

ANNUAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,  
LEB. BOTSFORD, M. D.

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ETHICS OF LAW.

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[*Read 20th February, 1885.*]

A FEW WORDS to define what is meant by law, before entering upon my subject. The term law is understood to mean or infer a force which causes similar results under similar conditions. In calling it a law we, however, merely state a fact, we do not reach nor explain the source of the fact. This principle is manifested or acknowledged in the realm of matter, in organic life, in intellectual and moral phenomena.

Thus in matter we accept the fact that liquids ever tend to take a level position. Numerous observations establish the fact, and we regard it as one law of their condition. In calling it a law, however, we do not explain the source of that fact. Looking into it further, we find that owing to gravity, or, in other words, the attraction of a large mass of matter, the earth for instance, every molecule of a liquid is virtually acted upon equally and is forced to take its place until each molecule of the upper layer occupies the same distance from the attracting body. This is, however, a mere statement of a fact. So also it is with the law of gravity. Gravity is a term only, it signifies the result of observations upon matter. We are led by many observations to recognize the sense of weight, and this eventually drives us to the conclusion that the idea of weight arises from an unseen force which draws matter towards matter. Further observations lead us to conclude that attraction is in relative proportion to the masses and their distance. To call this gravity or attraction does not explain the why nor the wherefore;