



HENRY DRUMMOND 1851 – 1897

Born in Sterling, Scotland in 1851, Henry Drummond was a man of varied talents. Perhaps best remembered as a gifted evangelist who assisted Dwight L. Moody during his revival campaigns, he was also a lecturer in natural science. Although he never received a degree from Edinburgh University, he was an ordained minister and a professor of theology.

However, a meditation he wrote in 1874 that illuminated the importance of 1 Corinthians 13 titled *The Greatest Thing in the World* is the one that assured he would be remembered by later generations. Widely read and quoted during his lifetime, it went on to sell over 12 million copies and it continues today to influence people to follow God's two great commandments: to love God and to love each other.

In 1877 he became lecturer on natural science in the Free Church College, which enabled him to combine all the pursuits for which he felt a vocation. His studies resulted in his writing *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, the argument of which is that the scientific principle of continuity extends from the physical world to the spiritual. It sold 70,000 copies in five years and made him famous. However, before the book was published in 1883, an invitation from the African Lakes Company drew Drummond away to Central Africa.

Upon his return in the following year he found himself famous. Large bodies of serious readers, among the religious and the scientific classes alike, discovered in *Natural Law* the common standing-ground which they needed. Drummond continued to be actively interested in missionary and other movements among the Free Church students.

In 1888 he published *Tropical Africa*, a valuable digest of information. In 1890 he travelled in Australia, and in 1893 delivered the Lowell Lectures at Boston. It had been his intention to reserve them for mature revision, but an attempted piracy compelled him to hasten their publication, and they appeared in 1894 under the title of *The Ascent of Man*. Their object was to vindicate for altruism, or the disinterested care and compassion of animals for each other, an important part in effecting the survival of the fittest, a thesis previously maintained by Professor John Fiske.

Drummond's health failed shortly afterwards (he had suffered from bone cancer for some years), and he died on 11 March 1897. His character was full of charm. His writings were too nicely adapted to the needs of his own day to justify the expectation that they would long survive it, but few men exercised more religious influence in their own generation, especially on young men.