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### Creation: The Reign of Law

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

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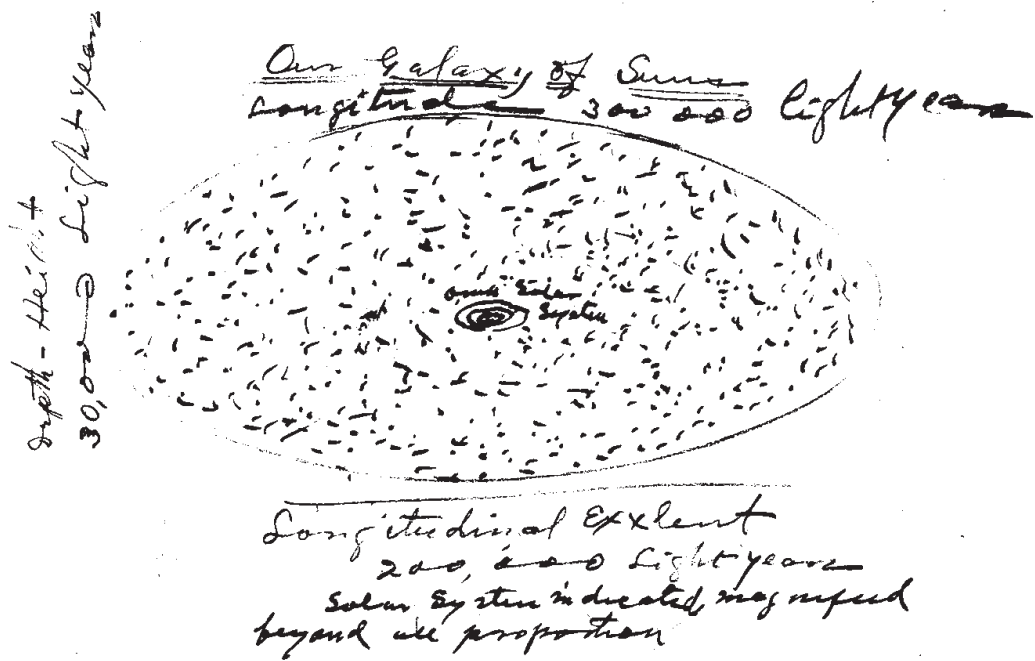
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**“Our Galaxy of Suns.”** Here Roberts provides the dimensions of our galaxy as 300,000 x 200,000 x 30,000 light years. Our solar system is shown in the center. Roberts notes: “Solar system indicated magnified beyond all proportion.”

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*What is creation?* The next question that logically rises to meet our inquiry is: how came all these galaxy-universes, solar systems and planets and their satellites into existence? By chance? By creative decree of harmonized Intelligences—God? Or by self-evolution from forces within the chaotic elements—automatic creation? The universe coming into existence by chance may be dismissed at once, not only as altogether unlikely but positively unbelievable, the one fact of order in the universe rendering it so; and with that observation that division of the inquiry may be closed ere it is opened.

Committed as we already are in these pages to the existence of limitless space, and eternal duration; to the eternal existence of matter and energy, and mind or spirit, it follows that “creation” can only consist of certain events or changes in, and within, these eternal existences. That creation is not a bringing forth of something from nothing, but a transmutation of one form of substance into another form. As for example, water is caused, or “created” by a union of hydrogen and oxygen—both gaseous substances—in certain definite proportions. These gases are changed in their nature by being united in the proportion of two volumes of hydrogen to one volume of oxygen; and changed from gases to liquid. But the water is not created or caused from nothing, but from these two preexisting gases; and whatever should effect the bringing together of these two gases in this proportion, would be the “cause” or “creator” of water; the gases themselves, however, being “con-causes” since the water could not exist but for them, hence they enter into the causation of the water.

Creation, therefore, with those who accept the eternal existence—and therefore the co-eternal existence—of matter, force, and mind, can only regard “creation” as events or changes wrought in an eternal universe. “Creation” thus conceived, while it would never mean “create” in the sense of bringing into existence force or matter or mind (spirit), yet it might be conceived of as bringing into new relations

matter and force; and bring into existence new combinations, which would really bring into being new things or new conditions. Even “mind” or “spirit” might be brought into such relationships with matter as to be an indwelling force in varied life forms, influencing the trend of things in the universe tremendously, bringing about awe-inspiring results, changing the whole aspect of a universe, giving it a development worthy [of] the highest order of intelligence, and imparting to it a definite object of achievement.

It is not in this chapter, however, that we have designed to discuss at length the nature of the universe, and the subject of creation: that theme is reserved for a later chapter. Here we merely bring the subject to the reader’s attention to preserve the natural sequence of thought development, hence so much of passing surface comment on the existence of the wonderful universe and how it may have been wrought to be, as it now is.

*The reign of law.* A subject more pertinent at this stage of our unfolding theme is the control or governance of the universe—this immensity—this eternal thing! Thoughtful minds are ready to say and do say that the impressive thing about the universe is not really its immensity or its eternity, but the fact of order within it, a thing which seems to be of its essence, or a quality of it. Professor Frank C. Moulton, of the University of Chicago, whose lecture before the American Association for the Promotion of Science (Dec. 31, 1925) we have already quoted on the extent and greatness of the universe, has this to say also on the “orderliness” of the universe:

The impressive thing to the astronomers is not the magnitude of the ⟨our⟩ galaxy, nor the long periods of time during which stars exist, nor the tremendous forces of nature; but the most impressive thing ⟨to him,⟩ is that all this vast universe which we have been able to explore is found to be orderly. The orderliness of the universe is the foundation on which science is built. It is the thing that enables us to understand the present, to look back over the past, and to penetrate the remote future. This discovery more than compensates us for the relatively unimportant position that man occupies physically.<sup>1</sup>

***Order: The evidence of a reign of law.*** “The orderly movement of the heavens,” says John W. Draper,

could not fail in all ages to make a deep impression on thoughtful observers—the rising and setting of the sun; the increasing or diminishing light of the day; the waxing and waning of the moon; the

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<sup>1</sup>Moulton [source not found].

return of the seasons in their proper courses; the measured march of the wandering planets in the sky—what are all these, and a thousand such, but manifestations of an orderly and unchanging procession of events? The faith of early observers in this interpretation may perhaps have been shaken by the occurrence of such a phenomenon as an eclipse, a sudden and mysterious breach of the ordinary course of natural events; but it would be resumed in tenfold strength as soon as the discovery was made that eclipses themselves recur, and may be predicted.

Astronomical predictions of all kinds depend upon the admission of this fact—that there never has been and never will be any intervention in the operation of natural laws. The scientific philosopher affirms that the condition of the world at any given moment is the direct result of its condition in the preceding moment, and the direct cause of its condition in the subsequent moment.<sup>2</sup>

***Authorities on the reign of law.*** In the remainder of the chapter above quoted, Draper traces the struggle between the idea of government by special providence and government by “unvarying law,” until the latter triumphs in modern thought and science.

To the same purpose Andrew D. White, once professor of history at Cornell University, and president of the university for twenty-five years, published his great work, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*. The title of a few of the chapters will show the drift of the thought: “From Creation to Evolution,” “From ‘Signs and Wonders’ to Law in Heaven,” “From Genesis to Geology,” “From Magic to Chemistry and Physics,” “From Miracles to Medicine,” and so following.

John Fiske of Harvard, in his *Studies in Religion*, says:

We have so far spelled out the history of creation as to see that all has been done in strict accordance with law. . . . So beautiful is all this orderly coherence, so satisfying to some of our intellectual needs, that many minds are inclined to doubt if anything more can be said of the universe than that it is a Reign of Law, an endless aggregate of coexistences and sequences.<sup>3</sup>

This last suggestion of Fiske’s, however, is a thought against which the reader should brace his mind, for the universe, however completely under a reign of law, is something more than law, and the “reign” of it, even if there is added Fiske’s qualifying words of “an endless aggregate of coexistences and sequences.” For a reign of law observed in the universe suggests something more of which the reign of law is but ~~the effect~~ ***a part and not the whole***; namely, Mind,

<sup>2</sup>Draper, *Conflict between Religion and Science*, 229–30.

<sup>3</sup>Fiske, *Studies in Religion*, 337–38.

Intelligence. The reign of law should rather be conceived as the means through which Intelligence is working to the achievement of some high purpose.

***Reign of law in the spiritual world.*** Henry Drummond, in 1893, published his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* with a view, as the title suggests, of bringing the phenomena of the spirit-world into harmony with the modern scientific conceptions that obtain respecting the natural world. His self-imposed task was to “demonstrate the naturalness of the supernatural”; that the natural and the spiritual world are one. Drummond’s conception was a noble one, and resulted in the production of a very notable and convincing book, though meeting in some quarters with the impatience that attaches to works of its class, viz., the class that attempts to work out harmony between science and religion, or between the natural and the spiritual world.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of law itself implies the possibility of disorder, which must result from infraction of law, that is, a departure from or violation of law. But “that which is governed by law,” it may be reasonably supposed, will be preserved by law, “and perfected and sanctified by the same” (D&C 88:34).

*The intrusion of “miracles.”* In all this about the reign of law the question may arise as to the intrusion of “miracles” into the scheme of things. If the universe is governed by law, does the universal reign of law permit of “miracles,” or acts of special providence, which are usually of a nature that they apparently interfere with existing law? For a miracle is regarded as something that happens in violation of law, or by the supervening of it. A miracle is defined as “an event or effect

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<sup>4</sup>Thus Andrew D. White, in his *Warfare of Science with Theology*, speaking of the phases of theological attack upon science, represents the third and the last—as “an attempt” at compromise—“compromise by means of far-fetched reconciliations of textual statements with ascertained fact,” 1:218. That Drummond himself was aware that these “attempts at compromise” of the “conflict” between science and religion, or the “natural and spiritual world,” is evident from his preface, where he says:

No class of works is received with more suspicion I had almost said derision, than those which deal with Science and Religion. Science is tired of reconciliations between two things which never should have been contrasted; religion is offended by the patronage of an ally which it professes not to need; and the critics have rightly discovered that, in most cases where Science is either pitted against Religion or fused with it, there is some fatal misconception to begin with as to the scope and province of either. (Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spirit World*, v.)

contrary to the established constitution and course of things, or a diversion from the known laws of nature.” Renan, the great French writer, defines a miracle to be not simply the inexplicable, it is a formal derogation from recognized laws in the name of a particular desire. “It is not therefore in the name of this or that philosophy,” he continues, “but in the name of constant experience that we banish miracles from history. We do not say the miracle is impossible. We say there has been hitherto no miracle performed.”<sup>5</sup>

*Miracle merged under law.* This resolving of miracles into events or effects contrary to the established constitution and course of things, or a deviation from the known laws of nature, is a wrong viewpoint. What is especially faulty in this definition of miracles is that they are held to be outside of or contrary to the laws of nature. Let us examine this. Two hundred years ago the only motive powers known to ocean navigators were wind and the ocean currents. Suppose at that time the old mariners had seen one of our modern ocean steamers running against both ocean currents and the wind and, withal, making better speed in spite of both wind and tide than the old-time sailing vessel could with both wind and tide in its favor. What would have been the effect of such a sight on the mind of the old-time sailor? “It’s a miracle!” he would have exclaimed; that is, it would have been to him “an effect contrary to the constitution and course of things,” “a derogation from recognized law.” But would such a thing, to us who know something of the force of steam, be contrary to the laws of nature? No, it is simply the employment of a force in nature of which the old-time mariner was ignorant; while it would have been a “miracle” to him, to us it is merely the application of a comparatively new discovered force of nature, and it is now so common that we cease to look upon it with wonder.

So with many things that people now in ignorance call “miracles”: the healing of the sick, restoring the blind to sight, making the lame to walk, through the exercise of faith; and the resurrection of the dead—all these instead of being in derogation from ~~organized~~ **recognized** law, may yet turn out to be simply the application of laws of which we are as yet in ignorance. As urged by George Rawlinson, “miraculous interpositions on fitting occasions may be as much a regular, fixed, and established rule of . . . government as the working ordinarily by what are called natural laws.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, what men in their ignorance call miracles, are doubtless the results of application of higher laws or

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<sup>5</sup>Renan, *Life of Jesus*. Wilbour, trans., 44.

<sup>6</sup>Rawlinson [quote not found].



forces of nature not yet learned by men, and miracles are to be viewed not as happenings contrary “to the established constitution and course of things,” under a universal reign of law, but as part of the not yet understood application of law to things and conditions that seem to produce effects that are in derogation of the ordinary course of the natural order of things. From this viewpoint the integrity of a universal reign of law is not incompatible with what may be regarded as Mind interposition, or acts of Providence.

*Destructive forces as under law.* When a reign of law is conceived as governing in the physical world, then the conception must include the destructive, or disintegrating forces as operating under law as well as the constructive or integrating forces, else the reign of law would not be universal. On the subject of destructive forces being operative in the universe Ernst Haeckel has the following vivid passage in his *Riddle of the Universe*:

While new cosmic bodies arise and develop out of rotating masses of nebula in some parts of the universe, in other parts old, extinct, frigid suns come into collision, and are once more reduced by the heat generated to the condition of nebulae. . . . While minute and then larger bodies are being formed by this pyknotic (condensing) process in one part of space, and the intermediate ether<sup>a</sup> increases its strain, the opposite process—the destruction of cosmic bodies by collision—is taking place in another quarter.

The immense quantity of heat which is generated in this mechanical process of the collision of swiftly moving bodies represents the new kinetic energy which effects the movement of the resultant nebulae and the construction of new rotating bodies. The eternal drama begins afresh.<sup>7</sup>

It is clear that the building of suns and the building of worlds is a process . . . in which the original matter must undergo transformation. The process may be continuous and may extend through infinite time. The collision of suns (which could result no otherwise than in destruction of their world system) may have produced nebulae and

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<sup>a</sup>Ether was the term used by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century physicists to describe an energy field that keeps the planets in motion and holds them in relative position to each other. Nineteenth-century science used the concept of ether in explaining the transmission of light between moving bodies, though these scientists were unable to measure the relative velocity of the ether. Mary Hesse, “Ether,” in Paul Edwards, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 3:66-69.

<sup>7</sup>*Riddle of the Universe*, 240-43. [Significantly, the ellipsis in the second line of the third paragraph stands for the words “of evolution,” which Roberts apparently omitted on purpose.]



those nebulae in turn may gradually develop themselves into suns again. It seems reasonably certain that nebulae are the stuff from which the stars are made.<sup>8</sup>

~~*The Spiritual World Under A Reign of Law.*~~ This is not the place for the discussion of the application of this reign of law idea to morals, or to the realm of the things of the spirit, or of mind; that will come later; but we may so far premise as to say that when we reach those realms of discussion we shall find the spiritual and ethical world as universally under the dominion of the reign of law as the physical universe.

***Modern revelation to Joseph Smith on the universe and the reign of law.*** It is my general policy in the thought-development of my theme to hold in reserve the introduction of the teachings of Joseph Smith with reference to the subject matter of these introductory chapters, but just here, what Joseph Smith said in part on this subject of the extent of the universe ***and the reign of law in that universe***, is so pertinent, and precedes in time of utterance the best and highest scientific pronouncements upon these matters, that I can not withhold from quoting a few brief passages from his revelations, noting the date at which they were set forth:

There are many kingdoms (meaning by that worlds and systems of worlds-galaxies-universes, and all that in them is); for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. (D&C 88:37)

This is a statement which represents the universe as being quite as extensive and as all comprehending as does Haeckel's "Law of Substance" (quoted in full, chapter 3 above), though couched in different phrase from that used by the German scientist, who states it as follows: "The extent of the universe is infinite and unbounded; it is empty in no part, but everywhere filled with substance."<sup>9</sup>

***Again the Revelation:***

And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. All beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified. For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light. . . . (A law has been given) unto all things, by which they move in their times and seasons; And their courses are fixed, even the courses of the heavens and the earth, which comprehend the earth and all the planets. And they give light

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<sup>8</sup>Kaempffort, *Science-History of the Universe* 1:318.

<sup>9</sup>Haeckel, *Riddle of the Universe*, 242.

to each other in their times and in their seasons, in their minutes, in their hours, in their days, in their weeks, in their months, in their years. (D&C 88:38-40, 42-44)

In these terms is the reign of law proclaimed by Joseph Smith and I know of no more emphatic pronouncement upon this subject than the above quotation. The unique thing about it is that it is set forth as a revelation from God, given in December 1832; Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* was published in 1899!

One further item in the *Prophet's* statement is particularly significant; namely, the passage, "Unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions," implying that even law itself is subject to or limited by law. A bold conception this, especially when it is found in a writing formulated a century ago, before men began to voice such conceptions. This same idea of law itself having limits and bounds, or law itself being subject to law, Henry Drummond, one of the recognized thinkers of the 19th century, also expressed, but following Joseph Smith by more than half a century. He said: "One of the most striking generalizations of recent  $\langle$ times $\rangle$  [science] is that even Laws have their Law."<sup>10</sup> John Fiske also says: "In order to be always sure that we are generalizing correctly, we must make the generalizing process itself a subject of generalization,"<sup>11</sup> which is but a recognition of Drummond's idea, that "Laws have their Law," and Joseph Smith's—"to every law there are certain bounds also, and conditions."

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<sup>10</sup>Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, 37.

<sup>11</sup>Fiske [source not given].

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* is especially commended; Moses and Abraham.