

**THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE; OR
PHYSICAL SPECULATIONS
ON A FUTURE STATE, PP. 1-
210. [LONDON-1875]**

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The Unseen Universe; Or Physical Speculations on a Future State, pp. 1-210. [London-1875] by
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THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE.

Stewart, Balfour



THE
UNSEEN UNIVERSE
OR
PHYSICAL SPECULATIONS
ON A
FUTURE STATE

— the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are
not seen are eternal.

THIRD EDITION.



London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1875.

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Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast *the blessed hope of everlasting life*, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Edinburgh University Press:

T. AND A. CONSTABLE, PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY.

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

WE have reason to think that notwithstanding all we have said, the position we take is not yet clearly understood, and we would therefore utilise the Preface to our Third Edition to put ourselves right with the public on this vital point.

To begin with the scientific side of our argument, we must once more make the statement that it is not we who are the dogmatists, but rather that school of scientific men who assert the incompatibility of science with Christianity.

Persistent as they have been in their endeavours to close the door leading from the seen to the unseen, we as resolutely maintain that it must be left open.

This class take credit to themselves for having thus barred the entrance to a throng of superstitious fancies which would inevitably rush through an open avenue—forgetting that they have by the same act barred the way to all the higher aspirations of man.

But though we have founded no argument for immortality on the existence of these higher aspirations, we cannot allow our adversaries to bar the way upon the plea that it would inevitably be the resort of unworthy passengers.

If it be the King's highway it must be left open; if the

unseen universe be a reality, surely we are not to dismiss it from our minds lest some people might entertain absurd views regarding its relation to the present visible universe. Such fancies are no new thing in the progress of knowledge. When two things are known to exist, we may have ten thousand erroneous hypotheses regarding their mutual relations, but only one true theory.

In the next place, we would say one word to that religious school which is more particularly affected by our present inquiry,—we mean the school who assert the resurrection of our material bodies, and a grossly material future state.

We have endeavoured to explain to this class of men that their belief is inconsistent with the integrity of that Principle of Continuity which underlies not only all scientific inquiry, but all action of any kind in this world of ours.

Under these circumstances such men have three honest alternatives before them.

In the first place they may acknowledge the truth of our position and change their views; or, secondly, they may combat our argument regarding the alleged incompatibility of their position with the Principle of Continuity; or, lastly, they may decline to accept this scientific principle in matters which concern their faith. What we complain of is, that the members of this school have chosen none of these alternatives, but have rather attempted to brand us as infidels and materialists, apparently forgetting (as usual) that such a method of conducting a discussion is neither Christ-like nor convincing.

But while one class of religious men have tried to brand us with these names, those of another school consider our theology narrow and gloomy. We reply to these men that we do not pretend to be theologians in any sense of the word. Our position in this respect has been greatly misunderstood. We are, no doubt, endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation between science and religion. In order to accomplish this we must first find out what is the fundamental principle of science, next what is the fundamental creed of the great majority of Christians, and then endeavour to show that the two are not incompatible with each other. In carrying out this process we have been led to regard the Principle of Continuity as the great law which regulates scientific inquiry, and there cannot be a doubt that the Old and New Testaments are regarded as authoritative expositions of religious truth by the great majority of the Church of Christ.

Now we find that the expressions in the Scriptures regarding the future of man and the constitution of the unseen world, taken in their obvious, if not absolutely literal meaning, are not inconsistent with scientific deductions from the Principle of Continuity.

We know very well that, especially of late years, a multitude of religious schools have risen up who take many of these expressions in a non-literal and far from obvious acceptation, and who, perhaps, do not accord the same authority to the writers as was formerly done. Into the disputes between these various religious schools we do not pretend to enter, nor do we see that the Shibboleths of

such schools can be affected by our arguments, inasmuch as their discussions have, in the great majority of cases, nothing whatever to do with Physical principles. They are rather founded on historical, or moral, or metaphysical considerations, all of which are foreign to our argument.

Having no pretensions to a title which we certainly do not covet, we trust that we shall no longer be regarded as theologians either of a narrow and gloomy, or a lax and heretical school, or indeed of any school whatsoever.

September 1875.