

No force can be proved to be merely mechanical, yet take a purely mechanical view. Nature is a chain of cause and effect, in which there is no missing link. Gravitation proves that the hosts of heaven and the things of earth are parts of one great complex arrangement. Our mind sufficiently expanded, would be able to follow natural processes from beginning to end. Given a grain of wheat, an acorn, an infant, and their surroundings, we could prognosticate the whole process of growth in terms of matter and force. Even on these purely mechanical principles, we have greatly to obliterate the strongly-marked mechanical, chemical, and other differences, which we thought were variously exemplified in a rock, a crystal, a tree, a cow. Sometimes it is a matter of doubt whether a given organism is a vegetable or an animal; and, in one case at least, the same organism is both animal and vegetable at different periods of its history. Every phenomenon, therefore, as to its essence, is something more than merely mechanical, or chemical, or vital, as so thought; but the manifestation of a Power including all, and more than all. Thus we are led to the conception of an all-present, all-prevalent energy, working all things—the Supernatural in nature.

How the inscrutable, the not-to-be-looked-at, is made plain, so as to be seen, yet not seen, is a mystery. What of that? Mysteries are everywhere. Men know, and do not know at the same time. The finite only knows in part, and does not know in greater part. In one yet manifold sense, the Cause of all made all, but makes nothing now; seems, as J. S. Mill said, "a non-cause." In other senses He is the doer of all, by that sustaining influence which is new creation every moment. "The trees do not sweep the stars down," the plants creep sunward, the atoms are endowed with a finite minimum of the Infinite in the infinitesimal. He who will not know this, who refuses to retain God in his knowledge, professing to be wise, becomes a fool (Rom. i. 21, 22). The gods curse deluders for wilfully telling others the wrong road.