

pendent beings. It is of no consequence to the present argument, whether we call the primary cause of finite existence, human, angelic, or divine; or whether intelligence be supposed to be incorporated in its essence, or excluded from it. These inquiries may be of much importance hereafter; but in the present stage of the argument all that we require is, to ascertain whether the primary cause of human existence be in itself dependent or independent.

That it cannot be dependent, has already been proved in the preceding paragraphs. Its independence therefore follows as a necessary consequence; it being the only alternative of the general proposition, which includes every possibility within its wide embrace; and the instant we admit the absolute independence of any given cause, we must necessarily admit it to be eternal. For since its actual existence could not have been imparted by itself, and its absolute independence precludes the possibility of its existence being derived, it must be in the possession of underived existence; and that existence which is underived, could never have known a commencement or beginning.

We have now arrived at a stage in this chain of argumentation, in which two points are clearly ascertained; namely, that something must have existed from eternity; and that this something could not be the human race, whether we view them as individuals or generations, or embrace, in one comprehensive survey, the aggregation of the species. But in what manner this something exists, which we must allow to be eternal, must be the subject of our next inquiry.

There are but two primary modes of existence within the reach of possibility, and these are necessary and contingent. That existence is said to be contingent, which might have had a commencement, and which, without involving any contradictory ideas, may have a termination. It follows, therefore, that every being and thing which is finite, can have nothing more than a contingent existence; On the contrary, that existence is said to be necessary, which is not derived from any source,—which is not dependent on any cause,—and which is placed beyond the influence of all foreign power. It appears from this definition of these modes of existence that the primary cause of finite being, cannot be contingent; and, therefore, it must include necessary existence in the essence of its own nature.

It is not, however, to be imagined, that when any being is said to have a necessary existence, its existence is necessary to the production of any given effects. In this respect it may be said, that the sun is necessary to give us light, and that its light is necessary to render things visible; but, in themselves, there is no absolute necessity that things should be rendered visible, that light should emanate from the sun, or that the sun itself should exist; since the total absence or non-existence of all these can easily be supposed, without involving any contradictory ideas.

But when we rise from these modes of existence, which are thus relatively necessary, though only contingent in themselves, to contemplate that existence which we have already proved to be both independent and eternal, we behold an exalted mode of being, wholly distinct from every thing that is finite, including in its own nature the essence of independent and absolute existence.

Nor can it with any propriety be urged, that what is said to exist thus necessarily, is simply necessary to give being to that which is finite. Finite existence, if it were readily admitted, could not have been, if necessary existence had not preceded it. But whether any thing finite existed or not, this cannot alter the nature of that existence which is necessary in itself; otherwise it would cease to be independent. Necessary existence, therefore, must include in its own essence the reason of its being; nor can we suppose its non-existence, without including contradictory ideas in the supposition. As every thing cannot exist contingently, something must exist necessarily; but if that which exists necessarily, could cease to exist, it would include and not include necessary existence in its essence at the same time. And if we proceed from simple possibility to fact, and admit the actual non-existence of that being or thing which we grant to exist necessarily, we must then allow, that necessary existence is become non-existent; and, consequently, that the something to which it applies, exists necessarily,

even while it is destitute of being. Nothing, therefore, can be said to exist necessarily, but that which cannot possibly cease to exist.

But, although necessary existence must be admitted, it is totally impossible for us to allow it in the mere abstract. Existence, in all the possible forms which it can assume, must necessarily be connected with some substance or essence, from which it is inseparable, unless it cease to be. Necessary existence, therefore, implies the actual existence of some substance or essence; and consequently, some necessarily existent substance or essence must actually be in existence. But as this something, to which necessary existence applies, must be allowed to have an actual being, it is totally impossible that it should be located to any portion of space or duration; because universality of existence is an undeniable consequence of necessary existence. If the absence of a being, of any description whatever, from any given portion of space, can be admitted, without involving any contradictory ideas, no reason can be assigned why it may not, on the same principle, be absent from all other portions of space; and the same modes of reasoning will hold good with regard to every portion of infinite duration. And so far as the possibility of this absence is admitted, the evidence arising from this admission is decisive, that such beings can have nothing more than a contingent existence.

Existence, on the contrary, which is absolutely necessary, is not confined either to time or place: it is dependent on nothing, and knows no bounds. Universality of existence is therefore its necessary concomitant; and hence, that being who exists necessarily, cannot but be omnipresent.

As all contingent existence must have been derived from that which is necessary, the being who includes necessary existence in his essence, must be the fountain of all power. No energy, therefore, of any description whatever, whether muscular, intellectual, or spiritual, can have any existence that was not primarily derived from this primitive source of all. This being must therefore possess all power; and wherever all power is concentrated, there we find Omnipotence. A power that is omnipotent must necessarily extend, not only to all realities that ever began to exist, but likewise to all possibilities. Nothing finite could have been what it is, had it not been the effect of power; and no power can possibly be conceived, but that which omnipotence has primarily supplied. To assert that any thing is possible that does not actually exist, is in effect to assert, that an adequate power must somewhere exist, capable of turning possibility into reality; and consequently, every thing must be absolutely impossible, which a power that is infinite is totally unable to accomplish. Nothing, therefore, can bound the physical operation of omnipotence, but that which involves a palpable contradiction.

As this first cause of all finite being must exist universally, because it exists necessarily, it must uniformly have the power of knowing its own energies; for this power to know must be included in our idea of omnipotence. But a being that has power to know the extent of its own energies, must necessarily possess knowledge; and that which possesses knowledge must be intelligent in proportion to its knowledge. Now, if this intelligence be in proportion to its knowledge; and the knowledge of any being be commensurate to its power; and this power to extend to all realities and all possibilities; it follows, that its intelligence, its knowledge, and its power, must be alike without limits; and, consequently, this being must possess power, knowledge, and intelligence, which are alike infinite. It is this glorious assemblage of necessary existence, of omnipresence, of omnipotence, and of infinite knowledge, from which we derive our idea of God.

As this glorious Being, whom we denominate God, must necessarily include in his essence those perfections, which we have seen combined in this assemblage, it is totally impossible that he should be material. It is evident, that matter does not include either intelligence or knowledge within its essence; for, if this were admitted, it would follow, that intelligence and knowledge are essential to matter; and, consequently, that every atom must possess these sublime perfections. But, as these perfections are not essential to matter, so neither can any combinations which matter can assume, give being to an exalted property, which no atom in the combi-

nation can possess. If one atom be destitute of intelligence, another must be equally destitute for the same reason. Can, then, two atoms, which are essentially unintelligent, give birth to intelligence by their being combined? If this were admitted, we must conclude, that these atoms had derived from their combination, a degree of perfection, which no one among them, and which not all, separately taken, could be said to possess. That which is true of two atoms, with regard to the production of intelligence, is equally true of three, of three hundred, of three thousand, or of three million; and of any assemblage that is placed within the reach of numbers. Matter, therefore, cannot be God; and, consequently, God is not a material being.

Nor can we, with any greater degree of reason, imagine matter to be necessarily existent, than we can suppose it to be intelligent. We have already seen, that whatsoever is necessarily existent, must exist universally. But if matter had existed universally, no interstices could have existed between the parts into which it is capable of being divided; neither could motion have been possible. No two atoms can occupy, in one and the same instant, the same portion of space. Matter, in its own nature, cannot but be impenetrable. If the universe were absolutely filled with matter; a body put in motion must move through solidity; and, consequently, must enter that space which another body occupied in the same instant; which is wholly inconsistent with the impenetrability of its nature. If, therefore, the existence of motion prove that matter does not exist universally, and the want of universality of existence prove that matter does not exist necessarily, it follows that matter itself, together with all the forms which the modifications of its parts assume, can have nothing more than a contingent existence; and, consequently, that it must be indebted for its existence to that Being whom we denominate God.

## LADIES DEPARTMENT.

### FEMALE ATTIRE, &c.

A woman's wardrobe may be divided into two parts,—the ornamental and the useful. In the first I include all the various articles which are affected by fashion; every thing, in fact, of external dress. In these a good economist will avoid a superabundance. She will endeavour to check that feminine weakness—the love of variety, which so frequently displays itself by an ever varying costume, and will confine the ornamental part of her wardrobe in as narrow bounds as the extent of her general style of living and visiting will permit. Whimsicality of dress is no proof either of good taste or good sense, but rather results from the absence of both, or from the mistaken notion that to attract attention is to gain admiration. But whimsicality, whether shown in dress, manner, or opinion, does not deserve, and never obtains permanent admiration: it is more likely to meet with the smile of contempt, or the sneer of ridicule. A claim to superiority and distinction established on such a foundation has nothing to secure it. It is those qualities only that are intrinsically good and useful, that can gain permanent admiration and esteem. It is true that every one who lives in society must follow fashion to a certain extent, or must be prepared to encounter the laugh, and perhaps the scorn, of those who pronounce judgment on appearances. But it is extremes on either side, that are to be shunned by all who wisely prefer propriety, and consistency, to notoriety and peculiarity.

Another disadvantage of possessing too many of the ornamental parts of female attire, is the fickleness of fashion, and the constant necessity which this must produce of altering the forms of dresses, which the means of the possessor do not allow to be thrown aside. For these alterations of dress much valuable time must be wasted, or much money squandered, and, in either case, the very attention which is requisite for so unworthy an object, takes the mind from more important and rational pursuits. Some women seem to think that life is of no use but to make or remodel dresses, and act as if they were born to be walking blocks for showing off to advantage the workmanship of the ribband and lace manufacturer, of the mantuamaker and milliner.