

immutable existence, the 'problem' has resolved itself into the discovery of what these things actually are. It will not do to jump at some object and assume that that is it.

A multitude of things obviously perish, thereby showing themselves to be trivial or accidental arrangements, according to our hypothesis. A flame is extinguished and dies, a mountain is ultimately ground into sand by the slow influence of denudation, a planet or a sun may lose its identity by encounter with other bodies. All these are temporary collocations of atoms; and it appears now that an atom may break up into electric charges, and these again may some day be found capable of resolving themselves into pristine ether. If so, then these also are temporary, and in the material universe it is the ether only which persists—the Ether with such states of motion or strain as it eternally possesses—in which case the Ether will have proved itself the material substratum and most fundamental known entity on that side.