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in the history of the Church of God, to enter on his task, and bent his footsteps to his own home. What befell him there, in what respect his mode of teaching was like or unlike to that of his great contemporary and his yet greater predecessor, will be the subject of my next paper.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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### BIOGENESIS AND DEGENERATION.

A VERY clever and well written book has recently appeared which has rapidly won a wide reputation.<sup>1</sup> No doubt it owes much of its success to a generous review in *The Spectator*—which is always generous when it praises; but no one can well read it without admitting that it thoroughly deserves the success which, but for that generous aid, it might have only more slowly commanded. Its author Mr. Henry Drummond, is at once a Professor of Natural Science and a Preacher of the Gospel; and in an ingenuous Preface he tells us how, to his great surprise, he found the two main spheres of thought through which he moves overlapping and interpenetrating each other. From the days of Bishop Butler downwards, many English divines have traced the most striking and instructive analogies between the natural and the spiritual worlds; but Mr. Drummond, not content with indicating analogies and resemblances, has been moved to essay the much bolder adventure of proving the identity of these worlds, by shewing that the same laws run and hold in both. And if he has not altogether succeeded in this bold adventure—and a complete success was hardly to be expected by the first that sailed into that unknown sea, he has at least done something to prepare the way for those who will come after him.

*Natural Law in the Spiritual World.* By Henry Drummond, F.R.S.E., F.G.S. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

But we need not, nor is it our intention to, repeat the praise which has been already lavished on this remarkable book. Mr. Drummond himself will feel that we are paying him a higher compliment if we indicate one or two points of grave moment, and at least one entire line of thought, on which we differ from him, and shew reason why he should reconsider them.

The line of thought we are about to call in question is worked out mainly in the first and second chapters of his work, which are headed respectively by the words *Biogenesis* and *Degeneration*.

In the first Mr. Drummond takes up the dictum of Science, that life can only spring from life, and shews that this law holds good in the spiritual no less than in the natural world. Time was when men of science, and even eminent men of science, held the theory of spontaneous generation—held, *i.e.* that life is capable of springing into being of itself, of being educed or evolved from that which is without life. And this theory was very welcome to the fanatical believers in Evolution, who reject the very thought of miracle, of supernatural intervention, of the presence, activity, nay, of the very existence of God. It is to the credit of this scientific school; therefore, that they have themselves conducted the experiments which disproved the theory of spontaneous generation; and that such men as Virchow, Huxley, Tyndall, have been foremost in proclaiming that life cannot be evolved from things without life, that it can only spring from a pre-existent life.

After glancing at the experiments by which this theory has been exploded and finally dismissed from the realm of Science, Mr. Drummond proceeds to argue thus. In the *religious*, as in the scientific, world there have been and are advocates and defenders of the theory of spontaneous generation, and advocates and defenders of biogenesis: that is to say, there are those who maintain that *spiritual* life may be

developed, by a natural force or process, in those who are spiritually dead; and, on the other hand, there are those who maintain that this life can only be imparted by a pre-existing Life, that it must in all cases be the gift of a living and quickening Spirit. The one class affirm that a natural man may gradually become better and better, grow more and more virtuous, until he becomes a spiritual man; that he is not dependent on any spiritual energy or force outside of or above himself, that he enters into life by a normal and appropriate development of his native and inherent powers. The other class affirm, on the contrary, that the spiritual man is no mere development of the natural man; that he is and must be a new creature, born from above; that he truly lives only as he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. And of the two, no careful reader of the New Testament will deny that the advocates of Regeneration have its full authority on their side.

Science, then, at least by its wiser representatives, declares that life springs only from life: this is the law of Biogenesis. Religion, at least by its wiser representatives, also declares that life springs only from life: this is the doctrine of Regeneration. The religious doctrine is, therefore, only a specific application of the universal law. As Science asserts that there can be no life which does not spring from life, so Religion asserts that spiritual life can spring only from the touch of a Life already spiritual. It must be born, or begotten, from above; born, or begotten, of the Spirit.

But the advocates of this doctrine of Regeneration, this law of Biogenesis in the spiritual world, have heretofore been compelled, says Mr. Drummond, to rely solely on the authority of Revelation, on certain texts in the Bible. In their conflict with those who maintain that Virtue may *grow* into Religion apart from the quickening touch of the Divine Spirit, they could produce no argument from Nature

or Experience, no argument, therefore, that would avail them with those who do not defer to the authority of texts, or who read them in a different sense. This missing link he holds himself to have supplied in the argument that, as there can be no spontaneous generation of natural life, so also there can be no spontaneous generation of spiritual life.

Nor is he content with this general analogy, this general argument, from Nature. He goes on to define it and give it force by an illustration which plausible as it is, and in some measure true, nevertheless in our judgment really weakens its force and exposes it to the gravest objections. Science, he says, divides the world of Nature into two great kingdoms, the organic and the inorganic. And in affirming the law of Biogenesis, it affirms that the inorganic kingdom is separated from the organic by a gulf which cannot be crossed—at least from the inferior side; that the passage from the mineral to the vegetable or animal kingdom is absolutely and for ever closed—at least to the mineral. “No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any form of energy, nor any evolution can endow any single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. Only by the bending down into this dead world of some living form can these dead atoms be gifted with . . . vitality. Without this preliminary contact with life, they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere for ever.”<sup>1</sup> There is a similar gulf in the human world, between the natural man and the spiritual man. The passage from the natural to the spiritual is

<sup>1</sup> Goethe had considered this, as so many other points, as we learn from the Eckermann *Conversations* (p. 521, Eng. Trans.). The efforts of certain inquirers into nature who, to penetrate the organic world, would ascend through mineralogy, having been mentioned, Goethe replied: “This is a great mistake. In the mineralogical world the simplest, in the organic world the most complex, is the most excellent. We see, too, that these two worlds have quite different tendencies, and that a *stepwise progress from one to the other is by no means to be found.*”

absolutely and for ever closed—on the natural side at least. Just as “the door from the inorganic to the organic is shut, and no mineral can open it, so the door from the natural to the spiritual is shut, and no man can open it. This world of natural men is staked off from the spiritual world by barriers which have never yet been crossed from within. No organic change, no modification of environment, no mental energy, no moral effort, no evolution of character, no progress of civilization can endow any single human soul with the attribute of spiritual life. The spiritual world is guarded from the world next in order beneath it by a law of Biogenesis: *Except a man be born again . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*”

And here it is to be observed that our Lord does not say that, if a man be not renewed in the spirit of his mind, he *will not*, but that he *cannot* enter the Kingdom. “For the exclusion of the spiritually inorganic from the Kingdom of the spiritually organic is not arbitrary. Nor is the natural man refused admission on unexplained grounds. His admission is a scientific impossibility. Except a mineral be ‘born from above’—from the kingdom just above it—it cannot enter the kingdom just above it. And except a man be ‘born from above,’ by the same law he cannot enter the kingdom just above him. There being no passage from one kingdom to another, whether from inorganic to organic, or from natural to spiritual, the intervention of life is a scientific necessity if a stone, or a plant, or an animal, or a man is to pass from a lower to a higher sphere. The plant stretches down to the dead world beneath it, touches its minerals and gases with its mystery of life, and brings them up ennobled and transformed to the living sphere. The breath of God, blowing where it listeth, touches with its mystery of life the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf between the natural and the spiritual, be-

tween the spiritually inorganic and the spiritually organic, endows them with its own high qualities, and develops within them the new and secret faculties by which those who are born again are said to *see the kingdom of God.*"

Now that surely is a striking and very impressive analogy. It is, perhaps, something more than an analogy. At least it gives us a hint of the *identity* of the natural and spiritual worlds, and helps us to understand Carlyle's favourite axiom, "The natural *is* the supernatural." For it is clear that a remarkable and significant harmony exists at this point "between the organic world as arranged by Science and the spiritual world as arranged by Scripture. We find one law guarding the threshold of both worlds, securing that entrance from a lower sphere shall only take place by a direct regenerating act, emanating from the world next in order above. There are not two laws of Biogenesis, one for the natural the other for the spiritual: one law is for both." *Wherever* there is life, it springs from previously existing life. And to find a law which runs in two worlds is to gain at least a presumption that these two worlds are at the bottom one.

For this extension of the law of Biogenesis, this identification of it with the law of Regeneration, we are indebted to Mr. Drummond, and the debt is one to be gratefully acknowledged. But our gratitude should not be blind. And, in our judgment, it would be blind if it led us to overlook the objections to which his exposition of this law, especially on the religious side, fairly lies open. His interpretation of the doctrine of Regeneration as taught by our Lord Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus, for example, leaves much to be desired. It is open to many objections on which our present purpose does not allow us to enter at the length they require and deserve. But, in passing, we may suggest that Bishop Butler's weighty definition of Regeneration, as "not a change of nature, but

a change *in* nature," accords much more nearly than Mr. Drummond's with the general teaching of both Scripture and Experience. We would remind him that He who said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," also said, "Except your *righteousness* exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven," and suggest that if natural virtue, or righteousness, will not of itself grow and develop into spiritual life, it is yet the best preparation for the renewing grace of God, and the condition most likely to secure the quickening influence of the Spirit. We would ask, If men are blind in the sense in which he pronounces them blind, and dead in the sense in which he affirms them to be dead—utterly unable, *i.e.* to see or stir or move, to what end, except to mock their helplessness and misery, does the gospel of the grace of God summon them to awake and arise, that Christ may give them both life and light? And we cannot but express our astonishment that any good man should calmly assume that he is a being of a higher quality, another order, to the great majority of his fellows, even the most virtuous of them; that he is endowed with a mystic life so superior to any which they possess as to place him in another sphere, in a world as high above theirs as the organic kingdom of nature towers above the inorganic, so that, compared with him, they are mere earths and gases. Such very superior persons are in no small danger, one should think, of sinking into Pharisees, and thanking God that they are not as other men ("the rest," "the refuse," of humanity)—the one only class whom our Lord allowed Himself to denounce as "hypocrites," as having a name to live while yet they were dead.

But these are points on which we can only touch and pass by, for a point of even graver moment awaits decision. Had Mr. Drummond been content to prove that the law of Biogenesis runs and holds in the spiritual as well as in the



natural world ; that here, too, life can only spring into being at the touch of Life ; that men must be born again, and can only be raised into a higher sphere of being by the quickening influence of God's Spirit—that Divine Spirit acting immediately on their spirits, or passing to them through the nurture and training they receive from the already quickened spirits of their fellow-men—we should have nothing for him but thanks and praise. For who that knows himself does not know that he cannot depend on himself, or on his brother men, for the life and salvation of his soul ? Who does not know and feel that he cannot in his own strength shake off the clinging curse of sin, cannot rise unaided into the holiness without which no man can see the Lord, but must be redeemed, quickened, and sustained by Him who alone has life in Himself, but who can impart that life in a thousand different ways—alluring us to goodness by our natural virtues and affections or the nurture and admonition of the home, driving us from evil by the stripes which scourge us for our sins, aiding us by his grace in our struggles with our besetting infirmities, speaking to us from and through his Word, meeting and blessing us in every sincere act of worship, opening the eye of faith on the sacred realities and sevenfold splendours of the world invisible, manifesting a love which awakens musical responses of love within our souls, and infusing into our hearts the courage and patience of hope. In all things we hang on God. In Him we live and move and have our being. Apart from Him we have nothing, are nothing.

No assertion of our dependence on God, for life, and breath, and all things, can be too absolute. But when, not content with asserting our absolute dependence on Him who is the Life indeed, Mr. Drummond proceeds to compare the natural man to the inorganic world and the spiritual man to the organic ; when he sinks between them a gulf wholly

impassable from the lower side, impassable even, if his illustration holds, to the voice of prayer and aspiration, and *to draw out the consequences* of that separation between the two, he passes into a region in which we can no longer follow him, and ruins his analogy by overdriving it. For one logical and direct consequence of his argument is, that for the vast majority of men there is no hope nor chance of life. They cannot rise into it by any effort of their own any more than a crystal or a gas can become a plant by any effort of its own. They can only wait, helpless, and impotent even of desire, till the Spirit of God stoops down, and by his gracious touch quickens in them the life of the soul. And as, up at least to this period in the history of man, the vast majority of the race have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, much less felt and consciously responded to his quickening influence, it follows, as the night the day, that there can be no hope for them.

Nor does Mr. Drummond shrink even from this appalling consequence of his argument. He frankly accepts it, and even sets himself, as we shall soon see, to vindicate it as just. He says (pp. 410-12): "The broad impression gathered from the utterances of the Founder of the spiritual kingdom is that the number of organisms to be included in it is comparatively small. The outstanding characteristic of the new Society is to be its selectness. 'Many are called,' said Christ, 'but few are chosen.' . . . The analogy of Nature upon this point is not less striking—it may be added, not less solemn. It is an open secret, to be read in a hundred analogies from the world around us, that of the millions of possible entrants for advancement in any department of Nature, the number ultimately selected for preferment is small. Here also 'many are called, and few are chosen.' The analogies from the waste of seed, of pollen, of human lives, are too familiar to be quoted. But

there are other analogies, wider and more just, which strike deeper into the system of Nature. A comprehensive view of the whole field of Nature discloses the fact that the circle of the chosen slowly contracts as we rise in the scale of being. Some mineral, but not all, becomes vegetable; some vegetable, but not all, becomes animal; some animal, but not all, becomes human; some human, but not all, becomes Divine. Thus the area narrows. At the base is the mineral, most broad and simple; the spiritual at the apex, smallest, but most highly differentiated. So form rises above form, kingdom above kingdom. *Quantity decreases as quality increases.*"

This, then, is the dainty high-polite way in which Science, even when it has clothed itself with Religion, calmly informs us that the vast majority of us are to be damned, or, at least, "cast as rubbish to the void," veiling the horror of its conclusion from itself in these refined and elaborate circumlocutions, speaking with a cool precision and taking a lofty argumentative tone which at first well nigh paralyses the very faculty of remonstrance within us, or tempts us, if we be of a hotter temperament, to break out into savage anathemas against the selfish but "highly differentiated" few who sit on the apex of felicity smiling at the many who meet their helpless doom at its base.

And yet, when we come to weigh and test the argument, what is it worth? Take, first, the analogy from Nature. Is the mineral to be condemned to an endless loss and shame and misery because it never becomes a plant, although it never could become a plant, since no member of the vegetable kingdom graciously stooped down to it, and by the mystic touch of its life kindled life in the inorganic mass? And if not, why is man, or the vast majority of men, to be condemned to that fearful doom because they never responded to a quickening touch which was never vouchsafed them? For, according to the theory before us,

there is *nothing* inorganic, there is no gas or mineral, which, if duly prepared and touched from above, must not rise into the higher life of the vegetable kingdom; and none which *can* rise into that life unless it be duly prepared and touched. And if we are to take the analogy at all, we must take it altogether, and argue that there is nothing human which may not—nay, which must not—become Divine, no natural man who must not become a spiritual man, if only he be quickened by the Spirit of God; while, on the other hand, no such man can possibly become alive unto God if that gracious quickening touch be withheld. Who, then, is to blame if the natural man remain a natural man to the end? Are we to blame *him* for not becoming what, ex-hypothesi, he could no more become than a crystal could change itself into a plant? If any one is to be blamed, are we not driven by this very argument to cast the whole responsibility of his doom on the Spirit who alone could have raised him to life, and yet did not do it?

Obviously, the very moment we put the argument to the proof, it breaks down: for when can a religious argument be said to break down if not when it leads us straight to the unpardonable sin of speaking against the Holy Ghost?

The simple fact is that, for all definite and authoritative teaching on the destiny of man; if we would know whether or not it be the purpose of Almighty God that all his offspring should be ultimately recovered to the noblest and highest kind of life of which they are capable, we must go, not to Nature, but to the Word in which He has revealed the counsels of his will—as, indeed, we do not doubt that Mr. Drummond himself would freely admit. He does go to Scripture, as we have seen; but most of us have also gone to Scripture for ourselves for the solution of this grave problem, and know what it teaches, know, therefore, where his argument is weak. It is weak in that it relies, not on the whole teaching of Him who brought life and immortality

to life, but only on a fraction of it. In the passage we have just cited from his work, he bases himself on the single saying of our Lord, "Many are called, but few are chosen," and even this saying he does not seem to have adequately studied in its connection. Suppose he had started with our Lord's express declaration that, in the sight of God our Father, men are of more value than many sparrows—might not that have thrown some doubt on his inference from the fate of minerals and gases, which are of much less value than the sparrow? Had he gone on to such conspicuous and beloved parables as that of the Shepherd seeking his one lost sheep, although he had ninety and nine safe in the fold, and not desisting from the quest until he had found it—might he not have been led to question whether, when men are concerned, God is indifferent to quantity so that He has quality, and "wastes" them as He "wastes" seed and pollen? Had he marked how the teaching of the parable of the Shepherd is confirmed by that of the Woman seeking her one lost coin, also until she found it,<sup>1</sup> although she had the nine safe in her pocket or her chest; and that of the Father drawing back his prodigal son by the memory of past love, only to lavish upon him a love still more tender and bountiful, although his only other son was always with him and always kept his commandments—would *these* have lent any sanction to his dainty but pitiless euphemisms that "the circle of the chosen contracts as we rise in the scale of being," or that "the outstanding characteristic of the new Society is its selectness," or that "the broad impression gathered from the utterances of the Founder of the spiritual kingdom is that the number of organisms to be included in it is comparatively small"? And had he gone on to study such sayings as these, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all men* unto me," "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of remark that in neither of these Parables does the Speaker add to "until he find it"—"or until he find that he *cannot* find it."

of *the world*," "God our Saviour wills that *all men* should be saved," and, most appropriate of all, "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord *both of the dead and of the living*"—would he not have found it impossible to pen the sentences we have just quoted? might not his doubt have grown upon him until he felt his conclusion to be wholly untenable?

Nature *may* rise in narrowing circles, and care so much for quality as to disregard quantity, and suffer the great mass of her works to perish without attaining the highest life of which they are capable. But if she does—and we doubt it, for surely we have heard from the lips of Science herself that Nature suffers nothing to be lost, but by some secret alchemy converts even things most vile to beneficent and noble uses; but if she does—all we can say is that she belies her Lord and Maker and ours. For, and we have his word for it, *He* wills that no man should perish but that all should live. If she does, moreover, why should we listen to her voice when we have a more clear and a more sure word of testimony to which we may go, even the Word of eternal life? What that Word really teaches on the point in dispute is not to be proved by a few isolated texts, whether the texts Mr. Drummond quotes, or the much larger array which we have quoted. Nor are we at all anxious to urge our own solution of this grave problem, or in any way to forestall the judgment of our readers upon it and the result of their own independent research. All we contend for here is that we *must* go, each for himself, to the Word of God, and not to the analogies of Nature, for our conviction as to what the final destiny of the human race is to be; and that if we have gone to it and studied it for ourselves, there is nothing in Mr. Drummond's argument, able as it is and formidable as it seems, to shake us from the conviction we have reached.

But we may be sure that a man of his mark has not reached so unwelcome and appalling a conclusion as this, without having something to say for it which demands and will repay our best attention. Accordingly we find that in the Chapter which follows his discussion of the law of Biogenesis, he sets himself to vindicate his conclusion, to shew the justice of the doom which he believes to await the majority of the human race.

The heading of this chapter is *Degeneration*, and here he discusses the principle of Reversion to Type. A few words will suffice to indicate the main line of his argument—all the fewer because in a paper which appeared only last month, the Editor of this Magazine dwelt on the true application of this principle to the conduct and fate of men at some length.<sup>1</sup> The argument runs thus. Every creature that has life, and the energies and faculties of life, tends, if it neglect to use and train those faculties, to degenerate towards a lower form of being. Every flower and shrub in our gardens, for example, if it be neglected, deteriorates, and sinks toward the type from which it originally sprang—the rose into the dog-rose, the geranium into the cranesbill; and the more cultivated and complex and beautiful they are the more rapidly do they degenerate. The same law holds good of every variety of pigeon in our dovecotes, and indeed of every animal we have pressed into our service, and the strain of which we have cultivated and improved. Nor does the law cease to operate when we rise to man. Here, too, neglect means degeneration. If he neglect his body, he sinks toward physical disease and death; if he neglect his mind, he sinks toward idiocy and madness; if he neglect his conscience, it runs off into lawlessness and vice. And, in like manner, if a community of men, a nation, neglects its proper culture, wastes its best opportunities, breaks into division against itself, devotes

<sup>1</sup> See "The Sluggard's Garden." Vol. vi. pp. 401-416.

itself mainly, if not exclusively, to conquest, pleasure, or the acquisition of wealth, it sinks in the scale, becomes violent, sensual, sordid and grasping—decays and decays till it is ripe for destruction.

Of this general law of Degeneration Mr. Drummond gives two illustrations from the natural world on which he lays special stress. "There are," he says, "certain burrowing animals—the mole, for instance—which have taken to spending their lives beneath the surface of the ground. And Nature has taken her revenge upon them in a thoroughly natural way—she has closed up their eyes. If they mean to live in darkness, she argues, eyes are obviously a superfluous function. By neglecting them these animals make it clear that they do not want them. And as one of Nature's fixed principles is that nothing shall exist in vain, the eyes are presently taken away or reduced to a rudimentary state."

And again: "When one examines the little *Crustacea* which have inhabited for centuries the lakes of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, one is at first astonished to find these animals apparently endowed with perfect eyes. The pallor of the head is broken by two black pigment specks, conspicuous, indeed, as the only bits of colour on the whole blanched body; and these, even to the casual observer, certainly represent well defined organs of vision. But what do they with eyes in these Stygian waters? *There* reigns an everlasting night. Is the law for once at fault? A swift incision with the scalpel, a glance with a lens, and their secret is betrayed. The eyes are a mockery. Externally, they are organs of vision—the front of the eye is perfect; behind, there is nothing but a mass of ruins. The optic nerve is a shrunken, atrophied, and insensate thread. These animals have organs of vision, and yet they have no vision. They have eyes, but see not." . . . They "have chosen to abide in darkness, therefore they have



become fitted for it. By refusing to see, they have waived the right to see. And Nature has grimly humoured them. Nature had to do it by her very constitution. It is her defence against waste that decay of faculty should immediately follow disuse of function."

With these two capital illustrations Mr. Drummond strengthens his charge against man, and vindicates the judgment of God. And it cannot be denied that from the law of Degeneration, thus illustrated and lit up, he has drawn a very solemn and impressive warning against the abuse, or even the neglect, of any of the faculties which God has given us. While, if his argument be a sound one, if it be true that the majority of men are simply deprived of faculties which they have declined to use, and the possession of which would only unfit them for the condition into which they have fallen, it must also be admitted that he goes far to vindicate the doom which he believes the all-wise Judge will pronounce upon them.

Yet, once more, before we accept his conclusion, let us examine his argument, and see how it hangs together, and whether it will bear the strain he puts upon it.

And surely the first thing that will strike any thoughtful man who brings an open mind to this examination will be, that between these two chapters on *Biogenesis* and *Degeneration*, Mr. Drummond silently and, without a word of warning, wholly shifts his ground; and not only so, but that in the second he pursues a line of argument which flatly contradicts that which he pursued in the first. In the first, the natural man was compared to the *inorganic* kingdom of Nature; and it was argued that just as no member of that kingdom—no mineral, no gas—could live unless it were touched, quickened, transformed by some gracious vital influence from the kingdom above it, so the dead natural man could only be raised to spiritual life as he was touched, quickened, and transformed by a gracious and

vital Power from the Kingdom above him—as he was born again, born of the Spirit. Impotent and helpless, he could only wait until, if ever, the mystic touch, the quickening breath, descended upon him. And as, up to this time at least, the vast majority of the human race have not felt that touch, the inference was inevitable that for them there was no chance nor hope of life. But, now, lest it should seem unjust to doom them to an eternal death for not having responded to a quickening influence which was never vouchsafed them, Mr. Drummond proceeds to justify their doom by the law of Degeneration. Yet the inorganic world does not degenerate because it does not, or in so far as it does not, become organic. No mineral, no gas, reverts to a lower type, or sinks in the scale of being, because it is not raised or changed into a plant. It remains a mineral of the same structure and value, a gas charged with the same potencies. The old circle of analogies, therefore, would not serve his turn. And so, in his second chapter, and to justify the conclusion of the first, he quietly passes away from his old ground, takes up a wholly new set of analogies, and compares the natural man—no longer to inorganic minerals and gases, but to the most highly organized creatures, such as the flowers in our gardens, the birds in our dove-cotes, or the quadrupeds which we have domesticated and enlisted in our service. In the first chapter, we were all on the wrong or lower side of the yawning impassable gulf; but, as we open the second, we find ourselves, without a word to prepare us for so great a change, transported as by an act of magic to the right or higher side of the gulf! *There* we were all dead; *here*, with no resurrection to account for it, we are all alive! There, we were treated as impotent and helpless, without any spark of life; here, we are charged with having neglected our opportunities, wasted our powers, and flung our life away, or suffered it to “fust in us unused.” President Lincoln has taught

us that it is not wise to "swop horses in the middle of a stream;" but who will tell us what we are to think either of the wisdom or the fairness of a logician who secretly shuffles his fundamental premises in the middle of an argument? Does it not look as if he were so bent, if not on proving his indictment against man, at least on snatching a verdict against him, as to be a little indifferent to the means he employs for that end?

Assuredly that impression is not weakened when we mark that, even after he has shifted his natural man from the inorganic kingdom of Nature to the organic, Mr. Drummond cannot rely on the broad and general indications of this higher kingdom, but has to narrow in his view in the strangest way, and to select his evidence with a care which of itself might have led him to doubt its worth. For, as we have seen, he does not cite into court (with two exceptions, which we will examine in a moment) the trees which grow in every forest, or the animals which roam through their shade, or the flowers which spring in every field and hedgerow; but the trees of the orchard, grafted by the hand of man, "voluptuous garden roses" and highly differentiated geraniums which have elaborately responded to the gardener's skilful touch, and the animals which man has bred into new and specialized strains and made in large measure dependent on himself. The trees of the forest, which are not less noble, though they are more numerous, than those of the orchard; the wild flowers, which every artist holds to be far more beautiful than the proud and perfumed beauties of our hothouse harems; and the wild beasts, which all the world admit to be at least as strong and comely as those which men have domesticated and "improved"—all these, to which surely any sound and fair reasoner would have turned for evidence, would not have yielded the evidence Mr. Drummond desired; for *they* do not degenerate if left to themselves, but rather, if there be any truth in the

scientific axiom on the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, develop into new strength and beauty. The organic world does not, *as a rule*, tend to revert to a lower type; and hence Mr. Drummond has to turn to a selected corner of it for the testimony he requires, and to collect his illustrations from the fate of the cultivated and complex plants and animals which man has coerced into his service, not without thereby rendering them more delicate and susceptible than they were, and more dependent on a care above their own. These, indeed, lend some colour to his forebodings of the doom of man, and so these alone are brought forward; and from the fate of *the few* in the organic kingdom Mr. Drummond ventures to infer that of *the many* in the human world.

And yet, do even these, when duly considered, really sustain his argument? Do they not rather turn round and testify against it? Beyond all doubt, our garden roses, our pigeons, our sheep and cattle, our dogs and horses, tend to revert to their original, and perhaps also to lower, types, if they are neglected. But neglected—*by whom?* By themselves, or by a being higher than themselves? It is not by self-neglect, but by the neglect of man, that they degenerate, if they do degenerate. The inference is obvious. And yet Mr. Drummond would shrink with horror from fairly working out his own analogy, and arguing that if man sinks toward a lower type, it is not because he neglects himself, but because he is neglected by a Being higher than himself, a Being whom in such a connection of thought we do not care to name.

But two of his illustrations *are* taken from the purely natural world—the world as left to itself and untouched by man, that of the mole and that of the blind fishes in the Mammoth Cave. These, therefore, we must examine with closer care.

The mole is not a domesticated animal. It is not by the

training or interference of man that it has learned to burrow and seek its food below the surface of the earth. And hence it may seem that here at least Mr. Drummond has Nature on his side. But has he? I am not a palæontologist, and I cannot therefore say whether the fossils yield any evidence in favour of his assumption that the mole was meant to live, or that he and his like ever had the power of living, above the surface of the ground, that it has "taken" to live below the surface; and that, as the due reward of its base love of darkness, it has lost the faculty of vision. I am not even naturalist enough to know whether or not the mole is really blind; but I observe that a well-known naturalist, in an essay on the mole contributed to one of the magazines for last month, asserts that this "dark gentleman in a velvet cloak," so far from being "all dark," has, when he comes to the surface, a sufficient power of sight to enable him to select and shape his course.<sup>1</sup> But whether or not the mole be blind, it is beyond all doubt that, not by its sunken eye alone, but by the whole structure of its frame, and, above all, by the structure and enormous muscular power of its fore-feet, it is exquisitely adapted to the conditions in which it lives, and for the useful function which it subserves. Many a broad acre which now bears a valuable harvest would be barren, were not the mole driven, by a hunger so voracious that he must satisfy it every three or four hours or die, to an incessant quest for the grubs and wireworms that would else eat up the springing crops by the root. If, therefore, we regard him fairly, with an eye which embraces his function and the whole series of his structural adaptations to that function, we may well believe, not that the mole by some degenerate bias of his blood has "taken" to burrow beneath the soil, or that he has chosen to live in darkness and lost his eyes by neglecting them, but that he was from the first intended

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. G. Wood, in *Longman's Magazine* for December, 1883.

by his Maker for the conditions in which we find him, and that in doing his useful work he is obeying his Maker's will. Or, to use a more scientific terminology, we may say, that by structure and function Nature seems to have ordained from the beginning that the mole should burrow in the dark. And if that be so, what becomes of all Mr. Drummond's figurative language about Nature "grimly humouring" its love of darkness, and "taking her revenge" on a creature which shewed that it did not want eyes, by closing or removing them? Is Nature—or, as "Nature is but the name of an effect whose cause is God"—is God so unjust as first to ordain one of his creatures to live and work in the dark, and then to condemn and punish him for submitting to an ordinance he could not resist?

Be that as it may, even for the sake of his argument, Mr. Drummond would not affirm that the moles of the present generation, or of countless generations back, are responsible for the deprivation under which they suffer, if it be a deprivation. They are simply what they were born. With them structure and instinct are both hereditary. It is not *they* who "took" to burrowing under ground, but their forefathers, or perhaps some great and common forefather of them all. Would it be just, then, to condemn *them* to an eternal and uncompensated loss, and, much more, to condemn them to an everlasting torture and shame, because they are simply what their ancestor or ancestors made them, *i.e.* because they are what they must be? And if not, how should it be just to condemn men purely for the very same fault?

That men suffer for the sins of their fathers, that we all inherit a certain bias toward evil from the first father of us all, is affirmed by Reason and Experience no less than by Holy Writ, though even that very suffering *may be* disciplinary and remedial. But does Reason pronounce it just that men should die everlastingly for the sin of their

fathers, whether of the third or fourth generation back or the thirtieth and fortieth? Does Holy Writ really affirm, despite the sound of certain familiar but isolated texts and the use that has been made of them, that we must all die, and die for ever, because of Adam's transgression? On the contrary, in a thousand different ways and by the whole spirit of its teaching, it affirms that every man shall be judged according to his own deeds, whether good or bad, and answer for himself alone to the great Master before whom we must all stand or fall, but who is in very deed able to make us stand. It meets the old godless and inveterate tradition, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," with the flat contradiction, "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die. The son shall *not* bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon *him*!" Nay, rising high above the rigours of strict law, it adds the merciful assurance, "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die: all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not (so much as) be mentioned unto him; for his righteousness that he hath done he shall live."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Drummond's second illustration, that of the *Crustacea* in the Mammoth Cave, is even more inapt for his purpose than that of the mole, and may be more completely turned against him; for while it is open to all the objections of the former illustration, and to the same reply, it is exposed to objections and retorts peculiar to itself. Nevertheless we cannot regret that he has used it. For we are glad to have an opportunity at last of saying a good word for these

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel xviii. 20-22. The whole chapter is nothing else than an eloquent and heart-piercing application of the truth contained in these words.

innocent, though much blamed, fellow-creatures. We have long felt a profound sympathy and pity for them. The eye of the moralist seems to be for ever upon them, and his frown. With their poor blanched bodies and sightless eyeballs—in themselves, one should think, an appeal for gentleness and compassion—they are always being held up as a terrible example, as a warning that the ways of transgressors are hard. Even Mr. Drummond speaks of them as having “*chosen to abide in darkness*” and as becoming fitted to the lot they have so basely chosen, and hurls against them the reproach that “*by refusing to see, they have waived the right*” and lost the power to see, although, as a man of science and a logician he should know that these are mere figures of rhetoric, and that, save in these misleading rhetorical figures, the unhappy denizens of the Kentucky cave lend no support to his argument. For the fish which now inhabit those dark lakes did *not* choose their lot. They were born and bred to it, and could no more escape it than the Ethiopian can change his skin. They, too, are suffering for the sins of their fathers—if at least their fathers were guilty of the base choice attributed to them. But were they? On the contrary, they were carried into darkness by forces which it was impossible for them to resist. The very catastrophe or convulsion of Nature which sank those lakes so deep swept *them* into the dark abyss, or the very laws by which this Cave were formed conducted them into it. That they have cheerfully adapted themselves to so cruel a fate, that they contrive to live under it and make the best of it, should win for them our sympathy and respect rather than bring on them our condemnation. How can we blame them for not having resisted forces which they could not resist? To condemn them for submitting to conditions which they did not select, to hold them up as sinners above all other fish in the American waters, is simply to add our insult to the injury



of Nature. I, for one, must rather admire the courageous tenacity with which they have clung to life and retained at least the rudiments of eyes through centuries of darkness and deprivation. And I hold it far more logical, as well as far more generous, to argue that if as the result of one catastrophe over which they had no control their optic nerve has shrunk to an insensitive thread, by another and more gracious catastrophe, that shall restore them to light, they may yet recover the precious faculty of vision of which, for no sin of their own and by no choice of their own, they have been deprived.

And if this analogy—which we did not choose, be it remembered, but which Mr. Drummond has offered us—is to hold in a higher sphere, must we not infer from it, not that the vast majority of men will be doomed to an eternal loss and misery, because they suffer from a catastrophe from which they could not escape; but that mere justice demands that a real and free act of choice should yet be open to them, and even that another and more gracious catastrophe should await them, by which they will be raised into larger and happier conditions, conditions in which they too may come to see and welcome the light, to thrive and develop new powers in it, before any final sentence be passed upon them? If we suffer for the sin of Adam or the sins of our fathers, so that, with all the outward show of eyes, we yet cannot see God and live, are we to blame therefor? If, by some irresistible bias or law of our nature, we have grown so accustomed to darkness as to have lost the very faculty of vision, may we not hope, may we not in common justice expect and demand that, by some such catastrophe as death itself, should none occur before, a light shall be let in upon our darkness which will develop that faculty within us, and raise us to a state in which we may both see and live, if we will?

We do not press this analogy. We do not rely upon it.

We simply plead that it tells just as fairly, nay, more fairly, in favour of the conclusion which Mr. Drummond rejects than in favour of that which he appears so eager, and even too eager, to enforce. We have seen how he snatches at every analogy in Nature which seems to sustain his doctrinal inference, however inconsistent one may be with another, however slender or dubious may be the support it lends him, however easily or justly it may be turned against himself. The Agnostic, in his despair, affirms that the immortal life of man is only "an hypothesis based on contradictory probabilities." And now that we have examined his reasoning point by point, and considered the analogies on which it is founded, we shall not be doing Mr. Drummond an injustice we think, if, in conclusion, we sum up our verdict upon it in the sentence, that his argument for the eternal death of man is only "an hypothesis based on contradictory *improbabilities*."

Not that we thereby assume either his doctrine of death and damnation to be false, or the opposite doctrine of life and salvation to be true. All that we here contend for is, that the ultimate destiny of the human race is not to be either proved or disproved by arguments drawn from the analogies of Nature, but can only be ascertained by a patient, open-minded, and reverent study of the inspired Word. The conclusion to which that sacred Word leads us is the only conclusion to which we can trust, and on which we can rely. And as this is a point on which we do not doubt that Professor Drummond entirely agrees with us, we gladly take leave of him while yet we are in full accord with him. And indeed we should be sorry if our strictures on his first two chapters left the impression on the mind of any of our readers, that there is little or nothing in the book which they are likely to approve and admire. No doubt his Theology is questionable at times. So also, we must add if we are to be fair, is his Science. For he is

constantly representing the good creatures of God, vegetable and animal, as transgressors of a law by which they are bound. And yet *no true physical law ever was, is, or can be broken*; while, to bring his organic kingdom under his quasi-moral law, he is obliged to endow his *flora* with will and his *fauna* with conscience; for the former are always "choosing," "meaning," etc., the latter, always doing wrong or right. Like Æsop, in short, he turns all his animals and plants into men and women, and sets them to talk to us, and, worst of all, to *preach at us*. Nevertheless, there is much in this book which is striking, original, suggestive, at once finely conceived and eloquently expressed—notably in the two chapters on Parasitism and Semi-Parasitism; much which will be most helpful to both cleric and laymen; and we strongly recommend our readers to peruse and judge it for themselves.

ALMONI PELONI.

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## THE REFORMERS AS EXPOSITORS.

### I. ERASMUS.

IN previous papers I have endeavoured to give the thoughtful reader some means of estimating the value of the Scholastic Exegesis which prevailed in Europe from the days of Bede († A.D. 735) down to those of Gabriel Biel, at the close of the fifteenth century. I will now endeavour in one or two papers to point out the immense change which took place in the methods of Biblical exposition at the period of the Reformation.

Such changes are rarely sudden and revolutionary. They are usually the slow outgrowth of views which have long before found isolated expression. The Reformers must be regarded as the founders of the modern system of Interpretation, but they were themselves indebted to the precursors