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## ARTICLE VI.

AN ESSAY TOWARDS A DEMONSTRATION OF THE DIVINE  
EXISTENCE.

By Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, one of the Secretaries of the American Home  
Missionary Society.

It must be possible to "demonstrate" the existence of God. The following Essay is an attempt to do this. Should it altogether fail of illustrating the divine glory, this failure will yet be, for its author, at least, a monition to humility.

Of all miracles, the greatest is the universe itself; and the greatest of wonders is, that anything exists. If we can believe this, we ought to find no difficulty in the acceptance of any proposition, on the mere ground of intrinsic miraculousness. For, that any particular thing, very great, strange, or wonderful, should be, or that any remarkable relation should subsist between any realities, is not so wonderful or incomprehensible as that anything at all should have being.

The earth appears in broad expanse, or towering in lofty heights, and we seem to feel its solid substance beneath our feet; above us is the apparition of the heaven, with its many lights, its ceaseless motions, and its stable laws; while within us is springing up, ever, the wonderful consciousness of intelligence, of identity, and personality. We ask ourselves: Is all this real? If so, what could make it? And then, what could have made that maker? And then—where, when, how, what, is the *Beginning*? *How* can aught begin? *How can* aught be? And yet, we see and know that all this is; and we are perfectly sure of our own personal reality. That there should have been an eternal nothingness, would seem very easy to believe, did we not so surely recognize positive existence, that it becomes an impossible belief. And now, perceiving and recognizing, as we do, this existence, it is yet a wonder passing all wonder, the mystery before which all others fade, that anything hath being. The beginning is a dark abyss.

It is not the business of philosophy to deal with madmen, or with those who choose to imitate madness. Her occupation is, to picture, by means of language, the true image of that which is, and its method. If any please to affirm, there is nothing; then, denying as they do, both the reality of their own proposition and of themselves, they cannot accuse us of a want of respect, while we merely take them at their word and deny their existence.

There is, undoubtedly, an intellectual interest in attaining the most logical, most complete, most rational, form of stating our knowledge; but not even for philosophical purposes, is it worth while to allow the possible reasonableness of a doubt of the reality of being. Nor this, merely because it is useless to permit such tampering with the truth and with the soul, but the habit of "supposing" things to be false which we must know to be true, of theoretically giving up the original foundation principles of right thought and feeling, whether out of an ambition for fairness, or in concession to the mental obliquity or moral perversity of another, is perilous and pernicious. No man can safely play these games with his own mind, or countenance them in another. Such levity is a wrong to the majesty of the truth, and to the sacredness of the soul.

We shall not undertake to prove, then, that the world exists, or that the soul is not a dream of nothingness. Every man knows the reality of the universe, and his own distinct personal identity. We accordingly affirm this; and *begin* by saying:

I. SOMETHING IS.

This is not a semblance of a sun, which shines above. Those are not falsehoods that strew the nightly heavens. That is not a phantasm-life which swarms the earth. That is not a form of nothingness which perceives and knows in thine own consciousness. Behold, this all is *real*. It is.

Did it just now spring from nothing? Did it ever spring from nothing? What power was there in nothing, to throw forth this vast reality; or even the least visible or conceiv-

able thing? In nothing, there is nothing. From nothing, nothing can come.

The mind seems sometimes to take wing, as it were, and with unnamable swiftness to fly back into the immensity of the time that is ended; but when it pauses, it is to find itself in the presence of *being*. If again it rise upon its swift wings, and again plunges into the inconceivable past, still, wherever its measureless flight is stayed, it is, it must be, in the presence of being, yet; and no point can be reached, where the reason can rest, and looking around and within, say, there is nothing! Thus the great truth is ever present with us, and it overcomes us, and from it we can never flee, that:

II. SOMETHING ALWAYS WAS; BEING IS ETERNAL.

It is impossible, with open and steady eye to contemplate this eternity of being, without awe. The vastness grows, and there is no end. The sublimity has no limit, save our own power to grasp and to feel it. The very *certainty*, in which this dread and glorious vision stands robed; that necessity, so absolute, of an eternal something, from which the mind finds no escape, is of itself sublime. Turn whithersoever we will, it rises before us still. Begin at what part of the universe we may, we discover this awful presence lingering behind it, and holding it all in his bosom. We look; and the longer we look, the more sure the vision becomes, not as truth merely, but as reality, as power, a veritable presence, reality most real—more real, possibly—we are sometimes tempted to say—than any of these things which we can touch. For may it not be, that these are but semblances shaped from out of this same “eternal something” which *is*? For:

III. It is very plain, that, IN ALL THAT IS, HAS BEEN, OR WILL BE, THERE CAN BE NOTHING SAVE THE ETERNAL, WITH WHAT HAS SPRUNG, SPRINGS, OR WILL SPRING, FROM THE ETERNAL.

We are not ready yet, from our present investigation, to affirm, whether this varied universe is all one pure substance only, which puts on and off these many fleeting forms, while

itself is in its essence the original and only being; or whether, again, in addition to the original element and out of it, constituted by its inner force, other essences and secondary beings have sprung into separate and partially independent existence. Here, we neither affirm nor deny; but, certainly, either in itself alone, or in itself and with its own products, achieved and achievable, this element constitutes the whole universe, present, past, future, possible. Either it is, or is and produces, the great *whole*. Thus, whatever theories we may adopt, this one *fact* remains sure: THERE IS AN ORIGINAL AND ETERNAL POWER<sup>1</sup>; and all things not embraced within it, are of it.

We propose, now, *carefully to examine this our conception, and to see what it logically and rationally involves*. Possibly we may discover that what the mind believes to be eternal and real, it must also believe to be spiritual. Perhaps it will become evident to us, that the "original power" can be none other than a personal God. We will advance slowly and with care; endeavoring to make every successive step to stand forth in light, looking at each successive proposition in its place and connection, until each, with the whole, becomes luminous. It is already clear:

IV. THAT THIS ORIGINAL POWER IS NOT DEPENDENT ON ANY OTHER POWER.

It was not created by any other, for it is original; nor sustained, for there was none to sustain it; nor limited, nor

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<sup>1</sup>The word "power" is used in two senses. In one, it refers to the capacity or potentiality residing in a substance, and is the name of an energy, or of energy, which may be put forth by *that* in which it inheres. Thus, various things are said to "have" various powers. But, in its second meaning, this word refers to that unity of both substance and accident which constitutes being or reality, and is the name of something, or of anything, which asserts positive being. All such things are "powers." Thus of the soul, it is properly said, when the body is yielding up the ghost:

"A *power* is passing from the earth."

Again, each distinct material element is, it is, a "power," a reality, i. e. a genuine substance and presence within the universe. "Power"—it is an appropriate name for all, and for any "being."

modified, nor qualified, nor in any way affected by anything else, for it was alone. It can not depend, for there is nothing outside of it on which it might depend. It is independent, then.

It is *self-existent*. Nothing makes or helps it exist, or in any way whatsoever, or in the slightest degree influences its existence. All that it needs, it is. All that can be had, it has. Self-existent, and self-sufficient, it is in the highest, widest, fullest sense, *absolute*.

V. THIS ETERNAL, ORIGINAL, INDEPENDENT, SELF-EXISTENT, ABSOLUTE POWER IS NOT LIMITED.

We have already seen that, in itself and its possible outgoings, it is all that is real, all that is certain, and all that is possible. That is to say, its various kinds and species embrace all possible powers or existences; and there can be no form of power, which is not essentially involved and contained in this. There can be no being, whose integral original forces are not, from eternity, active or sleeping within the great original Force.

*For example:* We will take it for granted that *light* is a one pure elementary substance, or else one kind of action in some one substance. It is thus, or else it represents a certain definite pure power (substance). Certain effects it produces; others, it is not capable of producing. It can shine; it can cause opaque forms to be visible to the eye; but it can not carry a mill, like water; can not feed lungs, like air; can not think, like the soul. Now this identical energy, whatever it be, resident in light, or rather constituting light, is, manifestly, either a part of the eternal Power, or a product of it. Its integral, original force, traced back, is found at last—there. The same is true in every existing element, substance, and action. The same is as true, also, of the things that will be, or the things that can be, as of the things that are or have been.

They are all parts, or else products, of the Eternal, whose possible activity, therefore, goes forth, from its centre, in all directions; the rays fill up the universal sphere, the sphere of possibility, and it makes that all solid with itself.

Whatever things, or forms or relations of things, may be reasonably supposed to be, are within its scope. Whatever things can be rationally talked about, the supposition of whose existence is not a contradiction, jargon, all such are contained within the sphere of the original Power; its *range* is the range of the possible; and so we may say, with truth,

(a) That in *kinds* and *directions* it is infinite.

But more than this must be true; for, clearly,

(b) In *each* kind and direction it is absolute. Whatever it is, it is unchecked. By supposition, there is nothing in being, that might put constraint upon it; and so it has the fullest liberty to act out itself, being wholly without limit, not only in its action as a whole, but in every distinct part, or kind of its action.

It is to be observed, however, that when we speak of "parts," *we speak* of limitations. In saying, therefore, that in these "parts" it is unlimited, we must not be understood as affirming that there are limitations which have, severally, no limits; or, that there are particular, definite kinds of this power, which *are* all other kinds; or, that in these, the Original Power is in such a sense infinite, that it could give them an intensity that should surpass the original limitations of their nature and idea. To say this, would be mere jargon. Accordingly, if an objector should ask: "Is the Original 'infinite in *each kind*,' in such a sense that it could have constituted light, e. g. so brilliant that a single pencil of it, no larger than a straw, would have clothed a world like ours with noon-day effulgence, and have awakened, in mere flesh and bones, in woody fibre, and in crystals, a faculty of vision?" it might be replied: We have no reason to believe that results like these belong to *any degree* of that action and power which we have named "light." A little reflection will make this very plain. For the sake of illustration, we will suppose that the "Theory of Vibration" is the true one, though the particular theory chosen would make no difference with our argument. According to this hypothesis, the effects of light are produced by the vibration of a certain ethereal medium, and the medium thus vibrating

we call "light." It is apparent, now, as soon as stated, that, if the intensity of these vibrations be supposed to increase indefinitely, by and by the effects are changed, not in degree merely, but in *nature*; we have a different "kind" of phenomena, and what *was* light, has become, we know not what, perhaps magnetism, heat, electricity, a something else; or, possibly, *nothing* perceivable by any human sense.

When, therefore, we affirm that the Original is *unlimited* in this or in any particular "kind," we mean: That all the intensity of this particular energy, or substance, which is, *in its nature and idea*, possible or conceivable (and none higher is namable), all this is within the range of the sole real Original Power.

So, when we say that the "Original is, in *all* kinds and directions, absolute," we mean, obviously: That whatsoever kinds of power (substance) are, in the nature of things, possible, or, in other words, whatsoever kinds are rationally conceivable, the *fulness and completeness* of all those powers (substances) resides in the *One* which is original and self-existent; and can be *exercised*, to any degree of intensity, up to the line dividing them, respectively, from other forms and kinds of substance—the crossing of which line would not be a heightening of degree, but a change of nature.

The truth of this statement is easily shown. For, in the first place, it is manifest that all the intensity of any substance (power) that has *yet* existed, is directly traceable to the sole Original; and if any higher degree can, in the nature of things, possibly exist, it is because there is energy in that which is the *ground and origin* of the "nature of things," equal to the constituting that higher degree. But if no higher degree be, in the nature of things, possible, then it is because the substance (itself a part or limited product of the Original) is, in its own *idea and nature*, exactly *so* defined that it cannot even be *supposed* capable of increase without a contradiction. To ask that a certain specific product of the Original, which is that specific thing by virtue of being



limited to  $x$  degrees of a certain kind of energy, or form, should manifest  $x+y$  degrees, is saying—nothing.

The proposition (b) holds good, then, of *all kinds* and *directions* of power; and, in every one, the Original is unlimited, is *absolute*.<sup>1</sup>

But (c) the original power is infinite in *extent*, or *space*; that is to say, it is “omnipresent.”

There is the same reason for its presence in any one place as in any other; and no reason for supposing it excluded from any. For even if it have a centre, in any sense, there is no possible supposable obstacle to its *extension* more than to any kind of its action. It must be everywhere absolute, since at no point is there anything to oppose it. Moreover, in the *beginning*, no place can be selected as its possible centre, since every other place has as good a claim as that. Its “centre must be everywhere, and its circumference nowhere.” But let us meditate somewhat further.

It is *objected*, we will suppose, that, perhaps, this power has a *law within itself*, according to which the intensity of its energy and action diminishes from some particular centre. It may diminish, too, in a *finite* series, and so come to an end; or, fading away infinitely, may at last approach *infinitely near* to nothingness, and be inefficient.

*Answer.* If this *be* so, you cannot *think* it is so; for you can have no reason for so thinking; and thought without reason in it is no thought. You can have no reason, for all space is the same utter desert *until* the original power has made one part to differ from another; and you have no right to *assume* that there is a difference when there is no possible cause or reason for a difference. The proposition—There is an eternal, absolute, infinite Being—is just as good for any other place, as for that in which you stand to affirm it. Why not? Does it grow weaker by travelling? In climbing the heights, does it faint? Or in sounding the depths, is it lost? What has any supposed position to do

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<sup>1</sup> The power which is absolute, both in kind and in degree, is properly called “Almighty.”

with *absolute truth*? And how can the emptiness of nothingness cause a difference, or create a change? Whatever be the reality then, it would manifestly be an irrationality to believe the original self-existent power limited in space; and as such, it is an impossibility to a *rational* being.

But some one persists in saying: "I *object* to the breadth of these conclusions. I grant, that there is something; for I can feel it, touch it, see it; but what I *see* is finite. I can not *see* any infinite and omnipresent power. I behold a power, it is true, in this region of the heavens to which our system belongs; but I am not convinced that there is anything more than this. There must be an original indeed, but this may yet be a *limited* power, though inconceivably vast. Besides, there is an *analogy* that implies, if it does not prove, that the power has a centre, and that it *diminishes* from a centre.

To this it may be replied: 1. That the limited scope of our being renders it as impossible to see, as to be, an infinite power.

2. That all possible *analogies* must be taken from among related and derivative forces; while, in the case before us, we are speaking of the original. These forces mutually limit each other; but, by supposition, there *is* nothing which might limit the self-existent power. But,

3. This diminishing of which the objector speaks, would be a part of the *history* of the original power. We are now inquiring, not into its history, but its original nature. His theory confines its *original* being to a single point; and declares that, *in the beginning*, it had no extension whatever, but simply position; that it was finite, and divisible, and *sent forth* a diminished effluence, so soon as it began to spread.

But it is hardly worth while to waste words on this. The first statement (p. 395) was really sufficient. The only rational conception of the original absolute power, is that which makes it *all everywhere*.

As we rest here, in contemplation and survey, what do we behold? There are no worlds; there is no ether; not

even a thinnest, feeblest, electric fluid. No separate things rise to the mind's view, no limitations, qualities, forms; there is only the one aboriginal power out of which all things in their modes and degrees will come. If, now, we ask ourselves, *why* is this power in being? and try to search out a cause that shall account for it, we find none. Of its own force it exists; and carries the reason of itself within its own bosom. We can only say, *it is*; and, eternally, *IT IS!* As we meditate, a voice comes to our spirit, declaring: "I am *for that* I am!" and the voice ceases. The mystery is unuttered, because unutterable. Only the presence is revealed; and, as in imagination, we explore the immensity, and sound its depths, we meet everywhere this eternal reality. Whithersoever we turn, one word, one presence greets us. Power! everywhere, *power!* above, beneath, all round about unto infinite extent, *POWER!* As yet we know no more.

VII THE ETERNAL, ORIGINAL, SELF-EXISTENT, ABSOLUTE, OMNIPRESENT POWER IS IMMUTABLE.

No addition can come to it from any external source; for it is itself the only source. No diminution can be made; for there is nothing to make it. Again, there can be no increase; for already it completely fills the sphere of the possible; and no decrease; for it is self-existent. There can be *no change* of any kind; for all change must be by addition or diminution. All changes that shall ever appear will be either forms of it, or created by it; none can be intruded within it. There may be endless evolution of existences, but underneath them all, originating and sustaining them, abides this one substance, this eternal power, unchanged. As, with our spirits, we profoundly listen, in the midst of that awful silence of the eternities into which we seem to have penetrated, a voice rises distinct upon the ear and it says: "I am *that which* I am!" and the voice ceases; and we understand that, from everlasting to everlasting, the power endureth *the same*.

VIII THE ETERNAL, ORIGINAL, ABSOLUTE, OMNIPRESENT, IMMUTABLE POWER IS ALWAYS ACTIVE.

This power is either subject to the strict {law of cause

and effect, or it is not. That is to say, it is either material or voluntary, either physical or spiritual.

We will suppose it to be the *former*. "It sleeps," you say. Then can it never waken; for there is nothing to stir it. It has no action now, and, being tied to the strict law of "cause," it can never rise to action of any kind; for nothing exists to act upon and "cause" it to rise. It is nothing now, and nothing can ever be made of it. A present unreality, it is also an eternal impossibility; and cannot even be supposed ever to exist. But if *this* have no existence, then there is no real being, and never can be any. If we begin by supposing the "power" to be a physical one; if, next, we suppose, that, in some remotest age, it rested in total and absolute inaction; then, since no change is going on within itself, and since no external agency exists which could start a change there, it must abide forever in this state of utter stillness, and, from everlasting to everlasting, nothing is, nothing can be. But something is. Then, the original power, if a *natural* one; is eternally active.

Again: Let us suppose it to be a *voluntary and spiritual* Power. As such, it acts only when consciously having an object in view, and an intelligent purpose. It is affirmed, now, that this great Mind and Spirit was, in the older eternity, buried in absolute inaction: this pure Will and Reason *sleeps*; neither knows, feels, nor determines. It is, in itself alone, the All. Now *what* can be supposed to wake it? What motive can grow up from the utter stillness within? What object or aim can come upon it, from the nothingness without? How can any change be supposed to begin? How can any be rationally imaged by our minds? Only as an *impossibility*. Besides, what *conception* can be formed of a pure spirit that is absolutely inactive? There is no such thought.

But again: we are compelled, in reason, to think that this Power, if spiritual, must have been always active, not alone within itself, *but also outwardly*. For, if ever inactive, it was in view of some motive, of some reason. But, so long as the eternal stillness remains unbroken, there is no change; and so if,

originally, no motive existed, then none can ever exist. If, in "the beginning," there was no reason for outward action, then no progress of time can bring a reason, for it brings no change of any kind; none within the depths of the Eternal Being; for he is immutable and not subject to "cause;" and none without; for, by supposition, he, the sole cause, causes none. If ever there has been a reason or motive, or ever can be, then there always was. But we see that there has been, for creation has taken place. Then *some* action, of *some* kind, outward as well as inward, has always been in exercise; and, viewing this power as spiritual, we must say: *God is eternal in his action; and some "off-spring" of God is eternally begotten of him.* Some word has been eternally spoken. This is a strict necessity of our thought.

There are those who, grounding themselves upon the affirmation that the universe had a beginning, understand that, from everlasting, Jehovah dwelt in utter stillness of his own silent mind. Their proposition might be worded: God is eternal in his dream; since, for the only real eternity, he has dwelt among the pure images of his thought. Let us accept this view, for a moment. "After an eternal dream, Deity rouses himself to action, and creates the world." *Why* did he create it? For a *reason*, we all answer, a wise and all-sufficient reason. But this reason existed from all eternity; since, from all eternity, there has been no change. And, if there were a good and sufficient "reason" for the divine action, then the divine Being *acted*. God is never irrational. There always was such a reason, and therefore there always was — action.

But if, now, any one should ask of us, what this "eternal outward action" of God has been, we bow humbly before the Great Incomprehensible, and own our ignorance. Does any one inquire whether suns and stars have always been in being? It passes our knowledge to declare. Do any affirm that it could have been only the inter-communion of a "trinity in the unity?" We hear in modest silence. But, that the energy of the original and omnipresent Being has always been put *forth* somehow, and somewhere, the

very law of our minds compels us to believe. We cannot rationally, and therefore cannot *really*, "think" (out) the contrary. The notion itself is found, when we follow it out and endeavor to mature it, to be an intellectual impossibility.

IX. BUT, THROUGHOUT ALL ITS BROAD, ETERNAL ACTIVITY, THE POWER OF WHICH WE SPEAK, — ORIGINAL, ABSOLUTE, OMNIPRESENT, IMMUTABLE, EVER-ACTIVE, — IS YET ONE.

We have but to open our eyes upon the manifold glory of the universe, to see that varied forms exist, both of being and of operation; and yet we have clearly been right in speaking of "*the (one) original Power.*" For,

(1.) If a *spiritual* Power, it is of course one; since unity is an essential attribute of spirit; unless indeed any one should so far forget himself as to intimate the possibility of a *polytheism*! <sup>1</sup>

(2.) If the Original be a physical Power, it must yet be *one*.

a. It is not divided in *time*; for, by supposition, it is eternal.

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<sup>1</sup> *Polytheism*, as a philosophy, or rationale of the universe, is wholly unworthy of attention. Not even in its simplest form, as a system of Dualism, does it merit any consideration, except as one of the follies in which the human soul has abased itself. Suffice it to say, that the very aim and end of philosophy, which it always presupposes, and in the absence of which its identity is lost, is, to mount up to the ONE WHICH IS ETERNAL. The intellect is not satisfied with anything short of that; nor can the heart find repose in any other home. The diversity and multiplicity must be seen in a Unity. A possible and a reasonable cause, or author, must be found for it all. To diminish the number, to reduce them to *two*, will not answer. It may be a simplification of the problem; it is not its solution. The mind cannot rest there. We have only the groping of unsatisfied Science, or a dream of the imagination, until we strike upon THE ONE! Until the whole is comprehended and referred up to an Original which is a Unity, and is viewed, thus, in a certain oneness, the intellect is not, and cannot *begin* to be, satisfied. When it has done that, then it is satisfied, indeed, but not perfectly. For there remains the work, afterward, of going down from this "Original," and of understanding each separate thing by itself and in its relations. To the achievement of the former, the human mind is equal. The latter is its immortal labor; and, for all finite minds, must be an endless and ever-widening task.

b. It is not divided in *space*; for it is omnipresent (p.395) and there are no intervals, that might serve as divisions between parts, and no external agencies, to cause separations.<sup>1</sup>

c. There is no division in *kind*; that is to say, no separation of inherent qualities; for it everywhere contains all kinds, and embraces all qualities. It is *all* everywhere. The fact that an apparent separation of qualities has taken place, so that "gravitation" is found here, in stones, and appetite there, in animals, and yonder, nothing at all; so that, in one place all the attributes of matter embodied, and in another, the attributes of mind, and in a third, no sensible attributes of anything, does not prove, surely, any *inherent* loss at any point of space. The other kinds of power may be latent, when not evident to sense; and the potentiality may remain where the actuality is, to *human experience*, wanting. The gold in your right hand may be but an apparition to sense of that one substance, which has also taken the form of silver, in your left hand, of carbon, in your diamond ring, and of oxygen in the air you breathe; and, since *originally* all these qualities were potentially omnipresent, we have no right — having no reason — to say that they are inherently absent anywhere now.

There is, manifestly, no possible reason for believing that, *in the beginning*, there was any difference between the kinds of power present in different parts of space. That which is self-existent, is *one and the same*, since there cannot be *two* self-existent, i. e. absolutely independent, powers. But the power that is *anywhere* present "in the beginning," is self-existent; and so everywhere the same. Again, being self-existent, absolute, it is immutable, and so always the same; never anywhere changed in its kind, but eternally embracing

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<sup>1</sup> If, in process of development, it have now resolved itself into parts, even this is in accordance with its own law, and by virtue of it; and is but a preservation of its immutability and identity (or oneness) of nature. Although it is apparently divided into parts, there are only divisions in certain respects or particulars, and these phenomenal; while, in other respects, and *fundamentally*, it is still *itself*, and the unity must be supposed to continue.

all possible kinds. Besides, by our very *supposition*, it is *one*, for we are "philosophizing" here, and trying to account for the universe. Any one then who, in such connection, denies this unity, forgets himself, loses the thread of his own thought, drops into confusion, and talks incoherently. It is sufficiently apparent, therefore, that *we* at least, can not rationally refuse to say that the original Power is *one*.<sup>1</sup>

Here, however, an *objection* comes in. A doubter rises and declares: *There is no Eternal Being, but the universe is an endless "flux,"* a flux aimless and without method, other than that of necessity, having no reason for it or in it, so that there can be no rationale of it, and no philosophy.

The "universe is a flowing!" But *what flows?* Underneath this appearance, there is something appearing; an apparent, evident something, is there not? "Flux" is not substance, but the act or state of a substance and which indicates and *proves* its real and positive being. "The universe is a changing," you say. A changing then of something. Of what thing? What, but of that eternal original, which through all these changes *remains*, and upholds each successive appearance. The forms come and go; they have their beginnings and their endings; they pass away and cease to be; but the original substance *abides*. It begins not; it ends not; in all changes, is unchanged; but endures, in eternal action immutable, and immutably creating and sustaining mutation.

"Ah! but the universe in an *Infinite Series*," says another.

This is but the same objection in other words. Is the "series," we ask, made of *nothing*? Then it is "nothing." But if, of something, then, of *what*?

It is acknowledged that the *present* universe is real; but then, this, it is affirmed, is the product of that which existed before it, which again sprung from another older still; and so on, forever and forever.

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<sup>1</sup> This unity is, in truth, higher and more absolute than has yet been *distinguishtly* affirmed. This we shall have occasion more particularly to unfold hereafter; but, for the present, are content with justifying our use of terms in speaking of "the Power."



Now, manifestly, these several universes are either forms of one substance which abides eternally, and takes these shapes in succession, or else each new form is not merely new in shape and condition, but new in its very substance. Then, on the last-mentioned hypothesis, supposing that we are able to distinguish the generations one from another, we have the following philosophy of the universe. "There was a universe in being, a thousand (or any other number of) years ago. That universe ceased. In ceasing, however, it created, out of *new* substance, another universe, also endowed with creative power. This second universe, in its turn, dies, and in dying, it creates a third, and so on. The substance is new every time. These births and deaths have always been taking place, and will always continue."

Now, manifestly, this very statement *itself* asserts the reality of an *eternal power*, an omnipresent energy, inherent in all these successive forms, and by virtue of which it is possible for them to come thus in an unbroken series, each one creating its successor. And this power is a most substantial being, exalted above all conditions of time and place, a *reality* that no death or change can approach, but which itself originates all endings as well as all beginnings. Thus, this theory of an infinite series is itself an affirmation—in-felicitous, indeed, to awkwardness—of the reality of that which it tries to deny.

Or again: There is a "series," it is said. This series, then, has a *law* which makes it a "series;" by virtue of which it is an order, and not a mere chaos of heterogeneity. But this "law," is the mode or condition of some substance; the method in which the substance acts, or is. Since, too, the series is from everlasting, its law is from everlasting. And since the law is eternal, the substance of which it is the mode is eternal, and there is an "ETERNAL POWER" in the universe.

When last we halted in our ascent, and, lifting our eyes from the uncouth and somewhat rugged path of our argument, essayed to look about us, we found ourselves in the midst of an infinite darkness and stillness. There was no

sound, no motion, no thing, no sensible action. Only one word breathed itself to the soul, not articulated without, but rising like an enchantment within the spirit, and whithersoever we turned in our thought, it smote upon us with its unseen stroke. Power! everywhere, Power! eternally, POWER! Power original, absolute, omnipresent, immutable. But we have now mounted higher up; and the utter darkness has broken away, and forms and sounds, and motions are seen. Action is begun; nay, it has always been begun, and is seen to be from everlasting. How, then, do we now image the universe to our minds; and as we pause to view and contemplate, what do we see? We see the *manifestation* of the power. In what? We know not in what particulars; for we are not able, beginning with the great original, to trace down its operations in all successions, gradations, and development; and we are especially ignorant concerning those which stand early and earliest in the series. The original methods of the Eternal one, remain to us an unfathomable mystery; and, were we to seek to picture within our minds, that beginning in which this visible universe, or any region of it, first stood forth a reality, we could, at best, only image it in symbols; our science is incompetent to furnish us with the facts. We only know, that, in its glorious progression and everlasting changing, as in its mysterious beginning, a *presence*, immutable and eternal, abides, the element of all substance, the spring of all action. In all visible glories, in all that wonder and majesty, which eye cannot see nor ear hear, and which the intellect but feebly grasps, and the heart is too faint to feel; in all, we see but the manifestation of the eternal activity of THE POWER. It is an omnipresent sea, lifting its waves, ever, amid the darkness, and these visible things are but the shining foam with which they break into view and disappear. Wide all around, unto an illimitable extent every way, their lamenting voices rise; the moaning of the infinite element of this shoreless ocean, as it mourns, in eternal blindness and senselessness, from everlasting to everlasting; moved by necessity, and, in dreary monotone without ceasing, raising its unconscious elemental cry; moaning as it works on endlessly.

*We have now attained the materialist's conception of God.*

This great, eternal, absolute, unreasoning Power, is his "God." He believes in a "power," not in a "spirit;" in a *force*, not in a benevolent and intelligent *Will*. Nature stands, with him, in place of Deity; Nature, working with interminable succession of cause and effect, worked by an invincible Necessity, the embodiment of force and fate; Nature, driving her million orbs and her ceaseless combination and dissolution of elements; driving and grinding on with her boundless *inquiry*, without rest from age to age, and from everlasting to everlasting; *Nature*, immense, dumb, pitiless, senseless NATURE is his God.

He looks into the skies at night. Who is it, that "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in?" He replies: It is the law of gravitation, and other unknown laws. He gazes upon the stormy sea, "when the deep utters his voice, and lifts up his hands on high." Who is it that "ruleth the raging of the sea, when the waves thereof arise?" "It is the principles of hydrostatics and of aerial pressure." Or, he turns his gaze inward, and looks upon the wonder of the soul. What is this, which thinks, which loves so tenderly, and *rules* in this mystery of the will? "Oh, this! It is a very curious effect of atomical combination: this is the most ethereal of all the forms of matter!" And so on, through the whole realm of things visible or known, he finds only the operations of nature, only the hand of necessity.

It is the same, also, in the experience of life. When sickness comes, it comes not under the supervision of any wise and kind Providence, but merely according to certain natural and necessary laws, and is but the working of the original energies of matter. When death enters his home, and the beautiful and the gentle one, whom he dearly loved, lies pale and cold, he hears no Father's voice speaking to him, feels no Father's hand laid on him, in admonition or reproof; and of the consolation which the Spirit, the Comforter, gives, he knows nothing. It is the deed of Fate. He gazes, in bitterness, on this work of the pitiless powers. In utter

dreariness of hopelessness, his spirit sits desolate and angry in her anguish, and he curses the senseless energies of irrational Nature, that have destroyed such beauty and delight, and laid waste his hopes, and extinguished his darling life. Brute Nature ! to crush beneath its dreadful heel so fair, so fragrant, and so tender a flower ! Fool Nature ! to make, and straight unmake ! to destroy goodness, and happiness, and the fountain of joy, and let vileness and misery, ugliness and shame, live on !

So when death, at last, draws nigh his own soul to extinguish it in eternal night, he yields himself up, with cold and hardy stoicism, to be dissolved back into the elemental power of which he was made at the first : earth to earth, ashes to ashes, *soul* to ashes ; all, dust to dust. Nature has done with him. She made him ; she unmakes him. Old Necessity, working by its law, put him together, at the first ; and now grinds him to powder again. The *inquiry* rolls on forever, senseless, pitiless, aimless, without rest, without change, and hears no cry, and heeds no prayer, and knows no thrill, and knows no compunction, and knows — nothing ; brute and inexorable, rolling on from everlasting to everlasting. This great, eternal, dumb *Force*, *this* is the materialist's God !

In the process of our reasoning, we have now got back to a one element from which all things spring ; to this unity all things are referred ; by it all are explained, and here the materialist makes a final stop, and says : This is God ; and there is no other. He thinks that he thus accounts for all things, and that here he has reached the *Unity* after which philosophy strives, and in which the mind and heart of man find a refuge from the questions that haunt his solitude, and embitter his toil.

This supposition — that he has reached a satisfying "unity" — will not bear scrutiny, as will be shown hereafter ; but, for the present, we are content to take him upon his own ground ; and remark,

X. THIS SOLE, ORIGINAL, ABSOLUTE, IMMUTABLE, EVER-ACTIVE POWER, IS SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL.

We have already seen that the "original Power" con-

tains, essentially, *all* finite powers that ever *can* exist. The whole force of gravitation that is in action now, or ever will act; all the several kinds of chemical attraction or influence; every specific energy of material substance, of organization, and of life; together with all intelligences, persons, spirits, are all involved and contained within the one eternal element. But,

*How* are they contained there? To this we answer: There are only *four* possible ways. Upon the supposition that this element is a purely *natural* power, then whatsoever particular forces of substance or of quality have existed, exist, or will exist, must have been wrapped up within the eternal element, either,

- a. As each a real and specific entity held, from everlasting, in unity with other entities; or else,
- b. They had being merely, under the form of a natural tendency and necessary law of production, sure to operate effectively so soon as the indispensable conditions shall have been wrought out.

Again: upon the supposition that the element be a *spiritual* one, then each particular atom must have had being from eternity, either,

- c. As a positive specific reality, eternally generated by the infinite volition, or,
- d. As a certain energy of the eternal Will, sure to be put forth at an appointed time; that is to say, as an idea and fixed purpose (decree).

There can be no other modes than these four; and one of these even (a) is excluded, by the conditions of our present problem, as we shall immediately see, in the following

EXPLANATION. A. The "Original" may be a *natural* power. If so, then either the thing itself must have existed always, or the power that *must* constitute the thing, so soon as the necessary condition or concurrence comes; and this condition, too, is itself necessitated. But, if we take the first of these suppositions, and say that all elements have *always had* their specific character; then we have not advanced one step in our "philosophy," which strives towards unity, and

we are still entangled amid the multiplicity and diversity from which we have been struggling to escape. If, by this one "element" of which we have been speaking, we mean merely an inconceivably thin fog or mist into which all the material universe has been (in our minds) rarefied, and where its several elements all commingle, we have still just as many things and the very things to account for, as at the first.

We find oxygen and nitrogen blending in our atmosphere; we find carbon, and gold, and silver, with many other elements, scattered throughout the earth. The question is: whence came these? And how came they to be at all? Are we so wise, as to imagine that we have answered the questions, when we say: there was, originally, an infinite cloud, or sea, composed of atoms of these several kinds; and, by and by (as birds of a feather flock in company), like sought out like or mingled in amicable contrariety, and so chaos became cosmos! Who does not see that the very question in which we began still remains? *Whence* did these same atoms of oxygen, of hydrogen, of carbon, of gold, and of silver come?

This supposition, then, in any investigation of the present kind, cannot be adopted. Let us turn to the other alternative, "b." What is that? According to this hypothesis, each atom, or element, has not existed from eternity, *by itself*, but there is an eternal somewhat which had a power of varied production, and was possessed of energies never all wholly inactive, and these which we now behold, were, from everlasting, sure to act at some time, and to be acting at this time. This element is neither fluid, nor aerial, nor fiery, nor electrical, but a mysterious and indescribable something, which, by an inherent law of necessity, will turn itself into everything that will be. If the original power be a *natural* one, this is the only mode in which things finite and temporal can be supposed to have been originally involved within the infinite and eternal one. But,

B. The original power may be *spiritual*. What then? Why then, each particular atom must have existed from eternity, as has been remarked, either as a specific reality

eternally generated by the power of the original will put forth continuously from everlasting; or, as a part of that power, held in reserve, but definitely appropriated to this particular thing, and determined for its particular time (idea-decree). It *may* be, e. g., that these atoms of oxygen that I am breathing have always been in being, as an eternal *product* of an eternal volition. Who is able to arrest them, single out each one, and read its date? Again, it *may* be that all these elements, and every atom of each of them, were absolutely *created*, when as yet there were none of them, at a certain particular point in the immense past, at a certain definite number of ages, years, days, hours, and seconds, from the present instant of time. *Then*, they first began. *Before*, they were not. How then were they from everlasting contained in the eternal? Thus: the power which is in them now, constituting their essence, he *possessed*, and was able to put it into these forms; the conception also of what they now are, he always had, and the archetypes of all things rested in the unfathomable depths of his mind. The *certainty* of their existence lay in the fixedness of his purpose to create each one, in the place assigned and at the time appointed, from everlasting.

In either of these *two* ways, may the manifold forms and kinds of being which the present universe shows, have been involved in the original, if that original were *spiritual*; in either of these, but in *no other way* than these two (c. and d). No other way has ever been suggested, that we know of, in which *material* things could have been eternally involved in a spiritual Original; but, in every Pantheistic theory, a different origin and evolution is necessarily implied for finite *intelligences*. Every such theory presupposes the reality of a certain element, not yet personal, but from which persons will and *must* come—a refined potency, omnipresent, eternal, indescribable, whose qualities cannot be definitely enumerated, but from which, not only all matter but all souls are born—it is, or contains, an element that is truly and properly *spiritual*; and that element can be imaged, in its omnipresence, no

otherwise than as an infinite spiritual *mass* (as ethereal as you please), the original stuff out of which all finite personalities are composed. If the reasonableness of such a theory be conceded, or its possibility, then there certainly would be *another* hypothesis for us to consider, in addition to the four already announced. But we meet this new comer upon the threshold, by the denial of his *existence*. That is, we affirm:

There *can* be no such thing as a "spiritual mass," out of which individual personalities may be carved, or from which they may be condensed, or of whose elements they may be combined or constructed. The mind cannot *conceive* of a chaos of spiritual substance from which a world of intelligences should be developed, and *there is no such thought*. The phrase "spiritual substance" *has no meaning* whatsoever if intended to shut out personality; for *the* meaning of *spiritual* substance is, *that* substance which is personal, in being intelligent, sensible, and volitive—in that it is *will*, knowing, feeling, choosing, doing. The substance which is marked by these traits, men call "spiritual;" they mark it by that word; and they mean, and can mean, none other.

In saying this, however, we do not imply, that there may not be traits or properties of spiritual being not yet named in human language, or recognized in human thought. We do not deny that there may be powers in some spirits altogether surpassing those in any "persons" who have yet come within our knowledge, or that the Eternal and Original one may thus be, in a mysterious and incomprehensible sense, *super*-personal. One definition limits only on one side. We say what "spirit," at the *least*, must be; not what it may be, beyond. We draw the line beneath which it cannot sink, and the limits which, at lowest, it completely fills; but we do not assume to define the shadow of that great mystery, into which the word, in its grandest and divinest meaning, recedes and expands, overshadowing the mind with an unknown majesty, baffling the utmost stretch of pursuing thought, overpassing the profoundest and the broadest search of the soul's anxious and awe-struck vision. We



simply affirm that the Original Power (if spiritual) and all spiritual substance is *personal*.

A STATEMENT. All existence, all *re-ality*, is either under the law of necessity, or it is not. The only existence which is not completely under the law of necessity is *volitive* existence. There is no volitive existence outside of *persons*. All matter is under the law of necessity. The *characteristic* of spirit is freedom or will. Matter and spirit, then, are separated, in all rational thought and theory, by a perfectly definite and immutable line. *Matter* exists, or seems to exist, in atoms; and these "atoms" may be agglomerated into "masses," or organized into "bodies." *Spirit*, on the other hand, exists in "persons." These persons may be combined into "societies" and "communities," and *these* are the only "masses" or "organizations" of spiritual substance. In other words, the *person* is to spirit, what the *atom* is, or seems to be, to matter—the *simple and primal form, in the absence of which "spirit" is non-existent*. Out of atoms, the material universe is (or is supposed to be) built. Out of individuals, the world of spirits is combined. The former are organized according to laws of necessity, such as gravitation, chemical affinity, etc. The latter are organized according to the law of *divine love*, a certain free or voluntary energy (in contradistinction from pathological or emotive), which is the sole bond of reasonable beings, and the central principle of the great world of intelligences, as indeed of each separate soul, and through whose might (and inner harmonies) the moral universe is beautiful and strong.

The foregoing distinctions hardly admit of discussion at all. For, that matter is under the law of necessity, *all* men agree; and that persons are free, *all* are conscious. Every spiritual being is a person. Every person is spiritually endowed. The two terms are identical in essential idea.

The phrase "spiritual substance," then, has no meaning, if intended to shut out personality. The only intelligible idea which it can convey, as the name of anything either real or conceivable, is—the substance which exists as "person" and not as "thing."

Since, then, there can be no such thought, there is certainly no such reality as a spiritual "mass," a vapor, a fog, an ether, out of which individual souls could be supposed to be condensed, or constructed; and so there remains only the two methods mentioned above (c. and d.), according to which, upon the supposition of a spiritual Original, derivative existences could have been eternally involved therein.

More briefly, again, we may state the matter thus: The objector affirms a spiritual "mass" as the original of all particular spiritual existences. This "mass" is either under the law of necessity, or it is volitive. If under the law of necessity, then it is material, not spiritual. If volitive, then it is a *person*.<sup>1</sup>

Having settled, therefore, with regard to the *modes* in which derivative existence *may* have been eternally involved in the Original, and having shown that there is only one possible hypothesis, upon the supposition that the Original is a merely natural force, while there are two others admissible upon the supposition that it is spiritual, we must proceed to determine the **FACT**, and to inquire *whether it really be spiritual or material*.

#### ARGUMENT.

I. It is obvious that the universe contains finite *natural* powers, forces, i. e. which are strictly subject to the law of necessity.

It is possible (for aught our argument has, at present, to

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<sup>1</sup> The words "will," "volitive," and the like, are used throughout this Essay in their highest and most absolute sense; in that in which they are applicable to none but free moral agents. This, indeed, is their only strict and proper meaning. The volitions, so called, of animals, can only be viewed as the resultants of natural forces working in an organism; whereas those "choices" of free moral agents, in which they rise superior to such "causes" — the forces of mere nature — and assert their personality, breaking away from all lower dominion, and treading the *world* beneath their feet, are acts in view of *eternal and absolute good*. Every being, who is truly "free," is so by virtue of his ability to recognize this good, and to choose it, the solicitations of nature to the contrary notwithstanding. No being can be deemed free who is incapable of discerning between right and wrong; and none surely ought in strictness to be spoken of as "volitive," or possessed of "will," unless strictly "free."

say to the contrary) that these may have been wrapped up, in the Original Power, in either of the three modes (b. c. d.) mentioned above (p. 407). They may have been parts of the ~~sure~~ tendency, and of the necessary working out of a merely natural force; or parts of the eternal action; or parts of the eternal purpose, and long-withholden action, of an infinite spiritual Power.

Here is a diamond. It is built up (we will grant) of atoms. Take one of those simple, primal particles. *This* is not composed at all. It does not consist. It is. Here we have a material unit. The question is, Whence came it? How comes it to be? To reply that it has always existed, is no answer, surely, but simply an affirmation of the impossibility of an answer. It is no answer, for it meets not the demand of the intellect; but instead, refuses to listen to that demand, and calls the intellect fool, for making it. It is no answer, for it is an absurdity; affirming the eternity and consequent independence and self-sufficiency of things that are partial and limited. It is no answer for *us*, certainly; for we are seeking to account for the universe, and are endeavoring to comprehend the multiplicity of its whole, in our philosophy. But this reply mocks at philosophy.

But whence came this atom? "Out of the eternal Element," says the materialist, a form or vortex of the original Power, a form not eternal, but that has now come, in the course of the necessary workings of eternal energies. It is the same with all the atoms that, together, make up the universe. (The inadequacy of this theory will be shown hereafter; but we pass on.)

But whence came it? we ask again; and the spiritualist replies: 'From God; and this in one of two ways: either it has been eternally generated by his volition, or, at some point of time in the past, it was once created, and has being still, an embodiment of a part of his infinite force. Thus it is with all the atoms of the material universe.'

We will not stop here, to criticise either of these replies, but remark:

II. The universe contains finite *spiritual* powers.

There are atoms, and there are also persons, masses and communities, bodies of particles, and bodies of individuals. There are things, and there are *souls*. The one is characterized by such attributes as impenetrability, inertia, gravitation, affinity, polarity. The other is distinguished by intelligence, love, will.

There is a greater and more specific difference between the two classes of attributes, than between any two attributes of the same class; a wider, and more definite, and more complete distinction between "things" and "persons," than between any two things or any two persons whatsoever.

It would certainly be illogical, therefore, to confound forces so particularly and so widely distinguished. We may not let it be assumed that gravitation and volition are, or can be, the *same*. Whether either may be the result, or product, of the other, it is not yet time to inquire; but, in themselves, they are *distinct*. We must affirm, then, in positive terms:

a. That these finite spiritual powers, *are not material*. Still further: that which is material not only *is not* personal, but

b. *It cannot become personal*. A pound weight can raise a pound, so much and no more, but it cannot feel or know. A two-pound weight has twice the force of the other, in its *kind*, but it does not begin to approximate any nearer to perception or understanding. Take any other material energy, it can act in its own way and produce effects of its own kind, but that is all. They cannot *become* another kind.

Here is a force; it matters not what it is, but a force under the strict law of necessity. How is that force, *of itself and by its own energy*, to pass from under that law, and to make itself intelligent and free? How is it to abdicate that which is the essential mode (law) of its being, and crown itself with a different and a higher mode? Here are forty forces, of forty kinds, combined and organized; each one, by itself, and the whole in their united action held in the strict rule of "causation." How are they to cease from that condition, and to rid themselves of this their *nature*, and be of another nature? Here is a universe of one infinite

material element, the whole bound by necessity, and exercising, of course, only natural forces. Now, how is this *matter*, held, as it is, eternally under the "law of necessity," how is it to become "free?" If it be not spiritual now, what can ever make it so? Nothing! for there is nothing outside of it, to act upon it, or influence it in any way. But how, then, can it make itself spiritual? It cannot: for no conceivable multiplication, or division, or interaction of material forces can *constitute* a spiritual force. They cannot even advance one step toward that point. Matter cannot begin to transmute itself into mind. Gravitation is no element in will. Chemical affinity is not the remotest incipency of that love which resides in moral beings and is intelligent and voluntary. No act of matter ever approximates the specific character of a personal act. But if so, then no matter ever approximates personality. The line of distinction ever remains sharply drawn, and the lower can never cross it and become the higher; material force cannot produce spiritual powers. Hence

c. The original power, of which we have been speaking, cannot have been *purely* physical and natural, but *must have been at least partly spiritual and personal*. That is, a *part*, at least, of its unity is a *person*.

The reality of this part can no more be denied than that of the other. The existence of spiritual beings is, in fact, not only as evident and as indubitable as the existence of material things, but the denial of it necessitates the denial of everything. Since, if we contradict and reject our own consciousness, we reject all that it brings. If we cannot believe in ourselves, we surely cannot in an external world revealed to ourselves. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to deny all things, we are compelled to grant that the original power was, from eternity, at least in part personal—a person. [See sequel.] Just here, an *objection* may be thrust forward; viz. If you deny the possibility of a spiritual "mass," out of which individuals may spring, and if you affirm only *one* eternal person, *then there can never be more than one*.

It suffices for our present purpose, to reply to this objection, that it is more than the objector is competent to affirm; for it is more than he can prove. He does not *know*, that the eternal will cannot embody in matter inferior, derivative, personalities, nor can he so much as bring a fair presumption in favor of his denial. In the fulness of our ignorance concerning these high matters, and of the beginning of things, we cannot presume to set bounds to the original spirit. We may not comprehend, indeed, the *way* in which he acts in creation, but this does not justify us in saying, he cannot create. For neither can we definitely image to our minds the way in which he does anything; since all this is outside of our experience. From the necessity and the very nature of the case, we know beforehand that we cannot do this. "*Such* knowledge is too wonderful for us. It is high; we cannot attain unto it." But here we know that there are finite personalities. We have proved that these finite personalities could not have originated in any material forces; and therefore that there must have been an original *spiritual* force; or, in other words, a *person*. To say, now, that we are unable to describe the genesis of derivative souls, from this original spirit, is of no account. We are quite as incompetent to detail the exodus of suns and planets from an original *hyle*. But,

d. The original power, if partly spiritual, is *dominantly so*.

The original power is a unity. We seem to have shown that, *in certain respects*, it is also a duality. The question arises, therefore, in that combining of the two, whereby the duality is yet an eternal and absolute unity, which is the superior, and which the inferior? which succumbs? which rules? The answer must be: It is the material which succumbs to the spiritual. For,

(1) It is a part of the essential nature of spiritual powers, to *use* those which are material. If we appeal to our own observation and experience, we everywhere meet with this fact. In all human beings, it is manifestly the proper office of the soul to rule the body; and in proportion to the actual

spiritual force which exists in any man, in that proportion is the physical part of his being kept in subjection and made to be subservient to the purposes of the soul. *More* than this, it is of the spirit's *essential nature*, to rule material forces. For it is its nature to know them, to understand their laws, and, finally, in volition, to take advantage of those laws (or modes and conditions of being and of action) for the accomplishment of *purposes*. It is impossible to conceive of spirit in active contact with matter, without thinking of it as both recognizing and exercising its own superior dignity and right to rule. Its actual dominion, at any time, must correspond with its actual power, then.

(2) It is just as much the nature of matter, too, *to be used* by spirit. Material forces are such, that they are, of necessity, susceptible of being controlled by the energies of personal existences. Consciousness declares the spirit's superiority, and perpetual experience proves the susceptibility of matter to the controlling action of the soul.

(3) We cannot conceive of the *two as coexisting in unity, except in this relation*. It is manifestly impossible that this unity should exist, except by the subordination of the one to the other. But it is equally impossible to conceive of spirit yielding itself up in *absolute* submission to material force. For so, it would come under the law of matter, which is necessity; and it would *be* matter, not spirit.

It is the essential nature of spirit to know, and to plan, and to seek to accomplish ends. Its nature is action for an end self-determined. This nature it cannot lay by, without ceasing to be itself. There is no subjection for it but in annihilation. But if spirit cannot be subordinated to matter, and if matter is not subordinated to spirit, then must there be perpetual war between these two kinds of forces. Our "philosophy" has not attained the unity which it seeks, unless it acknowledge a subordination here, and in denying it, affirms *two* absolute, original powers, each independent and self-existent, yet dependent each upon the other, and waging an irreconcilable conflict from everlasting and forever! But,

e. This subordination must have been *entire* and *absolute*.

For, if in any respect the unity were marred, then were there still two powers, and we have our unity yet to seek. That is to say, after having gone back to a power, which by supposition and the necessity itself of our argument, is original, we find in the investigation of it, that this, the only possible original, is itself derivative. For, any existence which is coördinate with another, cannot be viewed as self-existent and absolute, but only as dependent and secondary. Hence we see, that it is strictly a necessity of the case that the material forces should have been, from the first, *absolutely* at the disposal of the spiritual; or, in other words, the eternal person must have been absolutely supreme. The one original, absolute, infinite, immutable, ever active power is *supremely* a personal power. More than that,

1. *The person is the power.*

In the beginning there are, as has been shown, no material things, but only a something, able and certain to originate, alike, atoms, masses, organizations, and persons; and this "something" is the sole original being.

We have hitherto spoken as though there were, or might be, two *parts* in this original unity; the first a material force, and the second and ruling part, a spiritual power, or person, and have just shown that, as there cannot be two absolutes, the material must be viewed as *absolutely* subjected to the personal, which is to be viewed as *absolutely* supreme.

But if so, then the *ground* of all material force is identical with the spiritual power itself; for there is but one "ground," since but one "absolute." But if the person be the one *ground* of all things, physical as well as spiritual, then is he the "one original," the "first power."

Furthermore, since, in the beginning there were no material things, therefore, by the "material power" of which we spoke, we can mean nothing but a power having the faculty of producing matter, i. e. of creating a substance, and substances, which shall be under the strict law of cause, or necessity. Our argument enjoins no more upon us, then, than that we find this faculty somewhere; and this once really found, all the conditions of that part of our problem



are satisfied, and the *material* universe is adequately accounted for. The phrase "material power," as we have hitherto used it, applies perfectly well to a *faculty of natural or physical force, resident in the eternal person, and having its first impulse and its continuity, in the voluntary energy of his will.* Indeed, when it has once been conceded, that the *person* is absolutely supreme, there is no other consistent sense, in which the phrase can be used. For, it can only be understood as the name of something *utterly and absolutely* at the *disposal* of the person, as completely so as any of his own energies, that is, as in reality itself but an energy or faculty of his being.

The only "material power," therefore, which can have any original existence, is that eternal energy of the original spirit, whereby he is able, of his own free will, to constitute things whose law is necessity; and fundamentally, in the absolute beginning, the *one only reality is a PERSON.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This "Person," proved thus to be identical with the "original Power," is possessed of all those attributes hitherto shown to belong to that Power. The great original Spirit is independent, self-existent, absolute, of infinite power and presence, immutable, eternally active. He reigns from everlasting in sole supremacy, and all else that exists is either of him or by him. The energy of his will is an absolute energy, not simply tending towards its objects, but attaining them; not merely determining, but establishing them; moving ever with perfect creative force, and constituting whatsoever it wills. We must also confess the scope of his knowledge to be boundless as his power; and he beholds all that can be, could have been, has been, is, or shall be. But, moreover, mere will and intellect do not round out into completeness the sphere of spiritual being. There is another energy, as our minds necessarily conceive, resident *within* these, and without which they are not; and this is *love*. The love is as absolute as the power or the wisdom. But of this hereafter. Suffice it to say, now, that in finding the Eternal Person, we have come into the view of our soul's Lord and King. Ranging the vague immensity and eternity in search of the centre and the throne, we have come upon it, at last, and find it; not empty, the seat of vacant laws, nor yet the desolate penetralium of vast and brute force, but the home of the Infinite Glory — not unfamiliar — and the sanctuary of the presence of Him, whom we are privileged to name OUR FATHER! who is of like substance with ourselves, but not identical, of whose infinite and perfect image the sinless human soul is a similitude.

Thus great truths, glorious realities begin to loom up from beneath the edge of our horizon, and we feel impelled to hasten forward that we may do them reverence; but this is not yet permissible. A *falsehood* stands in our array, and we have not called it false! We can leave no traitor behind us; we must turn back.

In the process of our reasoning we reached a point whence we seemed to behold a *one eternal Element*, the original of all existence, and which, regarded as a purely natural power, is the materialist's God. We tacitly permitted him to call this a "unity," and an "original;" but proceeded, immediately, to prove that he was mistaken in calling it a merely natural, instead of a spiritual, power. We accepted his own ground, and then showed that the *ground* was other than he supposed it to be. We have now to acknowledge an error, and to affirm that there was *no ground at all*, that is,

I *We deny that the one original Element of the materialist is, in any proper philosophical sense, ONE, and that it can possibly be thought of, or at least thought out, as ORIGINAL.*

Let us see. We have, to begin with, the universe of earth and heaven. We find it made up of an immense variety of objects, solid, fluid, aerial; and containing powers most subtle and wonderful; agencies of light, heat, magnetism; principles of vitality and sensation; with the personal energies of mind, heart, and will. The philosopher enters, in the first place, upon a scrutiny of ponderable elements. He finds that a very great variety of them may be reduced to very few simples. The imponderable agents puzzle him somewhat; but he concludes, without serious difficulty, that sufficient skill would be able to resolve them, either into activities of other elements, or, perhaps, into the very primitive substance itself, from which all other things are made. As for mind and soul, he seems to himself easily to trace it back, through receding forms of animal existence, to its rudimentary state in the zoophytes, whose vague sensibility bears, he fancies, the closest resemblance to the chemical affinity which rules among the elemental atoms. It is, therefore, sufficiently plain to him, that human science has already proved the universe to be compounded of a comparatively small number of primal substances. But, small as this number is, it is yet too large; for the reason will not rest satisfied when told that the universe has — creators; and if his chemistry should succeed in reducing all these to *two*,

and should declare oxygen and hydrogen<sup>1</sup> to be, at once, the substance, and the life, and the soul of the world ; still, the mind obstinately refuses to be content, and demands, with as much pertinacity and eagerness as ever : “ But what is the ground and the spring of these *two* ? whence came they ? and what is their history ? Indeed, the difficulty is quite as real, and may be as great, with two as with two hundred. What is, now, our philosopher’s resource ? Why now, seeing that investigation has failed, he meditates ; and since the intractable elements baffle the resources of his chemistry, he throws them into the alembic of his imagination. Watching closely he sees, or seems to see, an immensely thin vapor issuing thence, an ether impalpable to every nicest sense, and unrecognizable by Chemistry’s subtlest detective police, seen only by the mind. It rises, and, in a twinkling, has spread itself throughout all space. It filleth immensity and inhabiteth eternity, the one primal substance, the great first being, the sole original, eternal, omnipresent, omnificient. Has it any qualities ? Not any in particular, but all in general. Is it any definite substance ? No, but the mother of substances, and the father. It is Proteus, and becomes anything and everything, not at will, however, but according to necessity — a great sea, brooded over by no spirit, eternally it is breaking into form, and, changing forms, giving forth all things, and, perhaps, receiving again into its infinite bosom all, as they in succession complete the cycle of their fate. In *this* he finds the reason and the rule, the beginning and the destiny of the universe.

Is there such a thing as carbon ? As known to sense, it is compounded of particles ; but, as seen by the understanding, each particle is merely but one definite and continuous limitation of the original infinite Energy. A portion of this Energy, in process of its eternal action — effect succeeding cause without end — stands, at the present moment, in this form. It is capable of being anything else. Just *now*, it is *this*.

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<sup>1</sup> See the speculations of Transcendental Chemistry.

Again : In a different place, do we discover a different thing, and name it — nitrogen ? Then we have merely to say : In this place the ancient Necessity has worked differently, so that the primal essence has come to wear a different form, and — nitrogen is accounted for.

Next, we stumble upon our own soul ; and this, too, we discover lying latent in the aboriginal abyss of entity. Thus we go the round of the world, and behold each several thing rise into being, and depart ; whereupon, we fold our robe about us, and sit down in peace — the *world* is at our feet. We fear lest we are transgressing our own canon in listening, so patiently, to this philosophy of materialism. But let us contemplate it. The materialist finds the beginning of all things in a certain indescribable *hyle* or first matter (rather, *mother* of matter). This, like an immense impalpable sea, is omnipresent ; and, being possessed with a multitude of energies, is ever simmering, as it were, and its vibration and its foam is this visible action, appearance, sensation, knowledge, will, which constitute the sensible and intelligible universe ; while *it* is, itself, the one only real, ultimate *substance*.

The materialist, like all other rational beings, is under the pressure of that relentless question which ever stirs up the mind with its inappeasable cry : *Whence* all this ? and *how* ? what is the beginning ? what the *unity* of the whole ? He too lies, in company with all his compeers, under this most stringent intellectual necessity of rising from the great chaos of diversity about him, to the vision of a *one original cause and reason*. All his philosophy is inadequate, as philosophy it is inept, if it fail of attaining *this*. He claims that he has attained it ; what has he done ? Exactly this : He has taken all existing with all possible things, shaken them well together, and then, by the solvent of his imagination, has melted them down into one vast “puddle,” in which every specific quality is neutralized by its contraries or correlatives, and all definiteness lost in universal indistinction. Thus, having *absolved* each thing of all separate and particular character, through intimacy of intermixture with everything

else, he has attained THE ABSOLUTE. This is the great Original, the one First Power. He finds *here* that unity, cause, essence, and law of all, which reason always demands, and for which all philosophy seeks. Here is, literally, the "solution" of the great problem.

But let us look at this solution a little more closely. It is no *unity*. An ocean is not a unity, not even though it be of one pure, unmixed element. Here, e. g., is a drop taken from it; and here, is another drop taken from another place, of course; we will say one mile distant from the first. Now look at those drops. Are they *one*? No, manifestly not one, but two. Are they identical? And is this one that, and is that one this, and is each one both? No, manifestly; but each one is itself alone, and not the other. Are they of the same substance, absolutely the *same*? Not the same, surely, but only similar, exactly similar. And this is true of all the drops, and all the particles, even of the minutest atoms in all that infinite sea. Undoubtedly. Each particle is itself, and not its neighbor; and no one part whatsoever is identical with any other part whatsoever. And so, this great sea, instead of being an absolute unity, is as complete a diversity as any philosopher need demand for his problem. The ocean is not *one*, but merely of *one sort*. It is a multitude, though the multitude are all alike.

When you can take us to the centre of your abysm, and show us there a something which creates each point in this ocean, a *unity* which establishes and sustains each particle in being and in action, then will you have brought us face to face with a true unity, and have found for us the object of our search. But,

II. This one original of the materialist is not even an ocean of *one pure element*; it is *many elements, or, at the very least, it must be two*.

We will grant, for the argument's sake, that all the substances known to chemists might be analyzed, were the manipulators skilful enough, and reduced to *two* simple elements; also, that from these two a material universe might by possibility have constructed itself. But it is *not*

conceivably possible that *one* pure natural element *should have worked itself out into the diversity of the physical world.* Such mere sameness could not have wrought differences.

If we suppose that, in the beginning, there are two distinct elements, then we may conceive the two, in combining, to form a third; the third, again, with each of the other two, forms a fourth and a fifth; and these, together with their after combinations and their mutual modifications, form a still greater variety of elements, by varied degrees of union and influence, again producing varied degrees and kinds, in endless permutation. Thus, according to a law which might, perhaps, be supposed inherent in the original two, a material universe might be imagined to build itself up.

But, now, instead of this *twain*, let there be but *one* pure universal element, and no universe is conceivably possible. From this *one* nothing whatsoever can be supposed to spring in any one part or place, which does not also spring in every other part or place; that is, there can never be any diversity; and a "universe" is impossible.

The conditions of our problem are, the same thing everywhere, and this everywhere in the same state. Now, what is there anywhere to make a difference? Is it said, there is a *law* within it, necessitating action and change? But that law is in it all, necessitating in every point the same change; and this infinite sea never loses its dreary monotony. It cannot become worlds. It cannot be the original of even a material universe. Hence, that great ocean into which the materialist melted down the existing multiplicity and variety, so far from being an absolute unity, cannot even be of one *sort*, but, at the very least, by the necessity of his own argument, contains *two* distinct elements; elements eternally distinct, and that cannot be supposed to merge and lose themselves in each other; and so, his "*one* original," in order to be an "*original*," must be two or more. But,

III. Let us concede to him, temporarily, the privilege of supposing, *that he has reached a true unity, a one pure power, which, lying, as it were, underneath the great abyss, has constituted each point and particle of material existence.* This is

not a sea, but it makes the sea. And it is a *purely natural power*. WHAT IS IT ?

a. Whatever it be, one thing is clear, *it is not matter*. By the very supposition, it is not only deprived of all essential material qualities, such as extension, and the like, but it is definitely *set over against* matter, as an entity logically anterior to it, and the active originating cause of it. The matter that we know of is its effect, not itself. Extension is not an attribute of itself, but only of its product. This power is not matter, though all matter, and mind, is but this power.

In putting his statement into this shape, therefore, the objector ceases to be a materialist (*materia*) and becomes, shall we say? a *matrist* (*mater*), ascribing the origin of the universe, not to matter, but to a certain nondescript *mother* of matter, the invention of his own imagination. Having melted the universe down in his furnace, and finding the flux still unmanageable, he has now, by a violent effort, sublimated and concentrated it all into a single mathematical point of pure natural power. From the infinite energy of this *punctum*, the universe has sprung, mind and matter both. This power, it is claimed, acting under the strict law of necessity, goes forth eternally in action, and each individual thing is thus caused to stand forth in its own place and time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Even if such an hypothesis could suffice for those existences, which, like this supposed original, are under the law of necessity, it encounters in voluntary beings an insurmountable obstacle. Were it conceded that such a power might be equal to the production of a material universe, yet, when we come to the realm of spiritual energies, its strength is palsied, and it cannot cross the line. This god is, at best, but a god of the valleys; and when we call upon him to ascend the hills, and to enter with us the solemn presence of those mysterious energies who act of their own free will—upon those heights where nature's kings hold their court, then his spell ceases. He falls powerless, crippled and dumb, the instant he touches the other side of the boundary line.—Although this point has been already discussed, yet it is so essential that it will bear review.

The universe, it is affirmed, is the *product of a Power acting by a natural law, a strict necessity*. Then, we reply, are *all* the products of this Power under the same law, and bound, with equal strictness, by the same necessity (pp. 415, 416). The stream cannot rise higher than its fountain-head. The *genus* cannot overpass the limits of its kind. By the supposition, there is, in the beginning, but one Power. That Power is of a certain kind, viz. *not voluntary and personal*,

But we have not yet answered the question: *What is it?* This question may be answered in part, very easily. It is a merely physical power. It acts unconsciously, and towards whatsoever ends it may be working, *it* has, itself, no end. It is a blind force acting from necessity.

Moreover, it has an absolute unity; and, in fact, the only true substance, being alone eternal, and immutably perpetuating change. From it, all attraction and repulsion has proceeded, affinities that draw atoms together, and the gravitation that rules worlds, the energies that operate in light, and in heat, in nerves, brains, souls; nay, the very forces themselves which *constitute* the hardness of things hard, and that repellancy which is the impenetrability of matter, the organic principle which is the central essence of vegetable and animal life, and even the intelligent and affectional free agency, in which the personal will has being. These all are but effluences, expansions, as it were, of this one power; are eternally resident therein, and taken with all the other forces that are real, or can be, they essentially constitute it. The power is itself to be conceived, however, as, in the absolute beginning, but a *point*; any, the least, diffusion is as fatal to this hypothesis as omnipresence itself; as having mere position, without size, and as *eternally active*. Now, what is this power?

*First*: What is its *original position*? Granted, that it is now extended, and exists wherever anything is, but, in the *beginning*, where is it? *Ans.* In a point. But where is that point? Has the philosopher any reason for saying that

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but strictly bound to the method of "cause and effect." The whole universe is in it — all *there* — each part sure to be "caused" in its time, each in turn, a necessary factor in causing its successor, and there is no thing, and no act, that is not strictly an "effect," and that does not "cause." This same law is everywhere; and there is nothing anywhere, nor can there be, which is not subject thereto, and which does not, in all its operation, act thereby. There is, and there can be, no free agent in the universe. The objector is imprisoned within walls of adamant to this conclusion. He is shut up within *his own premises*; an honorable and courteous constraint perhaps, when gracefully yielded to, but in this case a secure one.

The "Original," then, proposed by the *matrist* is incapable of fulfilling its function. It cannot *originate* the universe.



it is here, rather than there? None. Or, anywhere, rather than anywhere else? None. But it *must* be *somewhere*; and where it is, there it is by necessity; for, by supposition, this is not a voluntary power. Wherever it is, some necessity compels it to be there; and there is a cause of its presence at that point, and of its absence from every other. Now, *where* is it?

But here is another difficulty. The "original power" has been proved *omnipresent*; that is, to be either *in act*, or else (in case it be a voluntary power) potentially present everywhere. But the power of which we are now speaking, is purely physical. If, at every moment and eternally, it *can* act at all points of space, then must it *be acting* eternally at all points. For, if, at any instant, it is *not* acting at any one point, then it was impossible for it to be acting *there*, at that time. But, if the objector says that it *is* acting at all points eternally, then he asserts the eternal existence of an infinite *ocean* of power, as the cause of the universe; and so falls back into that "great sea" where his argument was drowned once, and there it is drowned again, and is twice dead.

But the question still pursues us: What is this Power? Let us return and consider. We are told, here, of a force which is somewhere, and that necessary, and yet without any cause, or any reason for being there rather than elsewhere; which is in one particular point *only*, and this by a necessity that is absolute, while there is no possible cause supposable that could exclude it from any or from every other point; and while, furthermore, it is omnipresent. It is *there*, within space, yet not occupying space, although a real *physical* force. Since it occupies no space, the point where it is might be supposed to be surrounded, and in fact to be occupied, by some other physical power, which should yet meet with no opposition from this force already there, because this is so wonderful a force that it has no extent. It is *there*, and has never moved, nor will it move thence, for there is nothing to move it (and it acts from necessity alone), but *there* it remains, permanently creating and constituting the whole universe, through all mutations; it is *just* there, and could

not have been and can never be elsewhere, and yet no agency limits it, or, being anterior to it, dictated its position. It is an absolute unity, a one *pure* element of the most perfect simplicity; and yet has, by an inner necessity, unfolded this pure simplicity of its self into all things; and all the diversities that are or can be, are eternally contained within this single and simple force. It has ever acted by necessity; and, at every successive step, was compelled to do as it did; and yet, it has ever been the sole original and absolutely supreme Power, wholly unconfined, unconstrained, passive in nothing, the first spring of all possible activity; in fact, active from eternity without reaction, every energy being but a radiance from itself. And notwithstanding it is a unity by being a *punctum*, it is also a diversity in being an *immensum*; for, in its eternal action, it is eternally omnipresent. What is this *original physical Force*? We cannot say.

It is proper now, however, that we inquire into the origin of all this confusion, and endeavor to understand whence this amazing chaos of contradictions has sprung. It comes, we think, from the effort to conceive of a material spirit, of a physical will, of a necessity-God; to find the *beginning*; in other words, *in that which is merely natural, and under the law of cause and effect.*

The materialist clings to the notion that nature is all. He believes that natural science can compass all; that necessity rules the universe; and that the world's great problem is to be solved like any in mechanics or chemics, its peculiar difficulty arising merely from the seemingly vast number and complexity of its factors. He proposes, then, to account for all things and all events, without conceding a spiritual personal Creator.

Of necessity, however, he must ascribe to his supposed Original, all the *natural* attributes of a personal God. In the very beginning of his statement, he must set forth to our view a something, a real power, which is eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, ever-active. More than this: he finds himself obliged to deny to this "First Cause" *almost all* the peculiar attributes which characterize matter; for,

matter being, in some sense at least, its product, cannot be identical with it. But his own argument will not suffer him to rest even here. Compelled to affirm the *unity* of his "Original Power," he is at last driven to divest it of *all* material attributes whatsoever, except that one which could not be surrendered without giving up materialism altogether, and ascribing to his "Original" the distinctive trait of spirituality, viz. freedom. He still holds fast to "necessity." To such extremes does he find himself constrained to go, towards acknowledging a personal Cause, that he even denies to his First Power the relation of space, so far as that can be denied (and farther than it can be intelligibly denied) to what is physical. He strips it of all *extent*; and, though compelled to give it position, is unable to assign it any particular position; and is, in fact, logically necessitated to lift it altogether out of the relation of space; which, however, he is, by a logical necessity equally stringent, forbidden to do, because his main proposition is, that the power is a *physical* one.

Thus he has denied to his original Being all the attributes of matter save one, necessity; and endeavors to ascribe to it all spiritual attributes save those involved in one, viz. moral freedom, or personality; and after all finds himself, not surprisingly, in a net of contradictions. Surely this is not strange; for is it not plain that he is endeavoring to form a conception of a being which shall be, at once, independent and enslaved, absolute and yet under constraint of absolute law; of a "force," which yet occupies no space; of a one pure natural element, which is yet the *involution* whence an infinite diversity shall evolve itself; of a *beginning*, in short, which being in *all* things necessitated, needs itself to be begun, and, in its helpless unity, must forever wait in vain for something to change it, and enable it to become something more? In a word, he is predicating attributes specifically spiritual, of that which he assumes to be merely material. He is striving, in brief, to conceive of a *material spirit*, of a *physical will*, of a *necessity-God*.

The truth is, that *no unity can be supposed to be omnipresent*

save a spiritual one; that there is no "absolute beginning" conceivable, except in will; that there is, even, no pure "unity" whatsoever, save that which we behold in a "person;" nor any possible "Original" for the world, save a personal God, who is not the world, nor the "cause" of the world, but the author, the sustainer, and the ruler of it. These statements, however, each demand some further elucidation.

First: NO POWER WHICH IS A UNITY CAN BE OMNIPRESENT, UNLESS IT IS A SPIRITUAL POWER.

The very object of our argument is to find the *one* from which (or whom) the universe came, and whence it forever depends. Our "original," therefore, *must* be a unity.

Again, it has been proved that the "First Power" is *omnipresent*, in the sense that it must be conceived of as present, in the beginning, as much at one place as another, and as at least capable of acting at every place. Now if a *natural* power is, at any given moment, *not* acting in any particular place, then how can it, or could it, at that moment, act there? Wherever it operates it operates by an absolute necessity. Wherever it does *not* operate, there it is *inoperative*, also by necessity, and *cannot* act. The only conception, then, of an *omnipresent physical force*, is of one which is really acting everywhere; a conception i. e. of an infinite sea, or abyss, of natural power. This, as has been shown, is not a unity. No physical unity, then, can be omnipresent; and the "First Cause," which philosophy is searching after, cannot be a physical cause, and so cannot be, strictly, *cause* at all. But,

Secondly: THERE IS NO "ABSOLUTE BEGINNING" CONCEIVABLE, EXCEPT IN WILL.

The "beginning" cannot be begun; neither can there be anything anterior to it, which, by acting upon it, shall stir it up to make a beginning. The "beginning" must be purely and strictly *self-active*. Matter is not so; neither this matter about us, nor any other possible substance, which, like it, is under the law of necessity. For, by this law, there is no action without a cause; and the action of the cause precedes the action which is its effect, and then that *causal* activity it-

self, if a necessary one, must have been caused again; and so we find ourselves, once more, stumbling up the ladder of an "infinite series." There is no such conception as that of a self-agent necessitated. The two terms are contradictory and cancel each other. Such language is jargon, and no statement of thought.

It has been proved that the "Original Power" is active from eternity. But if the original be a natural power, then this action must have been *caused* by something else, which proves itself, therefore, the true Original; but on the supposition that it also is physical, this one immediately surrenders his crown to another, and then that other to another still: and the last that we can see is, the insignia of royalty flying, with infinite speed, along an infinite line of powers; each one of them became a king and no king the same instant, and discrowned forever: The "infinite series" again.

There is no "beginning" conceivable, then, in anything which is under necessity, or anywhere but in *will*, which, by its very idea and definition, is self-active. The will, being essentially intelligent, makes and chooses its own object, and originates its own action. So strictly is this true, that the instant you bring in any other "cause," you destroy personality. So plainly is this true, that there is no man so feeble as not to be conscious of doing some things, and of having a corresponding responsibility; or so stupid as to believe himself answerable for what is not done by himself.

Since, therefore, the Power which originates all power, all substance, all phenomena and events, must be self-active, and since no powers are self-active but such as are of that kind which we call "voluntary" or "personal," the absolute beginning can be found nowhere else but in a *personal Author*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We have a clear conception of voluntary action, and a positive consciousness of originating it; and though this action, in us, finite and created beings, is put forth under close limitations, and upon a basis of occasions furnished to us, we readily understand that, with an *eternal* Spirit — the Original — no such constraints can exist, and no such basis be needed; but that his absolute intelligence must furnish objects at which his absolute will aims. Thus, though differing from us immensely, as infinite must from finite, and the original from things derivative, he does not so differ but that we find ourselves in his similitude, and call his action "voluntary," and call him a "Will," a "Person."

But we are now ready to go a step further yet. We have already affirmed and proved that there can be no omnipresent *unity* save a personal one; also that there is no *beginning* save a *personal* one. We now affirm,

Thirdly : THAT THERE IS NO TRUE, STRICT UNITY, EVEN, THAT IS NOT PERSONAL. FOR,

a. Every natural force whatsoever may be supposed to be divided; must be viewed as divisible; and so, *has no absolutely necessary unity.*

The smallest particle of matter has its sides or circumference, which can be cut by a plane that, of the one, would make two. The thinnest and minutest lamina, that at any moment you can think of, may, the next moment, be logically and rationally imagined the base of a pyramid whose apex should be, by any desired ratio, smaller than the base. So much for physical force embodied in solidity. But its form makes no difference.

Think of it as fluent, and moving in that simplest of directions, a straight line. First, this is not a "mathematical" line, for it must have some thickness, since it has material substance. This line of power, then, can even be conceived of as split longitudinally, by a wedge from that pyramid, if you please; and, certainly, can be cut across.

But reduce your conception to the last degree of evanescence, which shall yet leave any real natural power. Conceive of its utmost concentration, viz. into the nearest approximation in reality possible, to a "mathematical" point. This point is not a hard atom, but something else. We will not exact too great precision, a force, *something*. Still, it cannot be absolutely without extent; for then, as a physical force, it must be without being. Yet, if it be viewed as having extent, it must also be viewed as divisible. It has a north part, and a south part, an eastern half, and a western. But if divisible, then it has no essential, no *necessary* unity, since its unity is such as may, logically and rationally, be conceived as lost. It is impossible, then, to *conceive* of any merely physical power, as being essentially and necessarily one. Its unity, at any time, exists by chance,

merely; that is, by a temporary, and to us, uncertain and vague necessity, not by a necessity eternal and absolute.<sup>1</sup>

But, let us even suppose, as the objector affirms, that the universe is at bottom a mere physical force, and that this all is a *unit*. Then are all souls blended and lost in this necessary indestructible physical unity, and blended, not merely with one another, but with all matter also. And, since this unity is so absolute, we must go one step further, and affirm *this*: The whole physical force of the universe, (for it is *eternally* one and indivisible) is in each part in souls, as well as in atoms, and in each act, alike of matter and of mind. For, being *essentially* indivisible, it must be in each thing, in it all the time, and in all its motions, *all* these, again, not potentially, but *actually*. That is, all particular forces are *actually* and *physically infinite*, in mind as well as in matter; all powers are irresistible, all resistances immovables; all momentum and all inertia, all intelligence and all stupidity, are alike infinite. No wonder, that, from the boundless crash and conflict of the tremendous forces of this "unity," wherein infinite meets infinite in reckless concussion, results of remarkable brilliancy should ensue. When such flint meets such steel, it must be that celestial fires are elicited. The existence of suns, and comets, and philosophers is a problem no longer.

On the whole, is it not sufficiently clear, that, whether we select any conceivable part of the physical universe, or view it entire, it is impossible to imagine any merely natural power to have in itself, and to be, an essentially indestructible unity? We think it is clear. But,

b. Every "person" must be conceived of as essentially, necessarily, indestructibly, absolutely *one*.

That which says "I" cannot be divided, or be supposed

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<sup>1</sup> If the possibility of an eternal, physical unity could be proved, this unity could not be conceived of as originating the universe, because, by supposition having no other material than itself to make it of, and being itself an absolute, indestructible unity, it can neither make nor become a diversity. A spiritual Power, however, in its very idea, is one that "works undivided, operates unspent." The substance of the soul is not diminished by living, nor the force of the will divided by willing.

to be divided. (1) It cannot be divided in *time*. No man can think of *himself*, of his own personality, as having existed in successive parts. But, if he remembers the past, it was he himself, whom he remembers as living then. It is he himself who lives now; and himself whom he thinks of, when he anticipates the future.

(2) Nor in *space*. No man can think of himself as being partly in one place, and partly in another; but wherever he is, *he* is there.

(3) Nor into different *kinds* of things. The self is not dissected into sensation, knowledge, will; but it is the self itself which feels, knows, and chooses.

All the powers of the spirit, are powers which *it* possesses; and, however much they may diminish or change, the unity of the central, self-affirming, self-active agent is neither destroyed nor marred. It is not possible to conceive of this unity as not involved in the essential idea of "person," and of "spirit." While the being lasts, this unity is necessary and indestructible, has no degrees, does not vary in different individuals, but *is absolute in all*.

We have already endeavored to show that there is no "beginning" conceivable (for anything) save in a will. But even if we had been wrong there, we cannot be wrong in affirming,

Fourthly: THAT FOR THE UNIVERSE, AT LEAST, THERE IS NO CONCEIVABLE ORIGINAL, SAVE A PERSONAL AUTHOR.

Here is an immense system claimed, by the objector, to be altogether material, i. e. subject to the strict, perpetual operation of "cause and effect," a combined movement of *natural forces*. There is no God, he claims, superior to the *whole* of all these parts. God, if such a term be proper, and the universe, are identical. Or, perhaps he refuses the term altogether, and says: there is no God, no spirit; matter is all, mind is but one of its operations. With such views, he proceeds to inquire for the origin of the universe, the *great first cause*. In other words, having here an infinite chain, he is looking for a hook whereon he may hang it. Unless he find this, the whole falls, instantly, out of his sight. He *must* have a *first cause*, an original.



But is it not plain, that the original of the universe, is not *in* the universe; and that the *cause* must not be looked for among its *effects*? that the chain cannot be hung on any one of its own links, or on them all together. If there is good sense or right reason, in this perpetual search of philosophy after the "one original," then must that "one" be found outside of what we call the universe, outside, and above; anterior, in order of nature, certainly, and superior in essential dignity, in real power, and in comprehensiveness of being. Surely, the original of the universe is not wholly contained within it.

But it is equally clear, that you do not get out of this "sphere of cause and effect," until you have entered that of free-agency; you do not emerge from the natural, until you come to the spiritual. You have not escaped from matter, unless you have reached mind. In short, you have not got outside of the world, unless you find yourself in the presence of a *personal* cause, i. e. not "cause," but *author*. You are still entangled in the interminable succession of cause and effect, *until you see God*.

**SYLOGISMS.** The "origin" of the world is out of the world. The world (the objector himself claims) is all a sphere of cause and effect. The "origin" of the world is out of the sphere of cause and effect. But free-agents are the only existences that are out of the sphere of cause and effect. The "origin" of the world, then, is a free agent.

*Or again:* The "beginning" cannot have been "caused." All action is caused, save that of "persons." The act of the beginning, then, was the act of a person.

**OBJECTION.** A single objection here demands a brief notice. It is said: "In proving the existence of God, you have but plunged into deeper embarrassments than ever; have escaped from one mystery, only to fall into a greater mystery. If the world needs to be accounted for, much more, God; and, if the universe without this incomprehensible being, furnishes a difficult problem, much greater does the difficulty become, when this new infinitude is added to the old."

ANSWER. I We started in the endeavor to account for the "world." We have done so. If it is now proposed that we account for *God*, it is manifest, that a *new question* is propounded to us, wholly distinct from the one with which we started, and which we have been discussing.

We started to find the "first ONE." It is simply unreason to speak of another "first" anterior to that, or to require a unity more complete than the "one." We sought to find the key which should unlock the mystery of creation. It is absurd to ask us to unlock the key. We aimed to find the principle which should give us a *rational view* of all things. The principle that does this, stands within its own light, and needs not to be made to appear reasonable by the light of any other principle. That which explains all things, is, by the very supposition, as by the necessity of the case, *the final statement*. That being, the recognition of whose existence makes the perception of all other existence a rational conception, is the primal mystery. The primal mystery, explaining *all* others, is explained by none. But the objector may put his statement into another shape and *deny* that a *reasonable principle* has been given, that the affirmation which we have reached has any light of its own to stand in.

To this, in REPLY, II. We affirm that it *is* reasonable, and that it *does* stand in the light of its own perfect reasonableness, commending itself, not to the intellect alone, but to every department of the soul, and eliciting a thrill of acknowledgment from every fibre of man's being.

This assertion is not of a nature that admits *à priori* demonstration; but it can be illustrated and proved in an endless fulness and perfection of detail. Such illustration, however, must for the present, be omitted.

We are willing to rest, here, our demonstration of the truth laid down on p. 406, "X," *that the sole, original, absolute power is SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL*; and delay the conclusion of this Essay, merely to observe, that the result now reached, the *great facts* of the visible, and of the "intelligible" universe harmonize. Everywhere behold material forces subjected to ordinances of wisdom; working in com-

bination for intelligible and rational ends. Whether we contemplate the structure of our own bodies, or of the world; meditate upon atoms, or upon suns; upon those invisible seeds, finer than minutest particles of impalpable powder, which no secret depth and no distance can escape, or on that stellar dust which clouds the blueness of the heavens by night, that inconceivable system of solar and planetary orbs to which our own is imagined to belong, and of which the earth, with her sister spheres, constitutes but an infinitesimal and utterly insignificant part, whether we sink or soar, we behold everywhere the same subjection of material force to reasonable aims. This glorious vision crowns our metaphysic dream with new fulness of assurance; and we rejoice to find the same eternal one revealed in the universe without, as in the mind. Outward facts, as well as inner processes, hold us fast in the conclusion, that the highest and truest conception of the original power of the universe, is that of a *spiritual power involving and using all material forces*. And so, we pronounce firmly, confidently, but with eager inquiry, and intense longing, the GREAT NAME—GOD!

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## ARTICLE VII.

### NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

#### I. NORTON'S TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPELS.<sup>1</sup>

PROBABLY no theological work of equal bulk has ever been published in America, which combines so many outward attractions as are presented in this work of Prof. Norton. The paper is firm and pure, the type clear and elegant, there is a liberal width of margin, and every page is significant of affluence.

The editorial labor performed on the work is distinguished by its obvious

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<sup>1</sup> A Translation of the Gospels, with Notes. By Andrews Norton. In two volumes. 8vo. pp. 443 and 565. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.