analogies of what he defines as "evangelical religion" with Nature, Mr.

Murphy discovers nothing. Nor can this be traced either to short-sight or over-sight. The subject occurs to him more than once, and he deliberately dismisses it--dismisses it not merely as unfruitful, but with a distinct denial of its relevancy. The memorable paragraph from Origen which forms the text of Butler's "Analogy," he calls "this shallow and false saying" [11] He says: "The designation of Butler's scheme of religious philosophy ought then to be the analogy of religion, legal and evangelical, to the constitution of nature.

But does this give altogether a true meaning? Does this double analogy really exist? If justice is natural law among beings having a moral nature, there is the closest analogy between the constitution of nature and merely legal religion. Legal religion is only the extension of natural justice into a future life. . . . But is this true of evangelical religion? Have the doctrines of Divine grace any similar support in the analogies of nature? I trow not." [12] And with reference to a specific question, speaking of immortality, he asserts that "the analogies of mere nature are opposed to the doctrine of immortality." [13] With regard to Butler's great work in this department, it is needless at this time of day to point out that his aims did not lie exactly in this direction.

He did not seek to indicate analogies between religion and the constitution and course of Nature. His theme was, "The Analogy of Religion to the constitution and course of Nature." And although he pointed out direct analogies of Phenomena, such as those between the metamorphoses of insects and the doctrine of a future state; and although he showed that "the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected as to make up together but one scheme,"[14] his real intention was not so much to construct arguments as to repel objections.

His emphasis accordingly was laid upon the difficulties of the two schemes rather than on their positive lines; and so thoroughly has he made out his point, that as is well known, the effect upon many has been, not to lead them to accept the Spiritual World on the ground of the Natural, but to make them despair of both. Butler lived at a time when defence was more necessary than construction, when the materials for construction were scarce and insecure, and when, besides, some of the things to be defended were quite incapable of defence.

Notwithstanding this, his influence over the whole field since has been unparalleled. After all, then, the Spiritual World, as it appears at this moment, is outside Natural Law. Theology continues to be considered, as it has always been, a thing apart. It remains still a stupendous and splendid construction, but on lines altogether its own. Nor is Theology to be blamed for this. Nature has been long in speaking; even yet its voice is low, sometimes inaudible. Science is the true defaulter, for Theology had to wait patiently for its development.

As the highest of the sciences, Theology in the order of evolution should be the last to fall into rank. It is reserved for it to perfect the final harmony. Still, if it continues longer to remain a thing apart, with increasing reason will be such protests as this of the "Unseen Universe," when, in speaking of a view of miracles held by an older Theology, it declares:--"If he submits to be guided by such interpreters, each intelligent being will for ever continue to be baffled in any attempt to explain these phenomena, because they are said to have no physical relation to anything that went before or that followed after; in fine, they are made to form a universe within a universe, a portion cut off by an insurmountable barrier from the domain of scientific inquiry."[15] This is the secret of the present decadence of Religion in the world of Science.

For Science can hear nothing of a Great Exception. Constructions on unique lines, "portions cut off by an insurmountable barrier from the domain of scientific inquiry," it dare not recognise. Nature has taught it this lesson, and Nature is right. It is the province of Science to vindicate Nature here at any hazard. But in blaming Theology for its intolerance, it has been betrayed into an intolerance less excusable. It has pronounced upon it too soon. What if Religion be yet brought within the sphere of Law?

Law is the revelation of time. One by one slowly through the centuries the Sciences have crystallized into geometrical form, each form not only perfect in itself, but perfect in its relation to all other forms. Many forms had to be perfected before the form of the Spiritual. The Inorganic has to be worked out before the Organic, the Natural before the Spiritual. Theology at present has merely an ancient and provisional philosophic form. By-and-by it will be seen whether it be not susceptible of another.

For Theology must pass through the necessary stages of progress, like any other science. The method of science-making is now fully established. In almost all cases the natural history and development are the same. Take, for example, the case of Geology. A century ago there was none. Science went out to look for it, and brought back a Geology which, if Nature were a harmony, had falsehood written almost on its

face. It was the Geology of Catastrophism, a Geology so out of line with Nature as revealed by the other sciences, that on a priori grounds a thoughtful mind might have been justified in dismissing it as a final form of any science.

And its fallacy was soon and thoroughly exposed. The advent of modified uniformitarian principles all but banished the word catastrophe from science, and marked the birth of Geology as we know it now. Geology, that is to say, had fallen at last into the great scheme of Law. Religious doctrines, many of them at least, have been up to this time all but as catastrophic as the old Geology. They are not on the lines of Nature as we have learned to decipher her. If any one feel, as Science complains that it feels, that the lie of things in the Spiritual World as arranged by Theology is not in harmony with the world around, is not, in short, scientific, he is entitled to raise the question whether this be really the final form of those departments of Theology to which his complaint refers, He is justified, moreover, in demanding a new investigation with all modern methods and resources; and Science is bound by its principles not less than by the lessons of its own past, to suspend judgment till the last attempt is made.

The success of such an attempt will be looked forward to with hopefulness or fearfulness just in proportion to one's confidence in Nature --in proportion to one's belief in the divinity of man and in the divinity of things. If there is any truth in the unity of Nature, in that supreme principle of Continuity which is growing in splendour with every discovery of science, the conclusion is foregone. If there is any foundation for Theology, if the phenomena of the Spiritual World are real, in the nature of things they ought to come into the sphere of Law.

Such is at once the demand of Science upon Religion and the prophecy that it can and shall be fulfilled. The Botany of Linnaeus, a purely artificial system, was a splendid contribution to human knowledge, and did more in its day to enlarge the view of the vegetable kingdom than all that had gone before. But all artificial systems must pass away. None knew better than the great Swedish naturalist himself that his system, being artificial, was but provisional. Nature must be read in its own light.

And as the botanical field became more luminous, the system of Jussieu and De Candolle slowly emerged as a native growth, unfolded itself as naturally as the petals of one of its own flowers, and forcing itself upon men's intelligence as the very voice of Nature, banished the Linnaean system for ever. It were unjust to say that the present Theology is as artificial as the system of Linnaeus; in many particulars it wants but a fresh expression to make it in the most modern sense scientific.

But if it has a basis in the constitution and course of Nature, that basis has never been adequately shown. It has depended on Authority rather than on Law; and a new basis must be sought and found if it is to be presented to those with whom Law alone is Authority. It is not of course to be inferred that the scientific method will ever abolish the radical distinctions of the Spiritual World. True science proposes to itself no such general levelling in any department. Within the unity of the whole there must always be room for the characteristic differences of the parts, and those tendencies of thought at the present time which ignore such distinctions, in their zeal for simplicity really create confusion.

As has been well said by Mr. Hutton: "Any attempt to merge the distinctive characteristic of a higher science in a lower--of chemical changes in mechanical--of physiological in chemical--above all, of mental changes in physiological--is a neglect of the radical assumption of all science, because it is an attempt to deduce representations--or rather misrepresentations--of one kind of phenomenon from a conception of another kind which does not contain it, and must have it implicitly and illicitly smuggled in before it can be

extracted out of it.

Hence, instead of increasing our means of representing the universe to ourselves without the detailed examination of particulars, such a procedure leads to misconstructions of fact on the basis of an imported theory, and generally ends in forcibly perverting the least-known science to the type of the better known." [16] What is wanted is simply a unity of conception, but not such a unity of conception as should be founded on an absolute identity of phenomena. This latter might indeed be a unity, but it would be a very tame one. The perfection of unity is attained where there is infinite variety of phenomena, infinite complexity of relation, but great simplicity of Law.

Science will be complete when all known phenomena can be arranged in one vast circle in which a few well known Laws shall form the radii-- these radii at once separating and uniting, separating into particular groups, yet uniting all to a common centre. To show that the radii for some of the most characteristic phenomena of the Spiritual World are already drawn within that circle by science is the main object of the papers which follow. There will be found an attempt to re-state a few of the more elementary facts of the Spiritual Life in terms of Biology.

Any argument for Natural Law in the Spiritual World may be best tested in the a posteriori form. And although the succeeding pages are not designed in the first instance to prove a principle, they may yet be entered here as evidence. The practical test is a severe one, but on that account all the more satisfactory. And what will be gained if the point be made out? Not a few things. For one, as partly indicated already, the scientific demand of the age will be satisfied. That demand is that all that concerns life and conduct shall be placed on a scientific basis.

The only great attempt to meet that at present is Positivism. But what again is a scientific basis? What exactly is this demand of the age? "By Science I understand," says Huxley, "all knowledge which rests upon evidence and reasoning of a like character to that which claims our assent to ordinary scientific propositions; and if any one is able to make good the assertion that his theology rests upon valid evidence and sound reasoning, then it appears to me that such theology must take its place as a part of science."

That the assertion has been already made good is claimed by many who deserve to be heard on questions of scientific evidence. But if more is wanted by some minds, more not perhaps of a higher kind but of a different kind, at least the attempt can be made to gratify them. Mr. Frederic Harrison, [17] in name of the Positive method of thought, "turns aside from ideal standards which avow themselves to be lawless [the italics are Mr. Harrison's], 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 analyse. 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."

This is a most reasonable demand, and we humbly accept the challenge. We think religious truth, or at all events certain of the largest facts of the Spiritual Life, can be stated "in terms of the rest of our knowledge." We do not say, as already hinted, that the proposal includes an attempt to prove the existence of the Spiritual World. Does that need proof? And if so, what sort of evidence would be considered in court? The facts of the Spiritual World are as real to thousands as the facts of the Natural

World-- and more real to hundreds.

But were one asked to prove that the Spiritual World can be discerned by the appropriate faculties, one would do it precisely as one would attempt to prove the Natural World to be an object of recognition to the senses--and with as much or as little success. In either instance probably the fact would be found incapable of demonstration, but not more in the one case than in the other. Were one asked to prove the existence of Spiritual Life, one would also do it exactly as one would seek to prove Natural Life.

And this perhaps might be attempted with more hope. But this is not on the immediate programme. Science deals with known facts; and accepting certain known facts in the Spiritual World we proceed to arrange them, to discover their Laws, to inquire if they can be stated "in terms of the rest of our knowledge." At the same time, although attempting no philosophical proof of the existence of a Spiritual Life and a Spiritual World, we are not without hope that the general line of thought here may be useful to some who are honestly inquiring in these directions.

The stumbling-block to most minds is perhaps less the mere existence of the unseen than the want of definition, the apparently hopeless vagueness, and not least, the delight in this vagueness as mere vagueness by some who look upon this as the mark of quality in Spiritual things. It will be at least something to tell earnest seekers that the Spiritual World is not a castle in the air, of an architecture unknown to earth or heaven, but a fair ordered realm furnished with many familiar things and ruled by well-remembered Laws.

It is scarcely necessary to emphasise under a second head the gain in clearness. The Spiritual World as it stands is full of perplexity. One can escape doubt only by escaping thought. With regard to many important articles of religion perhaps the best and the worst course at present open to a doubter is simple credulity. Who is to answer for this state of things? It comes as a necessary tax for improvement on the age in which we live. The old ground of faith, Authority, is given up; the new, Science, has not yet taken its place.

Men did not require to see truth before; they only needed to believe it. Truth, therefore, had not been put by Theology in a seeing form--which, however, was its original form. But now they ask to see it. And when it is shown them they start back in despair. We shall not say what they see. But we shall say what they might see. If the Natural Laws were run through the Spiritual World, they might see the great lines of religious truth as clearly and simply as the broad lines of science. As they gazed into that Natural-Spiritual World they would say to themselves, "We have seen something like this before. This order is known to us..."

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