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THE ABSENCE OF  
DESIGN IN NATURE.

A Lecture

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BY

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## THE ABSENCE OF DESIGN IN NATURE.

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It is claimed by theologians that the order of Nature, when rightly interpreted, proves the existence of a great contriver or designer ; and, it is further maintained, by many, that the chief, if not the sole object in view by that great designer is, and always has been, the welfare of the human race.

Assuming the existence of a Deity, endowed with the attributes of infinite wisdom and power, it follows as a logical necessity, that whatever he designs and executes must be faultless in plan and perfect in workmanship. In other words, a perfect God can make no mistakes. If we find what we believe to be mistakes in nature, we may explain their existence in one only of two ways. First, we may assume that we ourselves are mistaken ; or, if this is not possible, then we must conclude that the imperfections observed are not the product of divine wisdom and workmanship.

The first explanation, which simply assumes that in all such cases we ourselves are in error, has proven so convenient to theologians and so anodyne to the human intellect, that it is usually adopted, without question or remonstrance. We assume that what appears to be useless and purposeless in nature will present a different aspect when we come to more fully understand the matter ; and if, after prolonged and thorough investigation, the difficulty still persists, we hush the voice of reason by still assuming that we have not yet gone deeply enough into the matter. We are invited into the field of nature to observe the evidences of design which are to prove the existence of a Great Designer, but at the very threshold of our inquiry are warned that we must only heed evidence in favor of the proposition in question. When difficulties appear and doubts arise, we are admonished that in times past it has often happened

that what men have thought useless or even injurious has been found, on further inquiry, to be useful or even essential, and that, therefore, a like solution of every problem is certain to result from adequate investigation. We appeal to reason to prove a proposition, and then deliberately reject all the adverse evidence, assuming that it must be imperfect, misleading, and false, or it would not be adverse. It is as if the State, which assumes all prisoners before trial to be innocent, should refuse to receive or credit the evidence of the prosecution, because it has often happened in times past that men, esteemed guilty beyond doubt, by the bench, the bar, and the people, have been shown by the developments of time to be absolutely innocent.

The alternative of this mode of disposing of the subject on *ex parte* evidence is, if imperfections and purposeless parts are found in nature, to deny that nature furnishes any proof of design. The existence of such harmony and adaptation of means to ends as we perceive about us, cannot be accepted as proofs of design, while there remains even one imperfect or purposeless structure in nature; for we cannot conceive that a perfect God made a single mistake, or left any work in an imperfect or unfinished condition. Nor can we conceive that God designed some parts of nature and neglected other parts. All is, therefore, the product of divine plan and workmanship, or none is.

There is, however, a third method of solving this problem, which, at first glance, is apparently very profound, but which, on investigation, proves to be a transparent sophistry. Thus, it is said that behind all matter and force there may exist an agency or being, who created the universe, with all its materials and forces, and who, having created matter and the laws to which it is subject, is content to allow nature to proceed in obedience to the original divine plan. This is simply foreordination and predestination applied to the universe. But it will be noticed that in stating this proposition, we are obliged to refer to an agency or "force *behind all force*," which involves a contradiction of terms. In other words, we must assume that, somewhere behind all matter and force, there is yet another force, which is an absurd proposition.

Paley and others have written many volumes with a view of proving the existence of this hypothetical being

behind nature, using arguments which, in the main, are analogous to the celebrated watch argument, which may be thus briefly stated: A traveller finds a watch, and, on examination of its mechanism, notes abundant evidence of design, which induces him to believe that the watch did not come by chance, but had a designer and maker. Next, the anatomist and physiologist examine the body of the watch-maker, and, on careful inspection, find it to be more wonderful in many respects than the watch, wherefore they conclude that it must have been designed and manufactured by an artificer possessed of superhuman knowledge and power. The theologian now takes up the clue and finds that this Great Designer lives somewhere in the sky, or behind nature; and, although he does not frankly say as much, evidently concludes that this mighty being is so *very* wonderful that *he* did not require either a designer or maker at all! For the sake of argument, however, we may neglect the absurdity involved in the doctrine of design, that God himself must have been designed by a greater God, and he by another, and so on, *ad infinitum*, and address ourselves at once to the facts of nature.

That there is a remarkable adaptation of living beings to their environment, is apparent to all, and has in all ages and among all peoples, originated and maintained the theory of an intelligent, designing Deity. Can this wonderful adaptation of living beings to their environment be otherwise explained? The doctrine of evolution—natural selection—the survival of the fittest, explains all in a most satisfactory manner. Evolution is, therefore, the designing hand. True, steps in the development of beings of every kind are not yet, and, perhaps never will be, made out with certainty. It may never be known, for example, what combination of circumstances drove the whale—originally a land animal—into the sea; but conditions having that tendency are readily conceivable. Those who refuse to accept the doctrine of evolution, because all the steps and stages in the evolution of animals and plants have not been observed, and cannot be reproduced experimentally, occupy the illogical position of rejecting the evidence of an army of witnesses simply because of the absence of one or a few, the testimony of whom they hope, almost against hope, would be contradictory to those at hand. For the same reason we might refuse to accept all the sciences, and indeed

all knowledge, not excepting theology, which, indeed, would be the first to fail by this test.

Since all the adaptation observed in nature is fully and rationally accounted for by the theory of evolution—indeed, we might say, is required by that theory—it is plainly a violation of the fundamental laws of human reason to attempt to explain these relations by invoking miraculous agency—a cause unknown to science, and of the existence of which no proof can be given in this age.

Pushing aside for the time, however, all of these grave objections, which in themselves are fatal to the doctrine of design, let us see if the facts so much relied upon by Paley, Lord Brougham, and others warrant, in any degree, the inferences drawn from them. As before remarked, any creature or organ designed and made by an omniscient and omnipotent creator should be absolutely perfect in every respect. What creature is perfectly adapted to its environment, or what organ performs its functions perfectly? The eye, on which teleologists place so much stress, is very far from perfection. The number of persons seen with eye-glasses and other devices to aid ordinary vision, shows that this organ is, to say the least, very easily disordered in many different ways. Optically the eye is not perfectly planned to guard against spherical or chromatic aberration, while, in mechanical construction, it is inferior to the cheapest optical instrument in the market. Astigmatism, or want of sphericity of the cornea, is present in a greater or less degree in the case of every human eye, while the crystalline lens seems to be even more imperfect than the cornea in this respect. Moreover, these refracting media, the cornea and crystalline lens, are not truly centered, as Helmholtz has shown, on the optical axis of the eye. The refracting media of the eye, as the aqueous humor, the crystalline lens, and vitreous humor, are not uniformly transparent, and hence, rays of light during transmission, undergo absorption and refraction, giving rise to various shadows, halos, and fringes, which fall upon the retina to the great impairment of vision. Even in the best of eyes there are numerous opaque granules, or floating patches, in the humors, giving rise to moving spots or spectres, so well observed and yet so annoying while using the microscope, especially if the field is well illuminated. Long-sightedness and short-sightedness are common difficulties arising from want of proper relation

between the refracting power of the eye and its depth, or the antero-posterior diameter. All of these difficulties are practically overcome or avoided in even the cheapest photographic cameras in the market, and yet no one has ever claimed that the camera had a miraculous origin, or that the wonderful design manifest in its mechanism proves its designer to have been a god. In the inner corner of every human eye is seen a little mass of flesh containing a little plate of cartilage. It is the vestige of the *membrana nictitans* or third eye-lid of birds and reptiles, and is not of the slightest use to man. Why is it there? Its existence, which is inexplicable on the theory of design, is not only consistent with the theory of evolution, but is one among the thousands of unanswerable arguments in favor of that theory.

The ear is, in many respects, as imperfect as the eye. There are, in the structure of the external ear, and attached to it, ten muscles—all in a rudimentary condition, and all absolutely useless. Indeed, all of the ear visible to the eye, except a small shell-shaped depression immediately around the opening, and not so large as an ordinary teaspoon, is completely useless, and, in consequence of its liability to freeze, is to some extent injurious. For what purpose, then, was this mass of useless material formed? Does its beauty or its utility as an additional member on which jewellery can be worn justify its existence? The internal construction of the ear is quite as faulty as that of the eye; but for the present we must content ourselves with only the observations that we cannot hear either very high or very low tones, and that we judge but very imperfectly of either the direction or distance of sounds.

Turning our attention now to other structures, we find, for example, on looking into the mouth of a child, a set of teeth beginning to appear soon after birth, and which continue to cut their way through swollen and tender gums from time to time, during two or three years. Hardly is the last one of these milk-teeth visible, before the whole set begins to vanish, before the incoming, so-called "permanent set." If the child is able to survive the tooth-aches and teething-syrups and diseases of a dangerous character incident to this period, and largely caused by the cutting and shedding of one set of teeth and the appearance of another set, it may hope, by the time it is able to vote, to have

cut the last wisdom tooth. But, as a rule, long before this time the service of the dentist is needed on the new crop of teeth. As a matter of fact, the dentist furnishes us the only strictly reliable and permanent teeth we ever have. No one can doubt that the process of teething, and the teeth produced, are far from bearing the impress of perfection. Indeed, few animals having any teeth at all are not better off in this respect than the human race.

Looking a little further down the throat, we observe a pair of tonsils, of no earthly use except as filling for a small amount of space which certainly might have been filled with some tissue not so liable to become inflamed and swollen, as in tonsillitis or quinsy. In surveying this region of the body, we notice that the opening into the trachea, or windpipe, lies just *below* the opening into the œsophagus or gullet, so that every breath of air through the nostrils must cross the path of food to the stomach, and, what is worse, every grain of food and every drop of liquid, on its way to the stomach, *must pass over the opening into the trachea*, thus endangering the life of man every time a mouthful of food is swallowed. That the danger is real, and not simply imaginary, is abundantly proven by the large number of deaths due to choking caused by the impaction of pieces of food, often relatively small, in the glottis during meals. Even when death does not result, the evil of the arrangement is apparent in the spasmodic coughing caused by the entrance of small crumbs or drops of liquid during meals.

The arrangement of the various digestive fluids in the alimentary canal is far from being the best one possible. In the mouth, food meets saliva, an *alkaline* liquid having a tendency to convert starch into sugar, but this process is hardly begun before the food reaches the stomach, where it meets an *acid* liquid—the gastric juice—which effectually destroys the alkalinity of the saliva which had been swallowed, and thus at once and for ever prevents its action. Even the ptyaline, the ferment principle of the saliva, is destroyed by the action of the gastric juice. After leaving the stomach food encounters two *alkaline* liquids—the bile and pancreatic juice, the latter secretion being simply *saliva again*. Here, digestion begun but not completed in the stomach, is arrested, and the kind which began in the mouth is again set up! Such an arrangement is not justified

by any principles of chemistry or of economy with which we are acquainted.

These, and hundreds of similar defects, are wholly unaccountable by, and incompatible with any theory of Theistic design, but they are in perfect harmony with the theory of Evolution, which assumes that man has attained his present degree of perfection by the gradual modification and improvement of inferior organisms. His organisation has been built up on the piece-upon-piece and patch-upon-patch plan, and hence is far more complex, in many respects, than it might have been had it been directly planned by an all-wise architect, or even by a good physiologist.

Design implies *purpose*, as much as it does the existence of a designer. With this principle in view, let us glance at one or two sample facts in nature. For what purpose was such an animal as the tiger designed? This animal has been endowed with great strength, sharp teeth and claws, acuteness of sight and hearing, a favorable color, and remarkable cunning—all for what purpose? The only possible answer is, “to enable him to capture and kill other animals as food.” But we find that the tiger’s food has not been neglected. The antelope exhibits as much evidence of design as the tiger, but the purpose is evidently different. His acuteness of sight and hearing, and especially his fleetness, are designed to enable him to run away from the tiger! Here, then, is design working against design, and we are assured that “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” If the antelope was designed as food for the tiger, why was he given such desire and capacity to run away and neglect his duty to the latter? Less design bestowed upon the antelope would have necessitated less elaboration of the tiger! It is worthy of note, however, that of all animals on which tigers love to dine, man was most easily captured and slain, until his own ingenuity gave him weapons for defence. Does this fact indicate that man was specially designed as food for tigers and lions? But, seriously, why should one animal have been designed to eat up another? What possible profit or pleasure can the Deity derive from this world-wide and incessant slaughter? Every second of time records the dying agonies of thousands of animals to whom life was, apparently, as sweet as it is to us. Indeed, this universal butchery and murder seen on every hand throughout the animal kingdom is one of the

chief hindrances to the refinement of men. It is impossible to learn mercy from nature, and yet, without mercy, man is a brutal savage,

We are aware of the fact that, but for the existence of carnivorous animals, there would have been far less variety in the animal kingdom; but it is also evident that, with less variety, there might have been even a greater number of individuals in existence. If it is said that, but for carnivorous animals—including man for this argument—herbivorous animals would soon possess the earth and crowd out the human race, we answer, that a little design, causing them to multiply less rapidly, would have obviated that danger. If man was the chief object of the solicitude of the Great Designer, those troublesome animals might have been omitted altogether.

We have heard the explanation that God made all the animals, as well as everything else, "for his own glory," which implies that he is exceedingly fond of blood and carnage, and further, that, before he created them, he was not quite as glorious as he wished to be.

The old race of theologians—unfortunately not yet quite extinct—claimed boldly that everything in existence was made for the use and benefit of man, directly or indirectly. When Galileo announced the discovery of the moons of Jupiter, the clergy asked him if they were visible to the unaided eye? On his replying that they were not, he was told that, since everything was made for the use of man, and since these alleged moons were not visible, and, therefore, were of no use to him, it followed, as a logical consequence, that they did not exist at all!

With the view of testing this theory, let us cull a few sample facts bearing upon this question from nature. There are at a least half a million species of plants in existence, of which man uses, directly or indirectly, about one in every three hundred. Are the remaining two hundred and ninety-nine simply passive and neutral? By no means. They drain the earth and air of the nutriment which would otherwise go to the support of the useful plants. There can be no neutrality in this matter. "He that is not for us is against us." What shall we do with such facts as these? Shall we admit their logic and say that the Great Designer fails three hundred times as often as he succeeds? But the whole truth is not yet told. Even in those cases in which

plants evince the most evidence of design, the degree of success attained is only partial. As articles of food, such fruits as crab-apples, wild cherries, May-apples, paw-paws, persimmons, etc., are very defective, both in taste and nutritive constituents; while, as remedies, the entire vegetable-kingdom fails to present a single perfect specimen. If medicinal plants had been designed by the Great Designer, who also designed the diseases they were intended to cure, we should have found them to be perfectly adapted to that end. With perfect remedies, the practice of medicine would long since have been a very simple and certain operation. Having diagnosed the case, the doctor might dismiss it, leaving the labor of looking up the right remedy in the catalogue and its administration to the patient or to his friends.

But even in the case of those plants found to be most useful as remedies, there is no relation between their place of growth and the use which is made of them. Thus, the cinchona tree, the most serviceable of all medicinal plants, is not found in low, marshy, malarious regions, where, as a remedy, it is most needed. On the contrary, it is found perched upon the top of a small area of the Andes mountains, a locality for a long time unknown, and now almost inaccessible to human beings. If we are told that the Creator put the cinchona in the best place for the welfare of the plant, we reply that man has since found a score of other localities in which it flourishes as well, and in some cases, better, than in its original home; and, secondly, that a little touch of Infinite design might have made it grow about Peru, Illinois, as well as in Peru, South America. But who designed the palmella or ague-plant, but for which cinchona would have been far less necessary? Here we see an organism, and there are hundreds of similar instances, exquisitely designed to cause disease, and, on the other hand, we find a remedy imperfectly designed to cure it. Here is another case of design warring against design. Nature teems with similar instances. Evidently, less design bestowed on *actinomyces*, *palmellae*, *trichina spiralis*, the itch animalcule, tape-worms, etc., would have obviated the necessity of designing an elaborate *materia medica*.

Turning our attention for a moment to the animal kingdom, we find that we use a score or two of animals largely and in various ways, and that we use the skins or other parts, and

sometimes the flesh, of a few hundred more ; but naturalists believe there are fully a million species of animals, great and small, in existence. Therefore more than ninety-nine per cent. of the species of animals in existence are not only of no service to man, but are absolutely injurious. Here, as in the case of plants, neutrality is an impossibility.

Hundreds of carnivorous animals infest our forests and streams, while over three thousand kinds of snakes hiss and snap at us as we trudge along the path of life, including the copperheads and fifteen kinds of rattlesnakes, specially designed for and donated to us Americans. Oh, for a full appreciation of the length and breadth and depth of the beneficence manifested in the design of a rattlesnake ! To make our earthly habitation a more perfect elysium, it has pleased the Great Designer to make the air almost hazy with hornets, wasps, flies, fleas and mosquitoes, giving us Americans several new kinds, as if the hornets which stung the Moabites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the Hittites were not good enough or bad enough for us.

The truth is, just as it should be, according to the doctrine of evolution, that man is simply a member of the animal kingdom, and that, like all other subjects of that great realm, he must struggle for his life from birth to death. He must contend with climate, disease, and enemies of all kinds. In this unceasing battle, he avails himself of every help and means within his reach. He uses such animals and plants as he can for food and clothing and as servants, and fights, with all his power, against the remainder. His ingenuity enables him to turn so many things to good account, in this contest, that his egoism prompts him to the belief that all things were made for him. But, as a matter of fact, every other living organism struggles for continued existence in substantially the same manner, and might with as much propriety set up the same claims.

There are those in every community who affect to believe that everything that occurs is specially designed and directed by an overruling Providence, and hence, on almost every coin we see the motto, "In God we trust," and almost every obituary notice begins, "Whereas, it has pleased an overruling Providence to remove Mr. Blank," etc., and yet, as everyone knows, the pious and orthodox are not more exempt from accidents, disease and death than are heretics. If an overruling Providence is managing these matters he ought

to, and certainly would, make some plain distinctions in the distribution of his gifts and punishments. There are, throughout the country, probably ten saloons and other infamous houses for every church, and yet it is no exaggeration to state that lightning strikes ten times as many churches as it does saloons. Of course, the steeples and spires of churches are very tempting to electricity, but lightning, directed by Omnipotence, should be able to strike a basement saloon as readily as a church-steeple. Not long since, we read of a minister who was struck by lightning and instantly killed while praying during the regular Sunday services, also of a pious man who was struck and killed while reading his bible. What shall we do with these and millions of similar facts? No one can harmonize them with the theory of design and an overruling Providence, except by assuming that, in some mysterious way, unknown to men, they are beneficial to our race. But the propriety and reasonableness of such an assumption are the very questions in dispute. Recognising the fact that the good are as frequently stricken with the "visitations of Divine Providence" as the bad, theologians have evolved two explanations by which to pacify their flocks. The first is that all of these calamities—and, indeed, all the evil in the world—are the works of the Devil. But who is the Devil, on whom the *onus* of blame is thus shifted? Did he, like God, create himself, or is he the creature, the agent, the employee of God? In the affairs of this world, we hold the proprietor responsible for the acts of the employee. Indeed, God himself, if correctly reported, gave us the correct principle of action governing this matter, when he said: "But if the ox (which had gored some one) were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death." Why has not this terribly vicious ox, the Devil, been "kept in" or "stoned" to death long ago?

The other explanation is by means of the argument of ignorance, which is usually sanctified and sugar-coated by the quotation, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," implying that the evil or calamity is, after all, but a blessing in disguise. The argument in full may be thus summarised: Many things and events are plainly beneficial; others, apparently pernicious, finally prove to be advan-

tageous; therefore, all things and events are blessings, either openly or in disguise. If, however, we invert this argument it will look as well, logically, and prove as much. "Many things and events are undoubtedly injurious; other things and events which at first seem to be advantageous, finally prove to be inimical; therefore, all things and occurrences are either openly or covertly hostile to mankind, and, therefore, essentially bad." The argument is as cogent in one form as in the other, and is but sophistry at best.

If God really wishes to prove to us his existence, can he not devise some proof not susceptible of any other interpretation? Can he not write? He is credited with painting all the exquisite colors and hues in nature. If so, cannot he write a single sentence somewhere, and in some manner, which could not be counterfeited or explained away by men? If he controls the winds and clouds why does he not sometimes arrange the latter into significant forms, or paint on them some words giving us some reliable information? We do not ask for much. Let him simply say, "The bible is inspired," or, "Obey the pope," or, "Follow Talmage," or "Believe in Joseph Cook." Any little hint will suffice to eradicate infidelity from the world, when we are *certain that its origin is divine*. The matter in the tail of a comet might easily be arranged into a few words which all men could see. No matter in what language the information came, its translation would offer no difficulties. The surface of the moon might have been variegated with a few texts instead of with volcanic craters. We are aware that God is reported to have written two editions of the decalogue on stone tablets, but unfortunately for the credibility of the account, Moses had to wait, in each case, forty days for the completion of the work; and now there are those so depraved as to suggest that in that length of time Moses might have done the work himself.

If God is really so solicitous in regard to the welfare of men, why does he not, at least sometimes, speak? He is said to have been very familiar and communicative two or three thousand years ago. Can he not talk now? The clergy will of course call these queries blasphemous, as they do everything which cannot be otherwise disposed of, but they are candid, and are the serious thoughts of every one who permits himself to think upon this subject. A little four-year-old girl, belonging to an acquaintance in

Ohio, was, some time since, heard to soliloquize thus, when saying her evening prayer: "Now, God, I have talked to you often enough. If you hear me why don't you talk back?" Sure enough! Why don't God talk, or act in response to prayer? It is the disgrace of wood and stone idols that, however much they are appealed to, to speak or act, they maintain a stolid indifference; but, in truth, does our God behave differently? Hundreds of millions of prayers, in the case of President Garfield, failed to evoke the slightest sign of even the existence of a God. Had these prayers been addressed to Bael, or Joss, the result could not have been more disastrous. Billions of billions of prayers for the conversion of the wicked and the heathen have been presented, and yet—although this is evidently the proper thing to do—the work is scarcely farther advanced than it was a thousand years ago. Indeed, no one in this age, not even the preacher, expects a prayer to be answered.

Those who have abandoned all the usual arguments in favor of a Supreme being, based on the evidence of design, as intrinsically bad, but who still wish to fortify their belief in the existence of such a Being, often assert that the mere order of harmony observable in nature, offers them sufficient evidence. It is plain, however, that if nature exists at all, some kind of order must exist, and that, whatever may be the course of events, some sort of harmony is a necessary consequence. If matter exists, it must assume some shape and occupy some position. If, however, the matter of the universe could be shown to be in the best possible forms, an argument for a supreme intelligence might rest on that basis, but he would possess a dull imagination indeed, who could not suggest numerous improvements in this respect, both in the form and qualities of matter, as we find it on our planet. The climate, for example, might have been made more genial and uniform, and the soil in many districts richer. Fewer mountains and deserts would have sufficed, and with less water better distributed, our world would have been better arranged. Indeed, a small amount of matter might have taken the form of homes, food, and clothing, with evident advantage to mankind. The labor of the human race is chiefly expended in re-arranging nature. The convenience of photographers, for example, would have been greatly enhanced if light had been endowed with such properties that it would not affect a sensitive

plate before its passage through a lens. If we are told that such a modification of light would unfit it for use as a chemical agency in many other respects, we can only reply that, while we cannot so load a gun as that it shall hit a bear but miss a calf, this is just what is to be expected from one with whom "all things are possible."

I freely admit that the arrangement of matter and its qualities might have been much worse, but if they had been we should not have existed at all. In the case of our moon a worse arrangement is actually seen, and, as a consequence, life is believed to be absent from that body. Water might have been made to freeze at forty degrees above, or forty degrees below zero, with some advantages in both cases. Alcohol might have been made with a repulsive taste, or without its intoxicating properties, with evident advantage to mankind. Thus, we might proceed to point out changes and possible improvements in the form and properties of matter *ad infinitum*. Since it is possible, therefore, to suggest improvements in the properties and state of aggregation in which we find matter, perfection in the order of nature cannot be claimed, unless it is assumed that in some way or other, not always manifest, everything must be for the best as we find it, which is simply the old argument of ignorance.

But if perfection in the order of nature is not made a part of the argument, then the simple proposition remains, that the existence of matter in any state of aggregation, and with any kind of properties, is sufficient to prove the existence of an intelligent designing Creator, who himself came into existence without any assistance or cause whatever, and then proceeded to create everything out of nothing! In the apt phraseology sometimes employed by gentlemen of the bar, those who use this argument go into and come out of the same hole.

So far as the doctrine of design implies the process of reasoning on the part of God it is plainly absurd, because the divine mind can neither reason, nor learn, nor forget. Reasoning is that process by which finite minds glide by easy or difficult steps from the known to the unknown; but, since all possible knowledge is supposed to be ever present in the Infinite mind, this process is both unnecessary and impossible. Therefore, while an unreasoning God may appear to be a kind of theological monstrosity, it is clear that

a God who reasons is no God at all, but worse still is a God who reasons badly.

Finally, we may be asked if we deny the existence of God? Our reply is, "By no means." To do so, would imply that we have positive knowledge on this point. We neither affirm nor deny the existence of a Supreme Being, because we have no definite and conclusive information on that subject. We simply maintain that the evidence which has thus far been relied upon to prove the existence of such a Being, is insufficient and fallacious. If new evidence can be advanced, or if the old can be made more cogent, we shall be among the first to give the matter a full and fair reconsideration.

