

# Macvicar



**Dr. John Gibson MacVicar** went to the university of St. Andrews in 1814, where he excelled in [mathematics](#) and [natural philosophy](#), and thence to Edinburgh, where he studied [chemistry](#), anatomy, and natural history under John Knox's tutelage, together with rhetoric, Hebrew and church history (see Dictionary of National Biography). At this time he also delivered his first papers, on the germination of ferns and on the air-pump. He was licensed to preach, but in 1827 took up a newly established post as lecturer in natural history at St. Andrews, becoming professor in 1830. In 1828 he began editing and writing articles for the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, assisted with the formation of a museum at St. Andrews and helped to promote the Watt Institution at Dundee. He lectured at both these places, and also wrote several books on [natural philosophy](#) in the early 1830s, in which he explained recent scientific advances and attempted to reconcile these with religious orthodoxy. *Elements of the Economy of Nature, or, The Principles of Physics, Chemistry and Physiology* appeared in 1830 (2nd edition 1856), and *Inquiries Concerning the Medium of Light and the Form of its Molecules* in 1833.

## [John Gibson Macvicar](#)

**Macvicar's** philosophy had a profound impact on [Keely](#) and was a source of many of his ideas.

### **Books**

*Elements of the Economy of Nature, or, The Principles of Physics, Chemistry and Physiology*

*Inquiries Concerning the Medium of Light and the Form of its Molecules*

[On the Nature of Things](#)

[A Sketch of a Philosophy](#)

[A Sketch of a Philosophy II](#)

[A Sketch of a Philosophy III](#)

[A Supplement to A Sketch of a Philosophy](#)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: *The Catholic spirit of true religion*. (printed for Scott, Webster, and Geary, 1840) (page images at HathiTrust)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: *An enquiry into human nature*. (Sutherland & Knox; [etc., etc.](#), 1853) (page images at HathiTrust)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: *Inquiries concerning the medium of light and the form of its molecules*. (A. and C. Black;, 1833) (page images at HathiTrust)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: *On the beautiful : the picturesque, the sublime* (Scott, Webster, & Geary, 1837) (page images at HathiTrust)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: *Philosophy of the beautiful* (Edmonston and Douglas, 1855) (page images at

HathiTrust)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: A sketch of a philosophy ... (Williams & Norgate, 1868) (page images at HathiTrust)

Macvicar, John Gibson, 1800-1884: A supplement to a sketch of a philosophy (Williams, 1881) (page images at HathiTrust)

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## Keely

A compilation of **MacVicar's** "[Sketch of a Philosophy](#)" (published in 1868) together with [Mrs. Hughes' book on evolution of tones and colors](#) [↗](#), was sent to Keely. [[Snell Manuscript - The Book, page 2](#)]

When [Keely's discovery](#) has been made known to scientists, a new field of research will be opened up in the realm of [Philosophy](#), where all [eternal](#), [physical](#), and [metaphysical truths](#) are correlated; for [Philosophy](#) has been well defined by [Willcox](#) as the [science](#) of that human [thought](#) which contains all human [knowledges](#). He who possesses the [structure](#) of philosophic [wisdom](#) built up of all [knowledges](#) - grand and sublime - has a mental abode wherein to dwell which other men have not. Dr. **Macvicar** says:- "The nearer we [ascend](#) to the fountain-head of [being](#) and of [action](#), the more magical must everything inevitably become, for that [fountain-head](#) is pure [volition](#). And pure [volition](#), as a [cause](#), is precisely what is meant by [magic](#); for by [magic](#) is merely meant a [mode](#) of producing a [phenomenon](#) without [mechanical appliances](#) - that is, without that seeming [continuity](#) of resisting parts and that [leverage](#) which satisfy our muscular [sense](#) and our [imagination](#), and bring the [phenomenon](#) into the [category](#) of what we call 'the natural' - that is, the [sphere](#) of the [elastic](#), the [gravitating](#), the [sphere](#) into which the *vis inertiae* is alone admitted." In [Keely's philosophy](#), as in Dr. **Macvicar's** "[Sketch of a Philosophy](#)," the [economy](#) of [creation](#) is not regarded as a [theory](#) of [development](#) all in one [direction](#), which is the popular [supposition](#), but as a [cycle](#) in which, after [development](#) and as its [fruit](#), the last [term](#) gives again the first. Herein is found the [link](#) by which the [law of continuity](#) is maintained throughout, and the [cycle](#) of things is made to be complete: - the [link](#) which is missing in the popular [science](#) of the day, with this very serious [consequence](#), that, to keep the break out of sight, the entire [doctrine](#) of [spirit](#) and the [spiritual](#) world is ignored or denied altogether." [[The Fountain Head of Force](#)]

"If [matter](#) without [form](#) preceded [creation](#) of [energy](#), it was only when [life](#) was given that the [atoms](#) became grouped in [individualities](#) through their intrinsic properties. The [hypothesis](#) of **Macvicar** and demonstrations of [Keely](#) pivot on the [law of assimilation](#) "*providing at once for the free and the forced ... for [mind and matter](#), and placing them ... in [relationship](#).*" This law is summarized as "*Every individualized object ... [assimilates](#) itself to itself in [successive moments](#) of its existence and all objects tend to assimilate one another.*" In its own nature, [matter](#) is wholly plastic or devoid of fixed innate properties wholly [assimilative](#) - both with respect to its own portions and to surrounding objects, as well as its [position](#) in [space](#) and insofar as it is capable, to the [mind of its Creator](#). In the [ether](#) are constructed groups of [ethereal elements](#) generating material elements." [[Snell Manuscript - The Book, page 2](#)]

**Macvicar's** illustrations of [assimilation](#) "*Attraction, inertia, elasticity, heredity, reversion, symmetry, culminating in [sphericity](#) or [symmetrical cellularity](#), [chemical](#) and [electrical action](#), especially in [voltaic action](#) the influence and persistence of this law is most remarkably displayed.*" [[Snell Manuscript - The Book, page 2](#)]

Dr. **Macvicar**, in his theories of the bearing of the cosmical [law of assimilation](#) on [molecular action](#), says: "During this retreat of [matter](#) into [ether](#) in single material elements or [units of weight](#), the [molecules](#) and [masses](#) from which such [vaporization](#) into the common [vapor of matter](#) is going on, may be expected to be [phosphorescent](#)." This surmise [Keely](#) has, over and over, demonstrated as a fact, also showing how [gravitation](#) operates as a [lever](#), [etheric wave motion](#), [concentration](#) under [vibratory concussion](#), and [negative vacuous tenuity](#). [[Snell Manuscript - The Book, page 2](#)]

"**Macvicar** foreshadowed the teachings of this new [philosophy](#) when he wrote, "All [motion](#) in the universe is [rhythmical](#). This is seen in the forward and backward movement of the [pendulum](#), the ebb and the flow of the tides, the succession of day and night, the [systolic](#) and [diasystolic](#) action of the [heart](#), and in the [inspiration](#) and [expiration](#) of the lungs. Our breathing is a double [motion](#) of the universal [ether](#), an [active](#) and a [reactive](#)

movement. This [androgynous](#) principle, with its dual [motion](#), is the [breath of God](#) in man. The writings of the ancients teem with these ideas, which have been handed down to us from generation to generation, and are now flashing their [light](#), like torches in the [darkness](#), upon mysteries too long regarded as "lying outside the domain of physical [science](#)." [[Bloomfield-Moore](#), see [Father-Mother Principle](#), [Neutral Center](#)]

"**MacVicar**, a little known philosopher, says of the creation of [matter](#): "In the [ether](#) are constructed groups of [ethereal elements](#) generating material elements. The [ethereal atmospheres](#) tend to become [confluent](#) or spherical and the individualized [nuclei](#) seek [juxtaposition](#), thereby forming [molecules](#)." [[Snell Manuscript - the book](#)]

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### **Ramsay**

"**MacVicar** and [Keely](#) agree in the [cosmical law](#) being that of [sympathetic association](#), or, under **MacVicar's** select name for it, [assimilation](#), the watch-word and the [law of Creation](#)." [[Scientific Basis and Build of Music](#), page 87]

See Also

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## **FORMATION OF MOLECULES**

### **Law of Assimilation**