

**MAN AS A CREATIVE FIRST
CAUSE: TWO DISCOURSES
DELIVERED AT CONCORD,
MASS., JULY, 1882. PP.1-109**

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Two Discourses

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BY

ROWLAND G. HAZARD, LL. D.



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PREFACE.

IN these discourses I have intended briefly to present the leading results of previous investigations, most of which had already been published; but more especially to vindicate metaphysical science from the charge of being unfruitful, by showing that in its proper application to the subject of its investigation, it is susceptible of the highest practical utility.

I have endeavored to show that, to say nothing of the invigorating exercise of such study, it may be a means of making the same amount of intellectual power more effective, by the invention or discovery of better methods in its application; and further, that in this its own proper realm, — the realm of the spirit, — it may achieve a yet higher utility, a utility transcending all other, in creating, moulding, and elevating the moral character. I have also pointed out some modes in which the creative powers of mind may be successfully exerted for these objects.

PEACE DALE, RHODE ISLAND,

September, 1883.

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FIRST DISCOURSE.

MAN A CREATIVE FIRST CAUSE.

§ 1. GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TO THE SUBJECT.

Utility of Metaphysics. It may add to intellectual power, and thus improve that which invents or makes all other utility, but its special sphere of utility will be found in our moral nature 1

§ 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF MIND.

Knowledge, feeling, and volition. Mind knows, feels, and wills. The will is its only real faculty. An act of will is simply an effort. All intelligent beings are thus constituted, and to these attributes there is no conceivable limit 2

§ 3. RELATIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS.

It is conceivable that we might have knowledge only, but we could not have feeling without knowing it. We might have knowledge and feeling without will, but will without these would be dormant and merely potential. An unintelligent being cannot be *self-active*. Our sensations are not dependent on the will, nor is our knowledge. The truth is often apparent without effort. The additions to our knowledge are always *simple immediate mental perceptions*. Feeling (sensation and emotion) incites to action, but is not itself active. Knowledge enables us to direct our efforts, but is itself passive. By will we produce change and thus act as cause. Our own will is the only cause of which we are directly conscious. Means

by which we come to know ourselves, our fellow beings, and God as causes	3
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§ 4. EXISTENCE OF MATTER AND ITS RELATIONS TO CAUSE.

We know matter only as an inference, from the sensations which we impute to its agency, and these are not conclusive as to any such external existence. The phenomena are all as fully accounted for, on the hypothesis that they are the thoughts and imagery of God's mind *directly* impressed upon our own. In either case it is the expression of his thought, and to us equally real. Matter and spirit are still contradistinguished. The ideal hypothesis is the more simple and more nearly in accord with powers we ourselves exert. We can ourselves create such imagery, and to some extent make it durable, and palpable to others. But we find no rudiment of power in these creations of our own, and no reason to suppose that any increase of power in the creator of them could imbue them with any. If matter exists, being inert, it can have no power to change itself, and even if endowed with power to move, being unintelligent, it could have no tendency to move in one direction rather than another. Such power of self-movement would be a nullity, and matter can only be an instrument which intelligence uses to aid its efforts. Against these arguments it may be said that matter has always existed and was always in motion, as intelligence, with its activity, is presumed to have had no beginning. To assume the existence of both when one is sufficient is unphilosophical, and the spiritual should have precedence. It is inconceivable that matter, which does not know, should create spirit, which does know; while it is quite conceivable that spirit should create all we know of matter. But whether matter, even if in motion, can be a cause or power, depends upon this question, — if left to itself and the moving power withdrawn, would it stop or continue to move? If its tendency is to stop, it could not even be an instrument for conserving or extending the effects of other power. Power could not make matter self-active, or the subject of government by law. Quiescent it could only be acted upon

§ 5. OF PAST EVENTS AS CAUSE.

The theory that of every successive event, "the real cause is the whole of the antecedents," does not distinguish between the passive conditions acted upon and changed, and the active agencies which act upon and change them. And further, the necessary adjunct and corollary to this theory of succession is, *that the same causes must produce the same effects*. But all cause acts upon a wholly void and therefore homogeneous future; and as at every instant the whole past is everywhere the same, the successive effects must at each instant be everywhere one and the same. On this theory of the whole antecedents, the same causes never could act twice, and there could be no proof from experience that the same causes must produce the same effect. The only cause we can logically recognize is that of intelligent effort 12

§ 6. FREEDOM IN WILLING.

This has been a prominent question for ages. It has been obscured by erroneous notions and defective definitions of will and freedom. Defects in Edwards' definitions of these terms and the consequent fallacies in his results. Will is the faculty of *effort*. An act of will is an effort, a trying to do. Freedom as applied to willing is *self-control*. The object of every effort must be to make the future different from what it otherwise would be. This is the only conceivable motive. A being with a faculty of effort, want to incite, and knowledge to direct it, is a self-active being; could act if there were no other power or activity. The will cannot be directly controlled by any extrinsic power. The only way it can be influenced is by changing the knowledge by which the being directs its act of will, and this would not avail if the being did not will freely. The notion of a coerced will, and the expression for it, are self-contradictory. It is *willing* when we are *not willing*. The future is always the composite creation of the free efforts of all conative beings acting as independent powers in the universe. The action even by the lowest order may influence the action of the highest. This inter dependence of the action of each

without interference with the freedom of any, is illustrated by the game of chess. This equal and perfect freedom in all does not impair the sovereignty of the supreme intelligence 15

§ 7. INSTINCT, REASON, AND HABIT.

Instinctive actions have been generally deemed exceptional.

We perform them so easily, that our agency in them escapes observation, and hence they have been regarded, not only as not self-controlled, but as necessitated and even as purely mechanical. That all animals at birth, without previous instruction or experience, act instinctively, indicates not that the voluntary effort is wanting, but that the knowledge to direct it is *innate*. In all cases requiring more than one movement we must have a plan. In the instinctive actions, the plan is innate, *ready formed in the mind at birth*. In the rational actions, we have to devise the *plan*. When by repetition in *act or thought*, we come to remember the successive steps of this plan, and apply it by rote, without reference to the *rationale*, it also becomes a *plan ready formed in the mind*, and our action becomes *habitual*. In it the process is the same as in the instinctive, and hence the common adage, *habit is second nature*. The differences in the three kinds of actions do not lie in the actions themselves, nor in the knowledge, nor in the application of it to direct the actions, but farther back, in the *mode* in which we obtained the knowledge we thus apply. The instinctive and habitual and rational actions are all self-directed by knowledge to the end desired. The genesis of our actions must be instinctive. Through habit, memory performs the same office for action that it does for knowledge, retaining the acquisitions of the past for future use. The agency of habit, in thus conserving previously considered modes of action, and making them permanent accretions to the moral character, is its most important function 23

§ 8. NECESSITARIAN ARGUMENT FROM CAUSE AND EFFECT.

Necessitarians assert that if all the circumstances, including mental conditions in a thousand cases, are the same, the action will be the same, and that this uniformity