

down, and, like a clock, will eventually demand the interposition of an Intelligent Will to re-establish its motion. The denial of this proposition drives us to one of the following alternatives: first, that there exists in Nature an endless series of causation—the remotest assignable cause still hanging upon another cause not higher than a material force—a conclusion entirely at variance with our intuitive cognition of primary causation; or, secondly, that one or more of the series of causes can act in different modes, so that what had just been done is presently undone, or done differently, and thus new conditions created for the renewed activity of other forces. But the supposition of a change in the mode of action of any force or cause contradicts a fundamental axiom of philosophy. We have no authority for such an assumption, and are not at liberty to resort to it.

It can not be denied that these are conclusions which are repugnant to the popular apprehension of Nature's operations. The thought of a "machine," moreover, suggests self-action, and seems at first to exclude that intelligent special agency in Nature which we call Providence. The solar system is, nevertheless, a combination of matter and force whose movements can be calculated with the same precision as those of a steam printing-press. If it be necessary to protect our notion of a Providence, let us suppose that those mighty forces which handle planets as if they were engaged in a "game of ball" are *not* energies inherent in matter, but *the immediate efforts of a divine will*. It may be so. There is no logic which can overthrow the assumption. But in either case, these energies are put forth according to intelligible and *unvarying methods*; and all that science asserts is, that *if the methods remain the same*—that is, if the laws of Nature continue unchanged—the course of cosmical activities will complete its round.