

The Elusive Deity of Deism

“What in god’s name do you believe?”

As I get older and wiser, my philosophical understanding continues to evolve. From time to time then, I must modify my public position on GOD to better conform to my current level of knowledge. I have already progressed from True Believer, to Confused Seeker, to Apathetic Atheist, to Inquiring Agnostic and then to goal-oriented Pragnostic. Just admitting ignorance of ultimate answers is a pretty dead-end position though, if you don’t eventually fill the final-answer void with something. So, for my next stage of existential evolution, I think I will call myself a *Deist*. But please don’t jump to the conclusion that this change is a leap of faith. It doesn’t mean that I have actually found God in my heart; or that I am so desperate for deliverance that I will grasp at thin air. It simply means that I have learned enough to move on to the next stage of self-knowledge: from self-sufficient Pragnostic to divine-dependent Deist.

Several years ago, I coined the new term “pragnostic” to combine the worldly-resignation of agnosticism with the get-it-done attitude of pragmatism. However, making-up your own personal, private word may be smugly satisfying, but not very practical for conversation, unless you can convince lots of other people to adopt it. So it seems more pragmatic to adapt my own inner concepts to the common vocabulary of the public. Therefore, instead of inventing a word that precisely fits my meaning, I will try to find an existing term that comes close enough to my own personal philosophical position.

I’ve found that most people don’t appreciate the historical and conceptual subtleties of the well-known, but poorly understood, “Agnostic” world-view. They just equate *Agnostic* with *Atheist*, and ignore the open-minded implication of “wanting” (i.e. not having) knowledge of ultimate things.

I am definitely not an Atheist in the usual sense. So I think I’ll experiment with a new label of my own choosing for a while, and see if it gets any more respect than *Agnostic*, which implies that I am blithely-ignorant of spiritual things, or *Atheistic*, which is taken to mean that I am arrogantly-certain about un-knowable things—concepts beyond human understanding. At least, it may temporarily forestall the knee-jerk assumption of willful rejection of everything related to the very idea of a supreme being, and consequently, the apathetic-existentialist acceptance of anarchy or nihilism. Thus, the denomination that most closely matches my current understanding of “God, the Universe, and Everything” is *Deism*.

Of course, such a vague and open-ended God-concept still won’t get me off the hook with my Christian friends and acquaintances. They usually see the world in simple dualities: black or white, spiritual or sinful, god-loving or god-hating. Consequently, they can’t understand why Atheists and Agnostics don’t live in fear and dread of the god they don’t believe in. They also fail to grasp that intelligent and well-informed un-believers don’t necessarily reject the God *concept*, even though they do reject the traditional, anecdotal, and theological evidence presented on behalf of a particular, partisan God. It’s a frustrating fact that all human reasoning about transcendent things—literally out of this world—is bound to be circular.

Such rationalized evidence and round-about arguments over the millennia have been sufficient for those who could think of no alternative to a humanoid über-king running the show—because the world “obviously” couldn’t run itself. Hence, they envisioned an idealized, parallel world, inhabited by a race of supermen, who pull the strings of the invisible forces behind the



LIBER DEITY

“The point which you raise on intelligent Design has perplexed me beyond measure . . . I am in a complete jumble . . . One cannot look at this Universe . . .without believing that all has been intelligently designed; yet when I look to each individual organism, I can see no evidence of this . . .” --Charles Darwin to John Herschel

operation of this mundane reality. Ironically, their sincere attempts to bring heavenly-perfection to this mediocre planet, have only served to antagonize those with different divine traditions. Deism tries to side-step the logical tangles and head-butting of traditional religions by avoiding theological thinking and take-it-or-leave-it dogma.

Deism is simply a free-thinking philosophy, based on the reasonable assumption (an educated guess) that the world was created by an intelligent designer (not to be confused with the unspecified, but clearly sectarian ID of fundamentalist Christianity), who reveals Himself only through Her* material creation. Admittedly, the choice of a divine creator over an eternal, impersonal universe may be a matter of taste, but in practice, it does make an emotional difference to put a human face on a stark abstraction. This God Hypothesis (GH) is merely the default beginning position for those who want to evade the anomie of existential ennui, and to avoid the inherent deceptions and delusions of human testimony and traditions. From the GH premise, each of us must create his own mental image of the creator from the raw material around us. Although Deist philosophy recognizes that the order of the universe implies a designer, it makes no positive assertions about the nature of that designer, except for what each individual can determine and support through reason and observation of the natural universe.**

Furthermore, it's a philosophical fact that no human reasoning can grasp the existence of an entity beyond space and time. The most sublime syllogisms always return back to the point of beginning. Circular arguments lead us nowhere. “No *ought* can prove an *is*”, as David Hume put it. Consequently, the only reason-for-believing that's left to us is physical evidence, such as a direct revelation of God. Yet the Abrahamic religious traditions assert that “no man can see God and live”. If so, that leaves us with no choice, but to look for

indirect physical evidence. Indeed some say, “Just look around at the glory of God's handiwork”. But practical minded folks see only the material universe, which is not in question. Hence, the “handiwork” answer merely begs the question: whose hands created what we see: Allah, Vishnu, Kronos, or Manitou?

In years past, miracles were used, allegedly, to confirm the authority of those who claim to speak for God. Miracles are direct evidence of the divine power behind the human spokesman. Unfortunately, miracles have lost some of their luster in recent years. As modern science reveals the mundane processes behind ancient mysteries, old-fashioned matter-mastering miracles, like parting the sea, have become extinct. Modern wonderworkers may be afraid to openly perform their staff-into-snake illusions, because of scientific skeptics who are able to reveal the mundane trick behind their magic feats. Therefore, most modern prophets stick to psychological tricks that are more difficult to debunk. Conveniently, the faithful are inclined to see what they believe.

Most miracles nowadays are limited to mental phenomena, and are thus subject to the same illusions and delusions that bedevil all unsubstantiated ideas. OK then, what about the Bible? That's a physical form of evidence, isn't it? Yes, but . . . there are many “holy books” about, that claim to reveal the will of God. In the New Testament, Christians are required to accept the testimony of an ancient cult of seemingly-sincere people—who claim to have known Jesus and to have felt the power of the Holy Spirit—because “it is written”. Yet, as recent events in major news organizations have shown, fiction is easier to write than fact. And you can pass-off “what-ought-to-be” for “what-is” as long as your credibility is taken on faith. If the Bible were the only written revelation, faith would come easily. But with conflicting stories in various scriptures, and little corroborating evidence, we

**The Deity has no human gender, so the choice of pronouns is strictly arbitrary. Feminine happens to be my preference. je*

***Some Deists hope for a heavenly hereafter, but most would admit it's more a sentiment, than a rational expectation.*

With scripture and revelation removed, all that remains to know God is personal reason and observation of the universe. Essentially, this is getting to know the artist by studying the artwork. The only "Word of God" is the universe itself. ---John Armstrong

must either believe them all, or none at all. Besides, how can human language reveal to me the knowledge that is beyond understanding?

So now we get down to the only irrefutable evidence for God: personal experience. Mystics throughout the ages have rejected, or neglected, the written words of fallible men. They seem to pity the pathetic parishioners clutching their leather-bound, paper idols, and praying to their invisible God-father for some little sign that He is, and that He cares about their petty problems. Contrarily, Mystics claim to go directly to the source. They profess to know God in the first person. Even more convincing, their passionate personalities, and their "I-know-something-you-don't" demeanor seem to be a truer manifestation of holiness than methodical piety. Yet again, though, *their* testimony must be taken on faith, and *we* must judge by mere appearances. Ironically, pragmatic, materialistic science has learned how to reproduce sublime sensations of oneness and transcendence, without resorting to mystical mumbo-jumbo.

Thus, it seems that the God question has evoked an embarrassing plethora of "final" answers. Yet, none of them is convincing apart from blind faith, which is a leap into the darkness of ignorance, motivated by the hope for future light and full knowledge.* All of the proposed answers though, fall short of actually demonstrating the glory of God. If you begin your questioning with an open mind, without a preconceived notion of deity, you could search endlessly for a final resolution. Hence, our mental image of God sprouts from a seed of mundane matter, leaving a trace of humble origins on the ideal of divine perfection.

If the search for God is such a crap shoot then, what option do we have, other than to just close our eyes and pick a faith? Sincere, but skeptical, seekers must try to keep an open mind as they continue to search for the answers to ultimate questions, such as: Why is there something rather

than nothing? "God created everything" is not an ultimate answer, but a thought-stopper. It only raises more questions, such as "where did God come from? And what about these more personal corollaries: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Who is responsible for all of this? The various and sundry scriptures can't seem to agree on the answers to those queries. Even modern science has no way to prove or disprove such subjective opinions. That's why scientists try to avoid the entanglements of metaphysics by accepting physical reality as a given, and by limiting their search to testable, objective topics.

Nevertheless, for sincere seekers after spiritual solace, such burning questions will torment us, until the flames are extinguished by soothing truth. Fortunately (or not?), when healing truth is not available, placebos may give us temporary relief in the form of faith. Yet, some stubborn souls prefer to endure the pain of un-knowing, until the real thing comes along. Such people are called Agnostics or Skeptics. Adopting the "know-nothing" attitude is not very comforting, though, and even seems perverse to most people. So, my plan "B" is to adopt the philosophical stance of many American "founding fathers", such as Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, and Paine.** They called themselves "Deists", rather than Christians.

Deism rejects all of the religious scriptures and dogmas created by fallible humans, as sources of final Truth. Instead, Deists try to avoid unwarranted assumptions, and focus on what is obvious. The world of Nature is where we live and breathe and have our being. But it doesn't seem to be eternal, so someone, or some thing, must have created it. Since the Creator, whoever She is, does not reveal Herself to us directly, we have no way of knowing what Her intentions for us were. So, as the dominant creatures on earth, we must work together to make our own way in the world. The philosophy of Deism is based on a single, axio-

**Agnosticism also hopes for future understanding, but it proceeds cautiously by following the "look before you leap" rule.*

*** See page 8*

“Life is like arriving late for a movie, having to figure out what was going on without bothering everybody with a lot of questions, and then being unexpectedly called away before you find out how it ends,” ---Joseph Campbell

Scientific American, Jan '05, p102

Life is a mystery without any clues. Well, maybe a few dots to connect.

matic premise: that some pre-existing Prime-Mover made us a physical, spherical home, then wound it up, and turned it loose to evolve its own path through space and time. This reasonable inference is not a fixed point of faith, however. It's just a convenient place to start our philosophical journey, because it leaves us free to deal with reality, without falling into the trap of logical conclusions derived from unwarranted assumptions.

Yet, if we are going to adopt the God Hypothesis, we must assume that She has the power of intention, even though we may not know all the whys and wherefores of creation. However, we must be careful not to ascribe human characteristics to a super-human character. If the Creator loves her children, how could our Mother-Goddess give birth to us and then abandon us to survive as orphans in the wilderness? To avoid pointless speculation, our hypothetical Deity's inferred attributes and purposes should remain in the realm of abstractions. For example, the office of Creator requires planning and executing abilities. The role of Final Arbiter requires judgment and authority. Since life always comes from life, the Life-giver must be alive in some sense, and should serve as the ultimate life-form. Dead matter could very well be eternal, but Life, as we know it, always has a beginning and an end. That's why the atheist Douglas Adams concluded: “. . . Without a god, life is only a matter of opinion”. Therefore, a supreme sanction seems to be necessary to curtail the perpetual questioning of children and philosophers. Unfortunately, in this post-prophecy age, Deists have found that ordinary humans have few qualms about offering their own considered opinions as God's divine edicts.

Since Deism has no scripture, no creed, no dogma, and no priesthood, it is not an organized religion. Rather, it is a personal philosophy of life, defining an appropriate way of living. It doesn't require us to accept any specific, traditional “reve-

lation” of God on faith. Instead, it merely requires us to act *as-if* an undefined, divine Creator exists, simply because we must have a fixed frame of reference against which to define all relative truths. Like God, Absolute Truth is beyond the reach of human reason, so its existence must be assumed without any hard evidence (Just as we act as-if we have free-will, despite the compelling evidence for determinism). The Natural Law-giver is a reasonable, but not proven, assumption. The God Hypothesis is an axiom which establishes a foundation upon which to build a rational belief system. It also points us in the direction of answers to other meaningful questions, such as “how ought a person to live in his relations to God, to humanity, to the world”. Distilling all we know of existence down to essentials, it appears that the presumptive Creator, for reasons known only to Herself, caused the physical world to exist, and to evolve. Change is the only constant in our lives. Thus, the task that we as sentient beings have inherited is simply to live and to evolve in harmony with the natural laws embodied by the Deity in the material world. After careful consideration of the babble of world religions, Deists are forced to conclude that all traditional scriptures and belief systems are human opinions, and not divine commands.

The gods of established religions go by many names and manifold manifestations. But the default deity of Deism is the “unknown god” who is called-upon when anthropomorphic idols of carved-wood and hammered-gold and leather-bound-paper fail to answer our prayers. This god-of-last-resort patiently listens to our pleas, but then expects us to work out our own salvation; because there is no justice in nature, except human justice. There is no morality in the world, except human morality. The deity-with-no-name is infinitely flexible, but eternally fixed in mind-space. She may be Good or Evil as the situation requires. She may be Love or Hate, feminine or masculine, hot or cold,

I didn't convert to Deism. I discovered that I had been a Deist all along.

---John Armstrong

black or white, day or night. She doesn't seem to care what you call her: Brahma, Mother Nature, Father-in-Heaven, Great Spirit, Gaia, or World Soul. She is not jealous of other gods, because She/He/It is all of them, and all are One.

Even though Deism is not a religion, *per se*, it fulfils some of the functions associated with religious organizations, such as defining Morality. For example, Mercy and Justice, compassion and cooperation, hope and perseverance, can all be derived from an understanding of the laws of Nature (e.g. the principles of Evolution), especially Human Nature. Indeed, untamed Nature is red in tooth and claw, living on death; but She is also capable of loving and giving life. Science has only recently begun to codify the expedient morality inherent in natural processes. But all religions have instinctively followed the minimum requirements of human societies that form the core of Morality. Deists have simply distilled their ethic down to one commandment: the Golden Rule.

Although historically, "English" Deism arose out of protestant Christianity, it gives no special credence to the written words of Judeo-Christian interpreters of God's Will and ways. Deism also evolved out of the secular Enlightenment, along with modern Science. Thus it covers the full range of spiritual and intellectual knowledge from physics to metaphysics. For example, religious myths and scriptures long ago developed speculative, but metaphorically powerful, outlines of how creation came about. Yet modern Cosmologists have reverse-engineered the on-going creative process in technical detail, from Big-Bang to Atomic Bomb, with no heavenly assistance. So, the only pertinent scripture for Deists is the history of God's works engraved on tablets of natural matter: the book of Nature. Hence, Religion may tell us how it ought to be, but Science tells us how it is.

Limited, imperfect, and challenging is "how it is". But our purported Creator gave us the power

to imagine how-it-ought-to-be. Eternal life in heaven is one possible answer to "where are we going?" But it appears that the Deity, created out of our logic and longing, has decreed that the ultimate outcome is for Her to know, and for us to find out. This existential teasing may seem cruel, but it's infinitely better than the terrible threats and hollow promises of traditional tyrannical gods. Whatever will be, will be; regardless of our preferences and expectations. But, if the idea of heaven makes you happy, by all means believe whatever gets you through the night. That's the advantage of Deism: in Deus all things are possible, but nothing is "written".

The downside of Deism is that we have no reason to expect salvation by faith alone. Any positive outcome in this world will come from old-fashioned hard, dirty work. But there is a ray of hope, because the Deity is scrupulously fair; She doesn't play favorites; There are no Elect or Chosen-people; She doesn't care if you are rich or poor, healthy or sick, happy or sad. If you need or desire something, it's your responsibility to make it happen. If you need help to achieve your goal, silent prayer may shore-up your confidence, but direct your spoken request to the source from whence cometh your help: your fellow man. Natural, instinctive Altruism, people-helping-people, is the rock of our salvation.

As you have no doubt noticed by now, my Deity is a fictional character, in the sense that I'm not reporting my observations, but my imagination. Yet most scriptures and myths are also fictional accounts of divine doings. Therefore, I feel free to reject any parts that are immoral or implausible to me. Even then, I can accept the symbolic truth behind the imaginative fabrications. Of course, I could be accused of creating my Creator to suit my own designs, and that would be an accurate assessment. Since I can't prove that my kind of God actually exists, why should I believe it? Like

"I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours." --- Stephen Roberts

most people, "almost all of my beliefs are based on faith in people, and processes, and institutions, and their various capacities for correcting themselves when in error." [Oliver Morton] It's in that last part where I find the institution of Science to be superior to the various establishments of Religion. As with any other profession of faith though, I believe in God primarily because that seems better than the alternative; because it suits me.

Because Science mostly studies discrete pieces of reality by the method of analysis, it can safely ignore the ultimate origins of Life, the Universe, and Everything. Philosophy, though, goes beyond the limitations of science, to study higher-ranking whole things (holons) by the method of synthesis. Hence, the philosophical leading edge of science, is currently studying the phenomenon of "emergence". This is the formerly mysterious process whereby a collection of parts suddenly and surreptitiously becomes a new thing. The resulting "holon" is *something* greater than the sum of its parts. For example, to a scientist Life is simply a complex arrangement of chemicals processing energy. Also, Mind is simply a blob of neurons processing nerve impulses. And yet, both are so much more than chemicals, and cells, and electrons. We give those independent pieces a collective name referring to the new properties of the whole that didn't exist in the parts. Yet again, in reality, nothing new has been added to the mix, except a connection in the human mind. So *Emergence* is not a mystical force; it's simply the mental transition from *perception* to *conception*, where a new concept or a new category has been born. It is merely a sudden realization of a hidden relationship that was there all along—like a connect-the-dots puzzle—and was born out of all that came before. Perhaps even God Herself was an emergent idea in primitive minds as they imagined a Great Spirit who ruled over all the mundane, but mysterious, natural forces. Or maybe the Deity *is* the

mysterious force by which chemicals become complex molecules, and molecules become organized cells, and cells become living things, and biological creatures become sentient beings.

Maybe. But as I said before, the choice between Deism and Atheism may be only a matter of taste. However, I believe that assuming the existence of a sentient deity has profound implications for the future of humanity. Even though we still have to guess at the Creator's purpose, we can instinctively identify with goal-oriented behavior—whereas random change is alien to us. Deists are not required to have faith though, except in the form of optimism. So the choice comes down to this: eternal matter or eternal spirit; an endless succession of multi-verses or one god; an infinite recession of secondary causes or a divine First Cause? Hence, I don't know if my Deus is real, but to me she is definitely beautiful—and useful. By analogy with Pascal's Wager, I'll put my money on the best-looking horse, and just hope that she's also the fastest.

Deism strips away all the religious encrustations obscuring the pure, elegant idea of God, the author of all things. It also allows us to accept the best parts of all the sectarian world religions, and add them to our emerging *wholistic* belief system. Deists take only one thing on faith: *God is*. Everything else is subject to skeptical scrutiny. And the only reason God is not scrutinized is that there would be no way to know what the truth is—no way to fact-check—no way to disprove our erroneous presumptions. The God Hypothesis, like many other self-evident concepts, is a tautology: God is the entity who fits the definition of a deity. It makes perfect sense, but those who prefer a deity with human attributes may find that Deism is just as bleak as Atheism.

As a novice Deist then, I am trying on this middle-of-the road philosophy to see if it fits. However, I don't choose to believe unconditionally

Deism (n): Belief in God as revealed by nature and reason combined with a disbelief in scripture, prophets, superstition and church authority.

in the Deist-definition of God, as a matter of blind faith. Rather, I choose to act as-if the Deity exists, as a matter of pragmatic Reason. The God Hypothesis, succinctly, but arbitrarily, puts a stop to the endless recycling of ancient philosophical questions. Space, time, matter, energy: all are physical and finite. And yet, the human soul is able to range beyond all physical limits. The soul-mind can even conceive of things it can't understand, like infinity, eternity, and deity. Such mind-boggling concepts could lead to an infinite regression, and insanity, if they are not contained. Therefore, to avoid an endless loop of thought, and eventual brain-burnout, we have a built-in fail-safe faith-mechanism to shut-down potentially dangerous critical-mass-thoughts before they explode into madness. By faith, we act as-if we have the ultimate answer, even when we don't. For example, I believe in the Creator in the same way I believe in George Washington. GW is the symbolic Father of our country, just as God is the symbolic Father of the Universe. Just as the presidency is an office, not a particular man, so the role of Creator is an office regardless of the particular attributes of the office-holder.

Such an open-minded conception of deity though, may lead to some unorthodox beliefs about who or what God is. Even those who don't claim to be Deists have expressed similar beliefs that reconcile some aspects of the science/religion dichotomy. Consider the example of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,* a Catholic priest and paleontologist, who conjectured that the human mind was evolving, along with the material world, toward an "Omega Point" of perfection equivalent to God. More recently, Amit Goswami,** a Hindu and physicist, concluded that God is the conscious Mind of the universe, who continuously creates the physical world out of intention (Will) and information (creative force). To Goswami, this god-concept

is the only way to make sense of the baffling, but fertile theory of quantum queerness.

Goswami calls his philosophy "Monistic Idealism" to contrast with Descartes' Mind/Body "Dualistic Idealism" and with modern science's Matter-is-all "Monistic Materialism". *Monism* means that ultimately there is only one essential substance. *Idealism* means that Mind, not Matter is that substance. Deism agrees that this single-minded substance is the Conscious Creator of the material universe. Thus, all apparent dualities are descended from the divine Singularity. Ironically, this theory of monistic idealism means that Jehovah and Satan, Good and Evil, Matter and Spirit are ultimately the same thing. All manifestations emanate from the One Source. I won't go into all of the ramifications of this concept, but most religious philosophies have eventually come to the same conclusion: that All is One. The Taoist Yin-Yang symbol below neatly illustrates the unity of duality.

Therefore, when asked about my religious affiliation, henceforth I will answer that I am a Mono-Deist. That's not intended to be a flip answer; it's just the best way I know to convey my non-mainstream beliefs. Yet, unlike Agnosticism or Atheism, my Deism—my faith in Deus—places me safely in the majority of humans who believe in some form of Supreme Being. And the lack of dogma in my belief system permits me to work together with my brothers and sisters of all faiths to make the world a better place to live. Of course, I understand that such broad-minded acceptance of difference doesn't always work both ways. So my new-found "faith" will surely be tested in the marketplace of ideas. Is it based on cogent philosophical reasoning, or on facile sophistry? Is my God anything more than a comforting illusion? Will my faith save me? I resolve to remain agnostic on these moot questions until my virtual faith is replaced by true understanding ☺

* *The Phenomenon of Man*

** *The Conscious Universe*

Excerpts from Thomas Paine's "The Age of Reason"

The author of COMMON SENSE was the public advocate of the American Revolution

☉ *But some perhaps will say, "Are we to have no word of God, no revelation?" I answer, "Yes. There is a Word of God; there is a revelation." **The Word of God is in the Creation we behold:** And it is in this word, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.*

☉ *The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a first cause, the cause of all things. **And, incomprehensibly difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it.** It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time.*

☉ *It is only by the exercise of reason, that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding anything; and in this case it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible to a horse as to a man. **How then is it that those people pretend to reject reason?***

☉ *That which is now called **natural philosophy**, embracing the whole circle of science, of which astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in his works, and is **the true theology...***

***It is a fraud of the Christian system to call the sciences 'human inventions;'** it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles, he can only discover them.*

☉ *What more does man want to know, than that the hand or power that made these things is divine, is omnipotent? **Let him believe this,** with the force it is impossible to repel if he permits his reason to act, **and his rule of moral life will follow of course.***

☉ *We cannot serve God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service; and, therefore, **the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made.** This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world, and spending a recluse life in selfish devotion.*

☉ *A Psalm of Deus*

*The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.
Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.
What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found,
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.*