



## Press On.

BY PARK BENJAMIN.

Press on! surmount the rocky steeps,  
Climb boldly o'er the torrent's arch;  
He fails alone who feebly creeps!  
He wins who dares the hero's march.  
Be thou a hero! let thy might  
Tramp on eternal snows its way,  
And, through the ebon walls of night,  
Hew down a passage unto day.

Press on! and if once and twice thy feet  
Slip back and stumble, harder try;  
From him who never dreads to meet  
Danger and death, they're sure to fly.  
To coward ranks the bullet speeds,  
While on their breast who never quail,  
Gleams, guardian of chivalric deeds,  
Bright courage, like a coat of mail.

Press on! if Fortune play thee false  
To-day, to-morrow she'll be true;  
Whom now she sinks, she now exalts,  
Taking old gifts and granting new.  
The wisdom of the present hour  
Makes up the follies past and gone;  
To weakness, strength succeeds, and  
power  
From frailty springs! Press on, press  
on!

Therefore, press on and reach the goal,  
And gain the prize and wear the  
crown;

Faint not, for to the steadfast soul  
Come wealth, and honor, and renown.  
To thine own self be true, and keep  
Thy mind from sloth, thy thought  
from soil.

Press on, and thou shalt surely reap  
A bounteous harvest for thy toil.  
—Favorite Poems.

## Joseph Cook's "Scientific Theism".

BY EDGAR C. BEALL.

OF all the fallacies in theological reasoning, some form of the "vicious circle", or circular syllogism, is without doubt the most common, as well as the most specious and subtle. Defined in general terms, it consists in proving the premises by the conclusion, and then the conclusion by the premises. In other words, assuming or stating within one of the premises, something, the truth of which could never be established, or which would never be admitted, until after the demonstration of the conclusion. The whole argument from design begs the question; but the most singular feature about it is, that the leading theologians, perceiving their error, now come forward with a new set of circular arguments, which are, if possible, even more sophistical than the old. Of the champions of "scientific theism", doubtless the most popular representative in the United States is Joseph Cook, of Boston. In his lecture entitled "Matthew Arnold's Views on Conscience", Mr. Cook presents what he calls the "scientific answer" to the obvious defect in Paley's reasoning. I quote verbatim:

"But the answer is this: That we cannot have a dependent existence without an independent or

self-existent being to depend upon. All existence, to put the argument in syllogistic form, is either dependent or independent. You are sure of that? Yes. Well if there is a dependent existence, there must be an independent; for there can not be dependence without something to depend upon, and an infinite series of links receding forever is an effect without a cause. Your axiom that every change must have an adequate cause is denied by the theory of an infinite series. You carry up your chain link after link and there is nothing to hang the last link upon.

"1. All possible existence is either dependent or independent.

"2. If there is dependent existence, there must be independent existence, for there cannot be dependence without dependence on something. An endless chain without a point of support is an effect without a cause; dependence without independence is contradiction in terms.

"3. I am a dependent existence.

"4. Therefore there is independent existence. But independent existence is self-existence.

"1. All possible being is either self-existent or not self-existent.

"2. If there is being which is not self-existent, the principle that every change must have an adequate cause, requires that there should exist being that is self-existent.

"3. I am a being that is not self-existent.

"4. Therefore, there is being that is self-existent. So, too, with exact loyalty to self-evident truth, we may say:

"1. All possible persons are either self-existent or not self-existent.

"2. If there exist a person that is not self-existent, there must be a person that is self-existent.

"3. I am a person not self-existent.

"4. Therefore, there is a person who is self-existent. It is He."

The introductory remarks, and the first four of these propositions, are, without doubt, substantially correct; provided, however, that we can construe the third proposition to mean that man is "dependent" upon the universe in a relative and not in an absolute sense. In the second argument, the first and second propositions are also logical; but the third, "I am a being that is not self-existent," like the third proposition in the first argument, is true only in the sense that man did not attain personality by an act of his own volition; or independently of certain reactions between his organism and its environments which were necessary to his development. The fourth proposition is admissible, provided Mr. Cook does not here attach to the word "being" the idea of organism or personality. Man is, of course,

a "dependent" or contingent being, so far as regards the fact of his having become an organism without any exercise of his own will; or in the sense that he is an objective expression or manifestation of a certain force or tendency inherent in matter, which may be said to underlie his personality. Thus, relatively, his individual organism is "dependent" upon this subjective force, or combination of forces and environments in nature; but, regarded absolutely, he forms a part of the eternally self-existent entirety of the universe. As an effect, he bears the same relation to the universe that the leaf does to the tree. A leaf is, relatively, an expression of a process or function of the tree, and is dependent on this function only for its form and individuality. But as an absolute existence, it is a part of the tree, and is as independent of any forces outside of the tree as the tree itself is. Or, if it be objected to this illustration that the tree is not self-sustaining, we may compare man at once to the tree. Relatively, that is, as a definite structure, the tree is dependent upon its environments, such as earth, air, water, and light; but absolutely, its particles are composed of material elements found in earth, air, etc., thus forming a part of the universe as a self-existing whole.

Let us now especially notice the second proposition in the third and last argument, viz.: "If there exist a person that is not self-existent, there must be a person that is self-existent." As this is the pivot upon which the syllogism rests, if it can not be established as true, the whole argument must fall. Have we, then, any evidence that it is true? Does Mr. Cook offer any? Not the slightest. He simply assumes that nothing short of a divine Person could be an adequate cause of human personality. And this he does without any induction whatever to warrant such a notion. This proposition is only a subtle method of asserting that there is a Creator, because it is on all sides conceded that, in a relative sense, man is not self-existent; that is, not self-sustaining, or independent of his environments. But what is the whole syllogism intended to prove? Why, simply that there is a Creator. Could there be any greater sophistry than this?

To make the "vicious circle" still more apparent, let us reconstruct Mr. Cook's argument, and express it in words which will perhaps admit of less ambiguity:

1. All non-self-sustaining persons are caused by a Self-Sustaining Person.

2. I am a non-self-sustaining person.

3. Therefore, I am caused by a Self-Sustaining Person; i. e., by a God.

Now, it will be clear to the reader that the first proposition here virtually contains an assertion that there is a personal God; because, as I have already explained, all concede that man does not exist or sustain himself independently of certain conditions and environments external to his organism. It will be equally clear that the third proposition, or conclusion, contains the same assumption. Thus the whole argument is a circle.

I have stated that man is relatively, non-self-existent, though when regarded absolutely, as a part of the indestructible entirety of the material world, he is self-existent. As this distinction might afford some ground for cavil, I will say that in this case it is entirely unnecessary for us to attempt to indicate man's exact relation to the universe. For the sake of the argument, we will concede that man is in no sense self-existent, and that he is contingent or dependent upon a "somewhat" external to himself. Now, can, or does, Mr. Cook prove that this "somewhat" is a "Some-One"? Admitting the third proposition, "I am a person not self-existent," upon what authority does Mr. Cook lay down the second proposition, "If there exist a person that is not self-existent, there must be a person that is self-existent"? How is it possible to establish this premise, without first establishing the fourth proposition, or conclusion, which is, substantially, the assertion that there is a God? Is there not here a positive violation of the rules of syllogism, which require that the evidence supporting the premises must be gathered from external sources? Induction must precede deduction. We have no right to draw a particular conclusion from a general proposition unless the latter is already admitted or has been demonstrated. Mr. Cook's argument is about as logical as the following:

1. All possible leaves either grow by themselves, or upon trees, or something resembling trees.

2. If there exist a leaf that did not grow by itself, there must be a leaf that did grow by itself.