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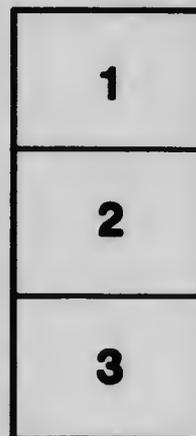
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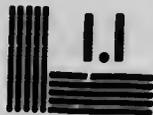
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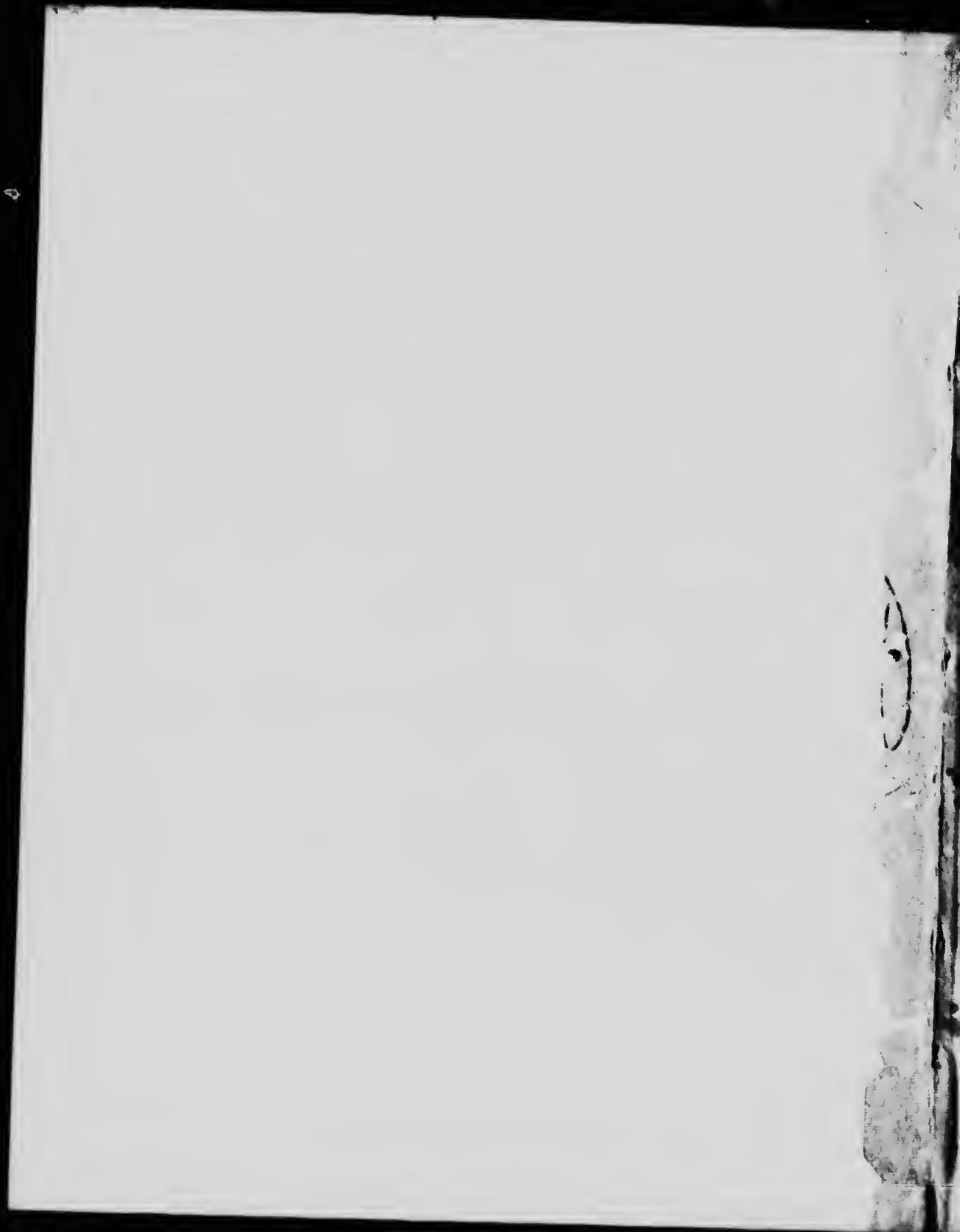
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THE  OUL

A PHILOSOPHIC POEM

S. J. Doucet

BY

THE RT. REV. MGR. S. J. DOUCET, D.P.

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S. J. Dowell, 31st, R. D.

THE SOUL:

A PHILOSOPHIC POEM

With The Compliments of the Author.

THIS EDITION is intended for private distribution only. In another Edition, if it should be published, a number of explanatory notes will be appended to the poem to make it more easily understood by the different classes of readers.

THE SOUL

I think a substance immaterial;
A spirit godlike, rational and free;
A being more of heaven than of earth;
Immortal, simple, incorporeal,
And yet, on earth, our mortal body's guest;
'The human body's living stay, its life,
Yea, more, its living and substantial form;
The living and substantial source of thought;
Of all our acts and all our energies.
Although self-active, self-determining,
And from its mortal mate in all distinct,
Yet, while their close, substantial union lasts,
It doth not act without its ministry.
Pervading its dark, earthly tenement,
Whole in the whole and whole in every part,
It saturates it with its living self
And forms with it the wondrous being, MAN.
This is the Soul, this is the human soul.
Thus, in its own light, is the Soul conceived.
But, soulless, could I thus conceive the Soul?
Were I but matter, could I form these thoughts,
And weave the psychic texture of my theme?
The Soul! The Soul! I think the Soul! My thought
My very thought, reveals my soul to me!

Ask not, O Man, have I a soul? Say not
I have no soul. Why speakest thou such words?

Thy thought forbids thy question, gives the lie
 To thy denial and thy unbelief:
 How couldst thou think the Soul, aye, think at all,
 Without a rational, a human soul?

Tell me, ye newest-born philosophers,
 How one without a soul could think the Soul;
 Could comprehend the human soul; could ask
 Have I a soul? or say I have no soul.

Can Matter think the Soul? Can matter, which
 Knows not itself, know what is not itself?
 Think what is not itself? reach that which is
 Beyond itself, beyond its grasp, its realm:
 The Unextended; th' Immaterial;
 The Soul; the Soul invisible; the Soul
 Impalpable; the Soul unknowable
 By sense, but knowable and known by thought?

Yet ye, false teachers, would have us believe
 That matter thinks, that matter thinks the Soul;
 Knows what Soul is and knows what matter is;
 Knows them to be essentially distinct:
 If ye be naught but matter, matter thinks,
 And naught else thinks in you whene'er ye think.
 And it must think the Soul, since ye, at times,
 Do make the Soul the object of your thought.
 That ye do think the Soul ye must concede:
 Assuredly one thinks what one denies,
 And, full of empty knowledge, say ye not,
 As knowing well whereof ye do deny:

The Soul?—There's no such being as the Soul!
In your denial and your unbelief,
'T is soul as spirit ye repudiate,
For soul as matter, if such it could be,
Ye are prepared and willing to admit.
'T is then the Soul as spirit which ye think—
Which matter thinks, to speak from your standpoint.
Absurd are your pretensions and your claims:
That ye are naught but matter ye affirm,
Yet, stepping o'er the bounds of matter's sphere,
Ye think ye are as matter fit to reach
And to explore the Immaterial!
With matter as examiner and judge,
Ye question the existence of the Soul.
The verdict must needs be the one ye want.
Oh, how profound is your philosophy!
Know ye not that it takes the Soul to think
The Soul, to comprehend the Soul, to know
What ye deny when ye deny the Soul?
He must needs have a soul who, thinking, asks,
Have I a soul, or says I have no soul.
A man thus speaking stultifies himself:
Thus speaking, he affirms what he denies;
Thus speaking, he denies his soul in vain;
Denying, he in truth affirms his soul.
Here, whether ye affirm or ye deny,
Ye equally bear witness to the truth.
When in his heart the fool says there's no God,
He hath already said there is no soul.

The Soul discarded from your reasonings,
 Explain the wondrous reaches of the Mind —
 Its inner light and sight; its conscious play
 Upon itself; its mastery o'er its
 Own pow'rs; its grasp of things beyond the ken
 Of sense: of things unseen, unheard, unfelt:
 Abstractions, generalities; of things
 To highest mental vision imageless,
 Although abstracted from sense images;
 True aliment of thought; realities
 Within the portals of the intellect.

I ope the book of words and these I note:
 Religion, virtue, honor, reason, truth,
 Design, creation, science, theory,
 Humanity, injustice, wisdom, mind,
 Heroic, good, immortal, infinite,
 Absurd, ungrateful, witty, laughable,
 Disloyal, criminal, forgetful, false,
 To be, forgive, approve, affirm, deny,
 Whenever, soon, but, if, or, never, since,
 Especially, perhaps, until, henceforth,
 Except, moreover, and, before, because, —
 These many stems of speech, and many more,
 Aye, more than half the words which fill this book,
 Imply th' existence of the human soul.
 The abstract thoughts by all such words expressed,
 Although to sense-perception meaningless,
 Are plain and clear to Man's high intellect.

These thoughts dumb animals can not perceive.
Their knowledge is sense-knowledge, nothing more.
Nor can imagination picture them :
What strikes the senses is what it portrays.
'T is not man's sense-perception, 't is his soul,
And sublimated knowledge that it gives,
Which make him rational, which make him Man,
And differentiate him from the brute.

'T is known that vital processes renew
All that within us is material.
If not the Soul, 'mid changes permanent,
What is it which, abiding, keeps intact
One's self, one's individuality?
When cycles of renewals are complete,
What makes one still perceive one's past as past?
Perceive one's self throughout a long life's course?
Perceive one's personal identity?

But mayhap ye have had some other selves,
(So wonderful is your philosophy !)
Pray what responsibility is yours
For deeds unholy of some former self?
Deeds laudable — as heirlooms they are yours.
And what of obligations unfulfilled
Which may have bored discarded consciences?
Has not your all been totally renewed?
And shall ye not ere long be born anew?

Then why care for the future or the past?
Are yours at present date the theories
Elaborated by your worn-out cells?
Do ye still claim the authorship of books
Which graced your name o'er seven years ago?
Is not that range your longest span of life?
Already gone who made the vain attempt
To solve the riddle of the Universe!
Departed, too, for aye, e'en many years
Before his final exit, he who deemed
Unknowable the Builder of the World.
And also he of fame bathybial.
He, too, who gravely ranked the Simian
As Man's progenitor, thus making apes,
Still full of life, the kindred of us all,
And, seemingly, the fittest to survive!
And metamorphosed soon they, too, will be,
Who dream they have extinguished heaven's lights!

Explain with your "mind-stuff," or your "mind-dust,"
Or any "stream of thought" ye may conceive,
How know ye that ye think; know that ye know;
Know that ye do not know; know that ye doubt;
Or know that ye are sure that ye doubt not.
Say how ye know your willing; will your thinking;
Or how ye think that others think and know.
And how ye can recall the thought ye thought,

Weigh it again, discard it from your mind
To think some other subjects, other thoughts;
Thus changing themes and thinkings at your will
And when ye will, and when it suits your ends.

I now recall some thoughts I thought before;
Them at my own free-will I here express:—

To rule men well their aspirations heed,
And hold intangible their tongue and creed.

There are men who, with downright tyranny,
Impose their will and call this liberty.

Disguised as Truth, e'en Error may look well,
But what it is its words and acts soon tell.

Truth often is betrayed and oft reviled,
But she is ne'er dishonored, ne'er defiled.

Truth unadorned is ever fair and bright,
For, like the Sun, Truth shines by its own light.

Truth's royal seat is God's eternal throne.
Thereon she reigns in godly majesty;
Yet that high seat is held by God alone —
Is God not Truth from all eternity?

Virtue is safe where'er she likes to dwell;
The only fit abode for Vice is hell.

Philanthropy, as now-a-days it looks,
Doth turn sweat into steel, steel into books.

An electrician, who on fame reclines,
Once switched his mind to psychologic lines —
He lost it.

A modern Jacc. dreaming, hath devised
A ladder for men's use when last hour rings,
But even Angels would be ill-advised,
If it they tried unmindful of their wings!

As Cynthia emerges calm and bright
From Earth's weird shadow cast across her way,
So Innocence comes forth from Slander's night
Untouched, unsullied, pure, as fair as day!

With the name of the Saviour is honored and blest
The sweet name of the Virgin whose womb was His rest;
For, His praise and her glory no more can we part,
Than the Babe on her bosom and love of her heart!

These thoughts I partly image in my mind;
Their meaning intellect alone can draw.

Left to itself, could Matter change its ways,
Its workings, windings, and select its time?
Can Matter say no further shall I go?
No longer shall I act, here I shall rest?

Can it decide what it will leave undone?
Determine now what later it will do?

Say not that human acts are never free,
Are ruled by motives irresistible,
For every man who sanely thinks and acts
Is conscious of the freedom of his will.
One's influenced by motives, not coerced.
Among the motives which appeal to me,
I make a choice: is not this liberty?
And while self-interest upholds its claims
I follow Duty's lead, am I a slave?
Yielding to proper motives demonstrates,
Not that one's acts spring from necessity,
But that they are both rational and free.

For those who say that Man's will is enthralled
What means acceptance, independence, right,
Responsibility, self-sacrifice,
Volition, choice, injustice, liberty,
Allegiance, treason, favor, tolerance,
Consent, demerit, duty, self-control?
What is to give, to grant, to acquiesce,
To liberate, resolve or to refrain,
To pardon, sanction, or to volunteer?
Words such as these should paralyse their lips.
If they imply not freedom of Man's will,
Why were they coined, and of what use are they?

Say how without a soul one can conceive
And then deny the freedom of the will.
Whence your assurance that your will's not free?
For were your will not free, would ye know it?
And could ye ascertain what free-will is,
If at no time ye felt your own will free?
The brute will never know that its desires,
Its impulses and instincts are not free.
If acts which I repeat or change at will,
Which I subordinate to your own wish,
Can not convince you that my will is free,
Then, pray what could one do, what should one say,
To demonstrate that one feels what one feels,
And to convince a man against his will?
Let motives be commendable, or not,
Let them be potent, or let them be weak,
Oft in the will is found the adamant.
'Tween men who teach the thralldom of the will,
And hence Man's irresponsibility,
And those who break divine and human laws,
I ask who are the greatest criminals?
Away with legislators and their laws,
With moralists and with their moral code,
With all the arbiters of right and wrong;
Demolish both the altar and the throne;
Tear down the emblems of authority —
What solemn mockery of Man all this,
If Man's a slave, if Man's will is not free!

The breaking of the law is not a crime
For beings unenabled to obey.
There's nothing good or bad, naught right or wrong,
In acts in which a free will plays no part.
Nay, virtue's folly, vice commendable,
And anarchy the normal state of things,
If each one's bent is to be each one's rule.

Is not the sum of Nature's energies
E'er constant, though these change unceasingly?
How then accord free-will with theory,
For with that sum would it not interfere?
Your theory is theory, not science.
Look at the facts evincing Man's free will.
Attune your theory to all the facts
To be accounted for, and do not twist
A single fact to fit your theory.
Ye ne'er shall solve the problem, if ye fail
To reckon with the power of the will.
In will-force Nature's forces have their source;
Upon will-force the Universe depends.
The heavens with their harmonies exist
Through God's creative and directive will.
Directive, too, is Man's free-will, God's gift,
O'er forces God leaves under its control.
Thus through Man's will and through his acts resplends
His Maker's image stamped upon his soul!

Is Mind the sum of feelings? and is thought
 A product or a function of the brain?
 Who would the feeler and the thinker be?
 And what would stand for lifelong conscious self?
 I; I: I feel; I think—Pray who is "I"?
 The thoughts and feelings thine?—Say whose are "thine"?
 Thy philosophic fantasies do make
 The feeler and the feeling one and same;
 The thinker and the thought identical.
 A train of thoughts is on thy stage a suite
 Of thinkers fleeting in and out of sight.
 Each thinker lives no longer than each thought,
 And each new thought stands for a new-born self.
 Then why, most provident philosopher,
 Should troublesome responsibilities
 Be borne throughout the lifetime of a cell?
 Time them to thy kinetoscopic selves.

Mind's ways and those of Matter are unlike,
 And show that matter is not stuff of Mind.
 The mind oft wavers and deliberates;
 Knows how to doubt and to refuse assent;
 Takes counsel and oft cancels its resolves;
 Doth act forthwith, or yet doth bide its time.
 For sport it seeks at times the roughest routes.
 It sees its way and can proceed with care;
 Can choose between the evil and the good;

Can danger shun; can seek a safer path,
And guard against repeating its mistakes.
Despite its wits, it often goes astray,
Alleging now and then an honest plea;
But, wanton, oft it strolls in Error's paths,
And tumbles into pitfalls willingly.
Though clearly seeing what it should approve,
It often praises what it should despise.
For Matter nothing can be good or bad.
It feels not any want: it has no wants;
It struggles not for life: it has no life;
It seeks no gains; strives not for mastery.
It questions not; it cannot harbor doubts;
It never hesitates; it doth not fear
To lose its way; it never goes astray:
The lines of least resistance are its paths.
It can be pushed or pulled, but not allured.
It cannot be deceived. It cannot err—
To err is Man's ignoble privilege,
The shameful evidence of his free-will—
It cannot err, because it is not free.
It cannot choose its way, for it is blind.
And blind it comes and goes, it moves or rests,
Impelled or stayed by Nature's stringent laws.
Electrons whirling in atomic worlds
Obey the laws which mould the water-drop,
And guide the starry orbs in boundless space!
Yet Man in Nature's realm doth oft command.

He lords o'er Matter, chains its forces, makes
Them serve his ends. He causes them to act,
Or swerves them from their bounded course. Ofttimes,
Despite his weary limbs and weary brain,
Opposing Nature's claims and Nature's rights,
With naught to urge him forward on his work,
Save motives purely intellectual,
He doth unlock and marshal energies
Which Nature's ways and laws would have at rest.
Could Man without a human soul act thus?

What makes him seek the truth, and love the truth?
What makes him love the truth for its own sake?
And whence his thirst for knowledge deep and wide?
For knowledge, as with truth, for its own sake?
Why his endeavors, why his eagerness,
To fathom Nature's deepest mysteries?
Could Matter spy, discern and search itself,
And feel supremely pleased on prying out
The countless secrets of its own domain?

Man's searching pow'r takes in the earth and skies.
The art of the Creator he doth find
Adorning every leaf of Nature's book.
He reads in rocks the story of the Earth.
She yields her treasures to his handicraft.
With deepest admiration he beholds
The wonders of the microscopic world.
Directing now his skilled eye heavenwards,
With keen delight, yet reverentially,

He scans the star depths, counts the myriads
Of fiery orbs. Their distance and their size
He measures, and he weighs the waltzing suns!
Without a human soul, could Man appraise
His victories? his knowledge gained? his worth?
His pow'r o'er Nature's divers energies?
O'er brute creation? even o'er himself?
From his discoveries in Nature's realm,
Could he deduce and formulate her laws,
And name unerringly the time and place
Of her most wonderful phenomena?

Still nobler things doth Man pursue. His thoughts
Are not hemmed in by Nature's boundaries;
Nor are his aspirations and his aims
Confined to objects of his earthly gaze.
Alike the lowly and the lordly mind
Can wing their flight to higher planes of thought.
The honest toiler in the field is more
Than he may seem. His worth is in his soul.
His burden weighs, yet he is not a slave:
He is a man. While leaning on his hoe,
Or laboring, he thinks; his will is free.
Uplifting sentiments may fill his breast,
Beguile his cares, and make his burden light.
At times his questionings may well confound.
The puffed-up, godless wisdom of the day:

How doth my toiling hard and long assure
The yield that cheers my heart and dries my sweat?
Why must the seed dissolve and lose its life
To generate and multiply its like?
What whites the lily and what reds the rose?
Why sweet and bitter fruit? Why flowers plain
And flow'ry forms of loveliness and grace?
What rules the growth of animals and plants?
Determines from the first their varied forms?
Why have they lives of so unequal spans?
Whence life? Why doth it burn away? Why death?
Why is not life a bright eternal Spring?
What is the primal reason of these things?
Thus Nature operates. Why is it thus?
To all these questions one response is true:
A Mind Supreme hath planned things as they are.

Thoughts still more serious has he whose mind
Is not horizoned by the things he sees:
Thoughts, not of time, but of eternity;
Of things momentous, thoughts we all should heed;
Thoughts worthiest of an immortal soul.
'T is well to look oft-times beyond the grave,
For Man's existence ends not with this life.
As pilgrims haste we through this vale of tears,
For here there is no place to rest our steps.
No earthly love can fill the human heart.

The yearnings of the soul tend heavenward.
The world's apportionment of joys and griefs
Is too unequal to be permanent.
Shall life's accounts unbalanced e'er remain?
Shall Virtue ne'er receive its due reward?
And Vice, the punishment it well deserves?
Shall anguished hearts continue e'er to bleed?
And shall the tear of woe remain unwiped?
Will not Eternal Justice weigh our deeds,
To each of us allotting what is due?
What must succeed our earthly pilgrimage?
Shall it be endless day, or endless night?

Oh! let my thoughts and contemplations be
Of regions bright, eternally serene;
Of scenes and visions paradisial;
Of joys and of enchantments heavenly;
Of Saints; of Cherubim and Seraphim;
Of Choirs angelic ever praising Him
Who is th' Eternal Truth, the Way, the Life.
Abode of Peace and Immortality!
There happiness ne'er ending, unalloyed,
Is Virtue's meed; there rapturous delights
Succeed deep earthly sufferings nobly borne.
Abode of rest! The weary pilgrim's goal!
Th' eternal home of all who, here below,
Fear God, and tread the paths of righteousness!

The human mind attains the lofty planes
Of all transcendent and ennobling thoughts.
E'en th' Infinite is not beyond its reach.
Then why those base attempts to picture Man,
Made in the image of the Deity,
As if he bore the likeness of the brute?
What would Man be were he not what he is?
Irrational, without a human soul,
And irresponsible, without free-will.
Insane philosopher, of what avail
To man's advancement, to his happiness,
Are volumes full of learned ignorance?
Thy efforts to explain away the Soul
Attest its presence and activity.
Were they successful, would they honor thee?
What merit can attach to acts unwilled?
Dost thou think worthy of applause and praise
The fettered frisks of an automaton?

O'erprizing Matter (not through reverence
For its Creator), some do deem it holds
The promise and the potency of all
The forms and all the qualities of life.
Resting their eyes on Nature's grand display,
Bewildered, they lose sight of Nature's God.
Life comes from life. The potency of life
Is life, and life alone can promise life.

From Matter nothing higher emanates
Than forms material. What life it holds
Is life in act, not life in potency.
The exsiccated seed may germinate
Long after life's conditions seem suppressed,
For in its lowest forms, though deemed extinct,
Life latent lay where life appears anew.

Who breathed life in forms material?
Speak, O my soul, thou knowest what to say.
Speak of thy God, proclaim his mightiness;
Recall the acts of His creative will.
Blind matter hath no knowledge of these things.
'T is God, the living God, who kindled life
Where there is life. Is He not life itself?
Of life the Lord, He gives and takes away.
'T is He who gave to Nature Nature's laws;
Hence, they are subject to His sovereign will;
And at His will them often He suspends—
Suspends them even at the pray'r of faith.
He makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear,
The dumb to speak; the dead rise at His word.
The gale and surging waves heed His command.
For Him these wonders are not miracles.
He made and He upholds the Universe.
Upholder by the will which called it forth,
He still is its Creator -- not its soul.

Continuous is His creative act.
The world He willed He wills unceasingly;
Incessantly He makes the world He made.
Creation doth go on before our eyes!
As at its origin, so now the world
Shows its Creator's glory and His might.
It stands as the expression of His will.
The world to end needs no act positive:
Not being self-subsistent, unsustained
It would at once revert to nothingness.

Of finite causes God's the Cause uncaused.
Through finite causes, Nature's very laws,
He rules all things in silent harmony.
He reigns supreme, yet 'neath His boundless sway,
Each of His creatures ever plays the part
Adapted to its nature and its end.
Their nature, as their being, He sustains.
The free-willed beings He upholds as such.
'T is His free-will which keeps their own will free.
Without Him, nothing that now is could be;
Without Him, nothing that now acts could act.
From nothing, nothing can begin to be,
Save by the act of an almighty will.
A blade of grass, the seed which germinates,
The winds, the floods, the tremors of the earth,
The heavings of the sea, the fire which streaks

The clouds, the twinkling star, the trembling leaf,
The morning dew, the singing of the birds,
A smile, a sigh, the beatings of the heart,
A spark of life, the human soul, a thought,
A ray of light, the world, an atom — all
Depend upon th' Almighty as First Cause,
Are equal proofs of His omnipotence!
Creating e'en a grain of sand demands,
As for a world, a power infinite.
For such a pow'r there's nothing arduous.
E'en the creation of the Universe
Is for th' Almighty no test of His might.

Inscrutable, incomprehensible,
But not unknowable is God to men.
His being and His personality,
His power, wisdom and intelligence
Are knowable through His creative acts;
Are made apparent by His wondrous works.
How could His creatures be endowed with gifts
Which He has not in measure infinite?
A cause, at least, must equal its effect;
Conclusions must respect their premises;
The crystal stream depends upon its source.
The human soul with all its attributes
Likewise demands an adequate spring-head.
Created fit to search and fit to find

Its noble origin and destiny ;
 Fit to ascend to highest spheres of thought ;
 To feed on truths both human and divine ;
 To mirror its Creator and its God
 And cogitate His attributes, 't is fit
 To testify to what its God must be.

Had Man a mere blind force as his first cause,
 Would he be rational ? Would he be free ?
 Would he be what he is — would he be Man ?
 Blind force the Infinite ? the Absolute ?
 The Artist who designed and made the World
 And filled the heav'ns with Nature's harmonies ?
 Whose hand upholdeth all it doth create ?
 Whose mind encompasseth the Universe ?
 A strange God would he be — unknowable —
 Who could impart more than he did possess.
 Man contemplator of his little works,
 And the FIRST CAUSE a blind artificer !
 Man personal, and God impersonal !
 Man conscious even of his feebleness,
 And the Omnipotent not of His might !
 E'en were it true that Man's self-consciousness,
 Intelligence and other attributes
 All spring from matter, whence the potency,
 If not from the Supreme Intelligence,
 The Power which includes all potencies,
 The living, conscious, personal First Cause.

To think is something greater than to be.
An atom is as truly as a world,
But neither could produce a single thought.
I THINK, say'st thou. Thy silent thought proclaims
Thy God's existence louder than thy own!
I THINK. My thought reveals my soul; reveals
It clothed with God-given attributes.
My soul reflects my Maker's traits; speaks of
My God. My soul reveals my God to me!



