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ARTICLE I.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In the remarks which we propose to make upon this subject, we have in our view the needs of the great body of private members of the Church rather than the needs of the ministers of the gospel; although we are not without hope of being able to say something which may serve to impart additional clearness to the views of some ministers who have not made the subject a matter of special study. Observation and experience have convinced us that there is not a little confusion, if not some error, in the notions entertained by many intelligent Presbyterians in regard to the nature and design of this ordinance, and to the mode in which it conduces to the sanctification of believers. Fatal errors in regard to it were taught in the Church for ages; and so inveterate have these errors become, so thoroughly had they poisoned the life of Christians, that even the great men who were raised up by Divine Providence and employed as its instruments in the work of reform in the sixteenth century, failed to reach any harmony of views among themselves concerning it; and an ordinance which had been established by the Saviour as the most impressive symbol of the union and communion of his people, became the occasion of bitter contentions and divisions. Its mission, like the mission of the Redeemer himself, seemed to be that of bringing a sword, not

officer who becomes an accomplice of this intrusion certainly renders himself obnoxious to discipline, just as he would by assisting to celebrate an idolatrous mass.

We close with one suggestion to such women as may be inclined to this new claim. If they read history they find that the condition of woman in Christendom, and especially in America, is most enviable as compared with her state in all other ages and nations. Let them ponder candidly how much they possess here which their sisters have enjoyed in no other age. What bestowed those peculiar privileges on the Christian women of America? The Bible. Let them beware then how they do anything to undermine the reverence of mankind for the authority of the Bible. It is undermining their own bulwark. If they understand how universally in all but Bible lands the "weaker vessel" has been made the slave of man's strength and selfishness, they will gladly "let well enough alone," lest in grasping at some impossible prize beyond, they lose the privileges they now have, and fall back to the gulf of oppression from which these doctrines of Christ and Paul have lifted them. R. L. DABNEY.

ARTICLE VI.

THE ALTERNATIVES OF UNBELIEF.

Anti-Theistic Theories. Being the Baird Lecture for 1877.

By ROBERT FLINT, D. D., LL.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. New York: Scribner & Welford. 1879.

This is the successor and companion volume to the eminent author's lecture on "Theism," which appeared in print two years ago. The former volume was didactic, this one is polemic. The design of the first treatise was to establish by positive argument the doctrine accepted by theists. The aim of the second is to undermine by logic the foundations of infidelity. We can heartily applaud these works of the famous Scotch teacher, and

would confidently set them over against the writings of his celebrated namesake, the American physiologist and materialist. Despite certain obvious defects that might be pointed out, the Baird Lecture for 1877 is especially worthy of commendation as being not only able and conclusive, and far from superficial, but also to a gratifying extent original. We propose now to make an examination of the different postures that have been assumed by infidelity in the past and present; as well as of the various attitudes in which that infidelity has been, or may yet need to be, confronted by Christianity. In doing this we shall have to forego, except in a single instance, the guidance of the valiant Greatheart of Presbyterian apologetics in the British Islands.

The possible opinions as to the existence of God may be grouped as Theistic and Anti-Theistic. The theoretical positions which have at any time been taken by the opponents of the divine origin of the Scriptures may be set down at six or seven, or at the utmost at eight, nine, or ten; and these, as we shall presently see, are logically reducible to a much smaller number. These six, eight, or ten positions appear to exhaust the possibilities of the situation. Atheism, Pantheism, Polytheism, Dualism, Deism, Agnosticism, Pyrrhonism: *voilà tout!* Materialism (where not, inconsistently, theistic) is but another name for Atheism, or Agnosticism, or else may be regarded as a strange sort of Pantheism.

Rationalism is either a wide term equivalent to Naturalism, or else denotes one phase, or several phases, of deism, pantheism, or atheism.

Pessimism is essentially atheistic, for the reason that if it does not expressly challenge the divine existence, it virtually denies a God by stripping the idea of all benevolent and moral attributes.

This seems to finish the catalogue. Infidelity, it is true, may continue to pass through its customary metamorphoses, but it is believed that a sharp, critical scrutiny will always be able to detect "the old familiar faces" under every imaginable variety of new disguises.

The Anti-Theistic positions, then, are as follows:

That of Atheism, which, conceding nothing, denies the divine existence;

That of Pantheism, which, conceding God's being, denies his personality;

That of Polytheism, which, conceding the divine existence and personality, denies the divine unity.

That of Dualism, which, while it concedes the divine existence and may concede his personality and even his unity, denies the divine self-sufficiency; and

That of Deism, which, conceding God's existence, personality and unity, and his self-sufficiency, denies the reality, and in some forms of it even *the possibility*, of the divine revelation and attestations, and in its most advanced utterances, the reality, if not the possibility, of the divine providential government, and indeed of the divine activity in the world.

There are two others necessary to complete the list. They are those of Agnosticism or Positivism, and Scepticism or Pyrrhonism. By Positivism is intended not merely the theory of Auguste Comte and his acknowledged school—headed by such men as M. Littré, J. S. Mill, G. H. Lewes, and Mr. Frederick Harrison, but also the broader theory of Mr. Alexander Bain, Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Dr. Tyndall, Dr. Maudesley, and many on the continent of Europe, together with their English and American *confrères* and disciples. We are aware that the English thinkers of this class many of them oppose what some of them consider Comte's fundamental postulate of the three states of human knowledge, and that they in some instances ridicule his scientific pretensions and in chorus disown his intellectual paternity, preferring to trace back their paternity to Hume. Professor Littledale has suggested the term Agnostics* as a proper designation for all who occupy the ground assumed by Comte and his retinue with regard to the futility of pushing our inquiries into the region of ultimate causes, whether final or efficient, and with regard to the vast realm of *the unknowable*. The term Positivists has, indeed, been rightly or wrongly fixed upon them,

*The credit for this name has recently been claimed for Professor Huxley. See *New York World*, August 19, 1879.

and it is perhaps too late in the day, even if it be desirable, to have it changed.

Pyrrhonism, or Scepticism in the distinctive sense, holds *sub judice* the propositions which are categorically denied by one or several of the preceding theories. Agnosticism might be classed as a variety of partial Scepticism, but for its characteristic and categorical assertion of the divine unknowableness. Scepticism is, however, a term often used popularly and broadly to denote infidelity in general, especially when not very sure of its conclusions.

These various theoretical positions can be classified in different ways, according as we select this or that principle of classification, or this or that point of view from which to make the classification. We might class them as forms of *denial* and forms of *doubt*. The forms of denial would then include all but the different branches of Scepticism. The forms of denial might then be further subdivided into Atheistic, Polytheistic, and Monotheistic Infidelity. Under Monotheistic Infidelity, on this plan, would fall Dualism, Deism, and Agnosticism.* The forms of doubt, on the other hand, would branch into universal and partial Scepticism; the universal being represented by Pyrrho—its abettors “doubting that they doubt;” the partial by those who with Hume admit the existence of our subjective states and processes but question their trustworthiness, and by the eclectics whether utterly capricious or more plausibly rational. The forms of denial might be grouped under the heads of *Naturalism* and *Supernaturalism*; and this without once raising the vexed question that agitated the fathers and the schoolmen, and has been since discussed by Trench and Wardlaw, by the Duke of Argyll, by Mozley, by President Hop-

*We are aware that we are here using the term “Monotheistic” with a latitude that requires explanation and may be considered unjustifiable. “Monistic” is the term usually employed; but this word has relation to the question of *substance*, and what we want is a word having relation to the question of *supreme cause*. We employ the description simply for the nonce and to give symmetry to our classification. Agnosticism, sharply defined, will be found to be situated exactly on the dividing line betwixt Theism and Atheism, but to have a decided slant towards Atheism. We first class it as Monotheistic and afterwards as Atheistic.

kins, and by Dr. McCosh, as to the definition of a miracle and its relations to the natural. The difficulty of that question is largely due to the ambiguity of the terms "law," "nature," "natural," and "supernatural." The term "Supernaturalism" is here taken roughly to indicate those forms of negative opinion which do, and the term "Naturalism" to indicate those which do *not*, allow of the extraordinary or miraculous interpositions of the Deity in the affairs of the world. Atheistic infidelity would then lie wholly under the head of *Naturalism*, and Polytheistic wholly under the head of *Supernaturalism*, while Monotheistic would lie partly under one head and partly under the other. Monotheistic Naturalism would embrace Deism, Pantheism, and Agnosticism; and Monotheistic Supernaturalism, if we exclude Mysticism and Traditionalism, would take in certain exhibitions of Dualism as well as Mohammedanism, Judaism, Swedenborgianism, and Mormonism, together with the better forms of table-tipping Spiritism.

The first conflicts of Christianity were with heathen Polytheism and Judaic Monotheism. At a later period Monotheistic infidelity was encountered and vanquished in its Mohammedan form. For the most part, however, from the second century to the Reformation, the contentions of the Church were conducted chiefly within her own pale, and her conflicts with the Moslem were not so much spiritual and intellectual as carnal. Even as late as the age of the Reformers, the scimitar of the Turk, who had long before obtained a foothold in Southern Europe, was still to be seen flashing for a brief interval before the gates of Christendom; just as in an earlier age the battle-axe of the Crusader was to be seen brandished for a time under the walls of Islam. But in both cases the conflict was not for national conversion, but for extermination, or else enforced subjection. The watchword of the Mussulman was "Death, Tribute, or the Koran;" the battle cry of the mediæval Christian was, "No mercy to the paynim."

The intellectual labors of the Church before Constantine were chiefly directed to the establishment of its creed and the overthrow of heresy. The intellectual labors of the Church during the heart of the Middle Ages were chiefly bent on the task of

forging the two-edged weapons of the scholastic logic, which were afterwards to be employed in the interests of the Romish hierarchy, and also, to a certain extent, in those of the Reformed theology. It is true that some of the early heresies, as for instance, Gnosticism and Manichæism, had their origin in Greek and Oriental heathenism; but they did not become heresies until the attempt had been made within the Church itself to support them by the divine authority of the Scriptures.

The Revival of Letters inaugurated a magnificent revolt against the despotic sway of Romanism and the fetters of mediæval scholasticism and superstition. The revival of true religion, the consolidation of the Reformed Churches, and the systematic statement of sound theology, followed in the two succeeding centuries. It was not to be wondered at that the new wine of intellectual liberty, which was broached, and which began to be largely quaffed, in the days of Erasmus, of Luther, and of Zwinglius, should then as well as subsequently be attended with excesses. These excesses first made themselves known in the ravings of the Anabaptists of Germany. The same heady ferment resulted two centuries later in the birth of modern infidelity. It was the undoubted right of private judgment that was thus sadly perverted. Many causes conduced to the production of this lamentable consequence. The philosophic innovations of Francis Bacon, the speculations of Descartes, of John Locke, of Bishop Berkeley, of Hume, the austerities of the Puritan commonwealth, and the violent reaction that followed at the period of the Restoration, were leading causes which contributed to make the beginning and middle, and, indeed, the whole of the eighteenth century the palmy period of Deism. Deism and deistic and neological rationalism of Germany are however largely due to the perverse thinking of such men as Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Toland, as well as of Hobbes and Spinoza* in the century preceding. The logical tendencies of Deistic naturalism, the abuse of the prerogative and of the power of the nobles and the clergy in France, the transparent impostures of decadent Romanism, the fierce recalci-

*German Rationalism began with Semler, who took his cue from Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus."

tration of the impetuous French people under the direction of the tribune and the *Encyclopédie*, concurred to make the epoch of the French Revolution the palmy period of outspoken Atheism. Meanwhile Scepticism had attained its zenith in the person of the most subtle of its advocates, David Hume. The scene was now shifted, from England and from France, to Germany. The intellectual system of that great thinker, Immanuel Kant, and especially his discussion of the categories of thought, and of the Relative and Absolute, prepared the way for the refined and thoroughgoing idealism of Fichte, of Schelling, of Hegel, of Bruno, of Strauss, and of Feuerbach; and all these influences united in making the latter part of the first half of the nineteenth century the palmy period of continental *Pantheism*. The wonderful success of the Baconian philosophy, especially as applied by Bacon's successors, in the department of physical science, the experience doctrine of Hume, and his theory of causation as developed by Brown and James Mill, the brilliant but sophistical generalisations of Comte, and the recent metaphysical and scientific disquisitions of John Stuart Mill, of the late Geo. H. Lewes, of Mr. H. Spencer, of Professor Huxley and Mr. Darwin and Dr. Tyndall, and their allies and pupils, have agreed in making the present or latter part of the century the palmy period of the so-called Agnosticism or *Positivism*.

Without holding the favorite tenet of the Comteian system, that there are three states through which the human mind successively passes in the attainment of knowledge, to wit, the "Theological" or "Fictitious," the "Metaphysical," and the "Scientific" or "Positive"; we do hold that the human mind does pass through successive states, which are, however, not definite in number or uniform in kind, of *erroneous* opinion, whether in arriving at the truth, or (as is more generally the case) after having once determined to renounce it. We are inclined to believe, moreover, that Positivism (or Agnosticism), so far from being the finality of truth, is more likely to turn out to be the finality of error. That the system of the Positivists (or Agnostics), at least in its current theological positions, is essentially an erroneous system, we doubt no more than we doubt the existence of

the Pyramid of Cheops; and there are many signs that in Positivism Infidelity has at last reached the end of its tether.

Let us again revert to the classification of the various infidel positions. Leaving out of view, for the nonce, the forms of doubt, and confining our notice to the forms of denial, we are shut up to a choice between Polytheistic, Monotheistic, and Atheistic, infidelity. The war with Polytheism, as we have seen, has been brought to a happy conclusion. In principle, as in actual influence upon the world, Polytheism, considered as a system of opinion or as a factor in the civilisation, is dead. A few enthusiasts, indeed, and *laudatores temporis acti*, continue from time to time to advocate the rehabilitation of the religious system that is embodied in Greek and Roman Paganism. Taylor, the translator of Plato, is one of the very small number which has ventured to do so in terms. There are others who are ready to defend, but not eager to revive, the classic mythology. Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and Taine in his entertaining little volume on Greek Art, have been among its foremost apologists. Middleton, the biographer of Cicero, and Matthew Arnold, have betrayed similar leanings. There are others again who, like Theodore Parker, and many living writers, seek to combine all the forms of ancient and modern belief on religious subjects, whether Polytheistic or Monotheistic, into one absolute religion. The only tolerable defence, however, that has ever been offered for Polytheism is on the alleged ground that it is after all only a disguised, albeit it may be a somewhat perverted, form of Monotheism. This ground has been taken in exculpation of the old Egyptian religion, of the Greek and Roman religion, and also of Buddhism and Brahmanism and the system of Zoroaster. Granting argumentatively the validity of the defence here set up, it is manifest that Polytheism *as such* thereupon falls, having confessedly resolved itself into Monotheism. The removal of this ground of defence leaves Polytheism theoretically defenceless and indefensible. It is clearly no defence of Polytheism as a system to shield its adherents under the pretext of their unavoidable ignorance, or to argue that worship of any sort is pleasing to the Deity. These pleas confess judgment on them-

selves at once, by admitting in the very plea itself the truth of Monotheism.

The fact is, that if there is one point upon which all theoretical unbelievers of the present day are agreed, it is that the hypothesis of a multitude of deities is suited only to a condition of imperfect intellectual development. The highest spirits of classic antiquity had shaken themselves partially or entirely loose from the integuments of the pagan mythology. The philosophers of the old world were either Atheists, Pantheists, or Dualists. Dualism, in one of its principal forms, is itself resolvable into Pantheism. This is where the two principles which Dualism postulates are not conceived as ultimate and aboriginal, but as derivative from a common source—the absolute or infinite. Dualism pure and simple, has its home in the Orient. The Gnostic and Manichæan tenets do not here fall under examination, and for the obvious reason that Gnosticism and Manichæism were attempts not to demolish but to transform the Christian faith; that is to say, they are species not of infidelity but of heresy. The most persuasive guise in which Dualism can present itself has always been that in which the two eternal principles that are assumed are God and matter. This seems to have been the view of Aristotle; though certain of his opinions as to the nature and relations of these two principles were altogether extraordinary and peculiar. The distinction is in many cases in point of fact, a shadowy and indeterminable one between this and the other form of Dualism—the one, to wit, which at last resolves the dual principles into a primal unity. Dualism though infinitely subtle as a speculation, and though it affords a satisfactory and most enviable *théodicée*, is at best after all an awkward device; since it clogs Omnipotence, and confines the Sovereign of the Universe as by a ball and chain to a substance which equally with himself possesses self-existence, which is exempt from his control, and which *ex hypothesi* must perpetually offer checks to the free exercise of his activity. Dualism clearly stands in conflict with the *independence* of the *être suprême* whose existence and whose unconditional perfection it asserts. The logical tendencies of the system are thus towards Atheism, in one direction, or else towards Pyrrhon-

ism, in another. "To this complexion must it come at last." So the matter is regarded from the view-point of a theist or the impartial logician. But the anatomical remains of Dualism are contemplated by our nineteenth century sceptics very much as the bones of the megatherium or iguanodon are regarded by the transient visitors in our museums. It is only as it appears (at least in glimpses) under the mysterious drapery of esoteric Buddhism, that the theory of a *dual* production of the world finds any special countenance to-day among anti-Christian thinkers; and then more as one of the most interesting phases of an ever-fluctuating religious opinion, or as a symbol of what is in itself really different and inscrutable, rather than as a just expression of objective truth. The intellectual opponents of the Christian Scriptures, at least where there is any show of manliness about them, will nearly all unite with us in the averment that if there be a great first cause, that cause is, upon a review of the whole evidence, plainly not dual, or manifold, but *one*.

We take this occasion to say our final word about Dr. Flint's book. One of the most striking things in it is the argument by which the author elaborately and cogently demonstrates that the boasted Monism of the Scientific Materialist breaks down at last in a species of Dualism, if not in abject pluralism. A large part of the praise demanded for Materialism grows out of the claim that is set up for it as a strictly unitarian scheme of the universe. But the elementary substances in the material world are no longer regarded as even four, but (after all reductions) are admitted to be probably somewhat numerous. The Monism so widely lauded, then, is a monism not of substances, but of *kinds* of substance. Above all, after the most searching analysis, there always remains the inexorable duality of *Matter* and *Force*.

We are thus reduced to the alternative between Monotheism and Atheism. Polytheism, as we have seen, belongs wholly to Supernaturalism, Atheism wholly to Naturalism, while Monotheism belongs partly to one and partly to the other. Monotheistic Infidelity having its affinities on the one hand with Naturalism and on the other with Supernaturalism, we come at once to the two heads, Monotheistic Naturalism and Monotheistic Super-

naturalism. Omitting Dualism, as already strangled in the form of Gnosticism and Manichæism, and as being in every sense effete except as it may disclose itself in the esoteric principles of Buddhism and kindred or derivative Oriental systems, nearly all of which, as it would seem, with Brahmanism and its congeners, may perhaps be ultimately resolved into Pantheism or else directly into Atheism, we have left under the head of Monotheistic Supernaturalism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Mormonism, Swedenborgianism, Spiritism.* It is noticeable that it is true alike of all these systems, that they not only concede the possibility and fact of a supernatural revelation from God, but admit also that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in whole or in part, contain, though they do not constitute, such a revelation. Judaism errs not only in denying the claims of the New Testament, but in coördinating the Old Testament and tradition. The remaining systems err respectively in subordinating the authority of the Bible, so far as they accept that authority at all, to that of the Koran, of the Book of Mormon, of the writings of Swedenborg, of the communications of the *séances*.

Of the three last enumerated, Mormonism is suited only to the ignorant, Swedenborgianism only to the cultivated, and Spiritism only to the insane. Not one of the three has any pretensions that can recommend it to the world at large. Spiritism is based upon a manifest logical *non sequitur*. Admitting its alleged spiritual phenomena to be facts of some kind or other, they are fully explicable on grounds that carry us far away from its conclusions. So large a number of those pretended phenomena, however, have been shown to lack confirmation as to evince that the system rests for its support, in part at least if not wholly, on a basis of deception and imposture. Swedenborgianism, conceding a literal interpretation of parts of Scripture, yet volatilizes the sense of the sacred Word by a peculiar and untenable principle of exegesis, and agrees with Traditionalism† and Mysticism

*The word "Spiritualism" is more in vogue in this sense; but it is too bad that Bedlam should be permitted to rob philosophy of so good a word.

†"Traditionalism" would perhaps be the better term, if there were only authority for it.

in supplementing, and thus virtually destroying, the inspired rule of faith. Mormonism is a wretched imposition in travesty of that of the false prophet, and like the system of the Arabian imposter is kept up by a combination of force and chicanery and by appeals to self-interest and sensuality. The Book of Mormon has never been venerated in pretence or in reality except by the Latter-Day Saints themselves—the signs are not ambiguous that the days of this stigma upon the fair fame of America are already numbered. This leaves only Judaism and Islam: and by Judaism is meant not that ancient theocratic system which afterwards developed into Christianity, but that effete system which (in the form but not the spirit of ancient Judaism) survived the date of this predicted coalescence, and which set itself up in direct antagonism to the Christian faith. With this understanding of the term, Judaism was, as we have seen, confronted and vanquished by the Church in the first century of the Christian era, and by the veritable witnesses of Christ's resurrection. It is, moreover, so far as it accepts the Scriptures at all, included under Traditionalism. The arguments against the religion of the Koran are familiar to our readers, and are ably as well as popularly handled in Dr. R. B. White's "Reason and Redemption." The system of Mohammed, as is generally acknowledged, had its birth, if not in ambition and greed, certainly in fanaticism and fraud; was promulged by robbery and slaughter, and recommended by licentiousness; it does not rebuke but tolerates and rewards the depraved inclinations of the human heart; it is destitute of the requisite credentials; it is at best an amalgam of second-rate Judaism and third-rate Christianity;* it has found no permanent acceptance at the hands of other than the Oriental races; and even among the Oriental races has acquired but a doubtful foothold. The books of Buddha are more potent to-day in the eastern hemisphere than are the writings of Mohammed; whilst it stands true that neither one nor the other has made any considerable, and at the same time lasting, headway in the western world.

*See this point made out triumphantly by Milman. *Latin Christianity*. Vol. II., Book IV., Chap. I., pp. 116–119. New York: W. J. Widdleton. 1874.

Mysticism and Traditionalism also deny that the Bible is the *only rule* of faith. They are, however, for the most part historical corruptions of Christianity itself, and commonly concede the inspiration of part or all of the Scriptures. So far as they do not make these concessions, they have little influence, and fall under some one or other of the heads already given. The opinions of heretics and other errorists who admit the general truth of Christianity and its divine origin, are excluded under the definition.

The known forms of anti-Christian Supernaturalism are not more easily disposed of than is the fallacy on which they and all other conceivable systems of the same character are based. Once admit the existence of a God and the principle of Supernaturalism, and there is not a link missing in the invincible evidences of the Christian Scriptures.

Taking up now the forms of Monotheistic Naturalism, we find them to be these three: Deism, Pantheism, and Agnosticism. These three systems agree in denying the validity of the evidence which establishes a supernatural revelation. But this ground can be consistently taken only by those who also occupy the position of Atheism. Once admit the existence of a personal God,* and you are driven by the rigor of a remorseless logic to admit the credibility, and therefore the fact, of the gospel miracles, and consequently the divine verity of the Christian Scriptures. By this summary process it is obvious that we have eliminated Deism. Nor can Pantheism or Agnosticism hope to fare better in this argument. Pantheism and Agnosticism are both but disguised forms of Atheism. Pantheism indeed professes a sincere belief in the being of a God; but the Deity by which it swears has neither personality nor, according to the Germans, true substance, as the infinite of which it speaks in its latest or Hegelian form, is confessedly resolvable into zero, and all existence is by it held to be reducible to a process of thinking.

But Pantheism has no other logical issue but outright Atheism. Its fundamental postulate is that all the opponent forms of Mono-

*This is incontestably established in Butler's Analogy and conceded by John Stuart Mill.

theism and Polytheism limit the infinite. But it is at least equally clear (as has often been shown) that Pantheism itself, on the same principles, limits the infinite. The existence of the phenomenal or finite world necessarily, on these principles, involves a limitation upon infinite being. There is therefore no infinite. The finite becomes everything and the infinite nothing. There is therefore no logical escape from the utter denial of the infinite, which carries with it the utter denial of a God: but this is point-blank Atheism. Hegel and Feuerbach have upon their own strictly idealistic principles made the same disposition of Pantheism. The only real existence is thought. The universe is at bottom a process of dialectics. In the regressive process of analysis, the absolute, at the farthest remove of philosophic scrutiny, is zero. "Das seyn ist das nichts." Everything and nothing are the same; and the relation is one of identity that is established between the ultimate existence (God) and non-existence. In this manner Pantheism inevitably resolves itself into undisguised Atheism.

Pantheism is equally reducible to *Pyrrhonism*. Thus: Personality involves a limitation of the infinite; therefore the absolute is impersonal. By parity of reasoning it may be shown that the existence of a phenomenal world involves a limitation of the infinite. It follows that there is no phenomenal world; which is in flat contradiction of universal consciousness. One of the fundamental principles of Pantheism thus leads unerringly to a scepticism of the sort professed by Hume, or rather to that other and suicidal sort which doubts that it even dubitates and which has been well denominated philosophic idiocy.

Let us now refer again to the classification, and sum up our results. Infidelity consists of forms of denial and forms of doubt. The forms of denial may be embraced under the heads of Naturalism and Supernaturalism. Anti-Christian Supernaturalism eliminated, there are left the various forms of Atheistic and Monotheistic Naturalism. Monotheistic Naturalism comprises Deism, Pantheism, and Agnosticism, which, as we have seen, are severally resolvable into Atheism. Monotheistic thus finds its logical debouchure into Atheistic Naturalism, or (dropping the now unne-

cessary term) into sheer *Atheism*. *Atheism*, too, is thus seen to be the inevitable logical issue of all the forms of denial. We are thus shut up to a choice betwixt *Atheism*, on the one hand, and some of the forms of doubt, on the other. The forms of doubt may be comprehended under the heads of Universal and Eclectic Scepticism. Universal Scepticism properly so called is that once attributed (though erroneously, we are persuaded) to Pyrrhon, who is said to have doubted the existence of his very doubts. This form falls into the fallacy which lands us in the infinite series of doubts, and is thus guilty at the outset of palpable intellectual suicide. Under the other head, that of Eclectic Scepticism, would then fall all other conceivable forms of doubt, including the so-called Universal Scepticism of Hume, who admitted the fact and extent of the mental judgments or feelings, but denied the validity of the mental conclusions and affirmations. As there is no warrant for believing the fact of the mental phenomena that is not equally a warrant for holding to the validity of the primitive mental judgments, Hume in consistency of logic would be compelled to occupy common ground with the imaginary Pyrrho, and forever doubt that he had ever doubted, whether he the doubter had ever lived long enough to doubt whether he had even doubted his own doubts.*

*The system of Hume begins as well as ends in absurdity. "Universal Scepticism," says Sir James Mackintosh, "involves a contradiction in terms. It is a belief that there can be no belief. It is an attempt of the mind to act without its structure, and by other laws than those to which its nature has subjected its operations. To reason without assenting to the principles on which reasoning is founded, is not unlike an effort to feel without nerves or to move without muscles. No man can be allowed to be an opponent in reasoning who does not set out with admitting all the principles without the admission of which it is impossible to reason. It is indeed, a puerile, nay, in the eye of wisdom, a childish play, to attempt either to establish or confute principles by argument which every step of that argument must presuppose. The only difference between the two cases is, that he who tries to prove them, can do so only by taking them for granted; and that he who attempts to impugn them, falls at the very first step into a contradiction from which he never can rise." See *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Science*, Art. Theme. Quoted from Morell's *Modern Philosophy*, p. 224.

There is therefore no valid ground on Hume's principles for asserting, as Hume does assert, the real existence of "impressions and ideas." The unavoidable result in logic is the indefinite series of dubitating exercises which have made stark Pyrrhonism the laughing-stock of ages. The issue of this summary procedure is too obviously unavoidable, however, not to have scared off the prince of modern sceptics.

Accordingly Hume endeavored to stop short of the Serbonian bog of absolutely universal scepticism, and admitted the reality of "impressions and ideas." That is, (to translate his meaning into modern phrases,) he admitted the *datum*, but questioned the *veracity*, of consciousness. But the validity of this particular admission is (as we just now said) inconsistent with Hume's doctrine (which, of course, is on his own showing itself invalid and just as likely to be erroneous as true) of the invalidity of all our knowledge. The only authority there can be for affirming the reality of the *datum* of consciousness, is the assumed *veracity* of consciousness on that point; the veracity, that is to say, of a faculty on one point the veracity of which on all points is stoutly denied.

All forms of Sceptical Rationalism are, in the meanwhile, at the mercy of the same argument which, as we said a while ago, eviscerates Deism. The entire sceptical fabric, therefore, is without logical basis, and at the first assault of discerning reason must tumble. The forms of doubt thus removed, we are shut up to the alternative of affirmation or outright denial, and the question is soon narrowed down to the old dilemma between Atheism and Faith.

This is no mean result of the battles between the truth and error. Infidelity has been effectually unmasked. The hands may be those of some new and specious delusion, but the voice will ever be found to be that of this ancient enemy. But the matter does not stop here. Atheism itself, though more logical than the other forms of infidelity, is as untenable as the most untenable among them.

By a rigid process of exclusion there have now been eliminated from our catalogue all the several forms of infidelity except these

two: Atheism and Agnosticism. The first of these is by no means an obsolete system. In point of fact, as a system having extensive prevalence, dogmatic Atheism is distinctly an outgrowth of those social and moral, even more than intellectual, tendencies which culminated in the French Revolution. Lord Bacon could lay his finger on no more than *two* plainly marked cases of Atheists in antiquity. Their number was considerable in the days of "the Terror." Men like Vogt and Büchner, or even like Haeckel and Helmholtz and Clifford, are not so often to be met with now as men like Darwin and Lewes and Buckle and Galton. The profane and sanguinary orgies in Paris in the latter part of the eighteenth century opened men's eyes as they had never been opened before to the iniquity and atrocious folly of Atheism. The world was now enabled for the first time to judge Atheism as a system not locked up in the breast of some eccentric philosopher, or limited to the closet of some poetic dreamer, but diffused somewhat more generally among the people. A very wide diffusion of Atheism among the people has never taken place on earth. The criterion laid down by our Lord is not peculiar to Christianity. Atheism has been judged by its fruits; and the enemies as well as the friends of the Christian religion have united in the condemnation of a system which in theory involves a denial of the utility and even the possibility of all religion that is worthy of the name, and when put in practice removes the foundations of morality and social order. The reproach implied in the charge of Atheism is one that will never be wiped out while man continues to be man. Atheism is more or less prevalent in the world to-day; but it has been compelled in a majority of instances to assume a disguise. In what we have to say on this topic we of course employ the term Atheism in its reference to the theoretical system so denominated. There is also such a thing as Atheism in a practical sense; but Atheism is in that sense but another name for ungodliness of life. But Atheism, even in the theoretical acceptance of the term, may be taken with latitude or with precision. We thus arrive at the distinction between virtual and veritable Atheism. In all careful discussions the term is taken with precision, and used of that

kind of Atheism which is veritably, and not of that kind which is only virtually such. Virtual Atheism is a description which may be applied to any form of infidelity which, though not consciously Atheistic, is yet capable of a logical reduction to Atheism.* But Atheism that is veritably cherished in the heart may and does assume two forms. Atheism may be either dogmatic or tacit. Dogmatic Atheism is that form of Atheism which is not only self-conscious but self-avowed. It is the categorical denial that there is a God. It is in this form that the absurdities and ruinous consequences of Atheism have been shown up in such a light that there has been a general abandonment of the system. The familiar difficulty of proving (and so of asserting) a negative here takes on colossal proportions. John Foster has profoundly observed that a man must himself be invested with divine attributes before he could be warranted in denying the divine existence. Among other things he argues that unless the Atheist had been everywhere he could not know that somewhere there might not be convincing evidences of a God. This argument has been applauded by two of the most illustrious theologians and orators of Great Britain: but on equally high authority has been pronounced sophistical, on the ground that the Atheist would be justified if he could in reality find *one* place that was destitute of the manifestations of a God. We are inclined to the opinion that Foster's argument is sound. Its soundness appears to be evinced from the following consideration: The propositions are distinct: A. There is a God; and B. The existence of a God (if there be a God) must be everywhere manifest. Both these propositions are true; but the second ought to be surrendered sooner than the first. The second of these propositions implies the truth of two others, viz., that if there be a God anywhere he must manifest himself there: and, if there be a God, he must

*We cannot but think Archbishop Whately is rather hard in his strictures on Lord Bacon because Bacon insists on making the ordinary distinction between the ancient pagan Polytheists and veritable Atheists. The old pagan systems admitted the existence of a great first cause, but erred as to its personality, or its unity, or its independence. See Whately's Bacon's Essays, p. 139. London: Jno. W. Parker & Son, West Strand. 1856.

be ubiquitous. There are, however, three conceivable hypotheses, any one of which might be reconciled in thought with the proposition of a first cause. They are these: that the first cause is manifest everywhere; that he is manifest in some places and not in others; and that he is manifest nowhere.

It will be observed that the question here is not whether the confessedly immense and omnipresent Jehovah of the Scriptures be ubiquitous, but whether the postulated but debateable *first cause* of natural theology be ubiquitous. The necessary ubiquity of a first cause ought to be given up before surrendering the doctrine of the existence of such a cause. Even conceding the necessary ubiquity of the first cause, the doctrine of the universal manifestation of such a cause ought to be surrendered in preference to the doctrine surrendered by the atheist. The absence of divine manifestation *anywhere* might warrant one in provisional scepticism. The absence of divine manifestation *everywhere* would warrant one in utter Pyrrhonism, were one gifted with immensity or omnipresence. In no event can the atheist under present conditions be justified in his extreme assertion. The professed enemy of credulity, he is thus demonstrated to be the most credulous of mortals. But the premiss of the atheist has no basis in fact. The manifestations of the eternal power and Godhead of the world's Creator and Architect are as universal as they are plain and undeniable. Theologians of Paley's time found a cure for Atheism in the human eye. Theologians of the time of Professor Calderwood prefer to take their argument from the Cosmos viewed in its integrity.

The chief or sole reliance of many is on the testimony of instinct, or of conscience. There is only one conceivable escape from the force of the general argument for the being of a God. It is evasion. It is a summary arrest of the intellectual process which legitimates the premises of the syllogism. This is the ingenious *pis aller* that has found expression in the system of Agnosticism—or the doctrine that God is unknowable—the only form of contemporary infidelity which we have not yet submitted to examination. The most well-defined shape that Agnosticism has put on has been Positivism in the narrow and strict sense, the

scheme of Comte; but the term has been invented to cover and describe all who accept the modern doctrine of the unknowable; including the entire school of British and Continental men of science who stop short of explicit Atheism, and yet deny the fact, and commonly the possibility, of the Supernatural. Agnosticism may seek to justify its affirmation of the hopelessness of looking for a first cause (whether efficient or final) in any one of three ways. All these three ways involve the assertion that a first cause is unknowable. According to one form of Agnosticism, the first cause is unknowable because it does not exist. This is evidently but a phase of open or secret Atheism. It is commonly tacit, as distinguished from dogmatic Atheism. It is Atheism, in other words, under a domino: Atheism that is conscious of itself, but does not dare to show its hand. This appears to have been very nearly the attitude presented in the outset by the celebrated founder of French Positivism.

A second form of Agnosticism insists upon the *fact* of a first cause (in some sense), but declares that the *nature* of that cause is wholly unknowable. This is the position of the coryphæus, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and his school, including his clever American disciple Mr. John Fiske. There are "better moods" in which this seems to be the hypothesis which has most attraction for such minds as that of Professor Tyndall. This is a scheme of Monism which is materialistic, idealistic, or absolutely neutral, at the pleasure or whim of the individual brain that assents to it. In the theoretical aspect given to it by Mr. Spencer, and at times by Mr. Tyndall, the scheme is strangely similar to that of Schelling or of Spinoza. To all intents and purposes, however, the scheme of the scientific infidels of our day of the school just referred to is the baldest Materialism. The God they worship is little else or nothing else than *force*.

Agnosticism in its third and purest form declares the *fact* as well as the *nature* of the first cause to be unknowable, and holds the mind in suspense betwixt opposite conclusions. This is the proper attitude of your true Positivist. This is ordinarily the ostensible attitude of Professor Tyndall. Whilst Comte was personally and at heart (notwithstanding the caveat of the late

Mr. Mill) an Atheist, the scheme Comte invented was expressly contrived so as to be non-committal on the question as to the *fact* and *nature* of an ultimate cause. With all his mental perturbations and pathetic moral and æsthetic yearnings, this was, as it should seem, the habitual attitude also of John Stuart Mill. If we may be pardoned for using just here a parliamentary figure, Agnosticism in this form is an attempt to get rid of the question by a motion for indefinite postponement. If we are permitted to press the image still further, that motion the common sense of mankind at large has over and over decided to be out of order. The effort of Mr. Spencer to ground the doctrine of the unknowable in Sir William Hamilton's peculiar theory of the incogitable fails under the pressure of a logical dilemma. Either Sir William's theory was the same with Dean Mansel's, or not. If it was, then it has been thoroughly refuted; for it has been effectually pointed out that Mansel's famous argument is a sophism that depends on treacherous assumptions and the use of equivocal terms. If it was not, then the fundamental dictum remains unproved. But even were it otherwise, the whole system of Agnosticism topples to the ground when once the sovereign and intuitive law of causation has established itself, as a law not only of subjective but of objective validity. The entire structure of Agnosticism falls with Hume's shallow and exploded doctrines of experience and of cause. If Immanuel Kant deserved no other credit, he would (notwithstanding his own deplorable defects and errors) be entitled to our admiration for his overthrow of the great intellectual iconoclast of the last century in Scotland. Scepticism has ever had the fate of Actæon and has been eaten by its own dogs.

Agnosticism is thus even in its best form equivalent to virtual Atheism. In its more audacious expression the Atheism is hardly veiled. But all Agnostics may be driven peremptorily to the ground of the outspoken or dogmatic Atheist. On the assumption of the Agnostic, (so far at least as he ventures to avow it,) the existence of a God, even if the fact be unknowable, is nevertheless *possible*; in other words it *may* be true, even in our ignorance, that the being of whom we are thus ignorant exists.

But if it is true that a God exists, it may be also true that he has given to his creatures a supernatural revelation and supported it by supernatural credentials. Thus there follows from the acknowledged premises of Agnosticism the credibility of the supernatural, and then by a remorseless logical process (as before shown) the truth and divinity of the Christian religion. It is a sad mistake to suppose that nothing has been gained to the apologetic argument by past conflicts. The only ground that infidelity can now stand on with the slightest color of plausibility is by the denial of the credibility of the miracles; and that ground is at once swept from under the feet of those who do not take upon themselves at the same time to deny not merely the legitimacy of the proof, but also the reality of the fact, of the existence of a God. Atheism alone can assume the astounding burden of this responsibility.

So monstrous and incredible a thing is Atheism in all its phases and under all its disguises; and yet into this gulf of outer darkness must sink all those who under whatever name recalcitrate from the logic of the Theist. "To this complexion must it come at last." Atheism or Faith: this is the last and only alternative for the rational mind that is not given up to utter Scepticism.*

*When these words were written the writer had not seen the review of Strauss's "New Faith" in the *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review* for April, 1874. The article is from the pen of one of the editors, Dr. H. B. Smith of New York, and contains the following statements: "Infidelity sometimes 'serves the law it seems to violate.' Logically and ruthlessly carried out, it reveals its inmost nature, and sets before the vacillating half-believers just where their scepticism tends. A thorough-going and uncompromising Atheism or Pantheism may thus unwittingly render essential service to the Christian faith. In putting forth its full strength it may unveil its essential impotence. Thus this last volume of one of the ablest modern antagonists of our faith shows the utmost that can be said against it, without reserve or qualification. It exhibits the old and the new faith in their sharpest antagonism. We can see what we must give up if we abandon Christianity, what we have left if we accept the new belief. It is, said Strauss, in substance, Atheism or Christianity: there is no logical middle ground. This is the vital sense of his 'Confession.' And this is a great point gained in the whole argument. The issue is definitely made. Visors and masks are raised. The sentimental semi-infidels are forced to face the storm. Some scientific men.

The intermediate ground is effectually commanded by the guns of the Theistic argument. All other forms of Supernaturalism except that of the Bible may be considered as "creeds outworn"; and all other forms of Naturalism except that of the Atheist, are "twice dead, plucked up by the roots." *Ventum ad supremum.* We could not ask a better or an easier quarrel. Let it then be insisted upon and made plain by the defenders of Christianity that the whole argument of infidelity takes the straight course to Atheism. The sophism here is in the original postulates. It is an appalling instance of the *reductio ad absurdum*. Then in the name of common sense, common morality, and human welfare and peace, let those postulates perish. There is, as we have seen, but one alternative. We are in this plain dilemma: "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." With this presentation of the matter we need not be at a moment's loss for our decision. As Dr. Johnson would say, we know there is a God, and "there's an end on't."

In what light, then, are we to regard Agnosticism? Simply as a new and very subtle device in evasion of the inevitable issue. Seeing that the choice lies between Faith and Atheism, and that Atheism is as unpopular as untenable, Positivism is a hopeless effort to adjourn the decision of the question altogether by a motion for indefinite postponement. We have demonstrated the futility of this expedient. There is no adjournment of the question possible, and there is no half-way house between Theism and Atheism.

There are many ways of meeting the Positivist, but this is the who talk vaguely and plausibly all round the only real questions in debate, will be obliged to leave rhetoric and use logic, and boldly meet the inevitable consequences of their own principles. For Strauss has, at last, no reserves, no concealments! he has dared 'the uttermost.' Vague phrases find their clear statements. Unreal compromises are brushed aside. What others whisper to the coterie he proclaims from the house-tops. Those who reject a personal God (he argues) must accept a blind and Godless evolutionism. It is, with him, God or Darwin; 'the choice lies only between the miracle—the divine Creator—and Darwin.' (I., 204.) 'Everything or Nothing.' *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, Vol. III., New Series, No. 10, pp. 261, 262.

best; or at all events the most intelligible and summary. The world is acquainted with Leslie's "Short Method with the Deist." In like manner, this is our short method with the Positivist: to unmask his pretensions, to show him up in his true colors, to prick the bladder of overweening confidence on which he is floating, and to judge him by the bad company he keeps, and by the vulgarity and wretchedness of his extraction and certain destiny.

Ah, but this is the *odium theologicum*! Not so: we are not referring to the men who espouse the system, but to the system itself. The men may be, many of them doubtless are, sincere; but *the system* is a fraud upon the world, being nothing but masked atheism; and it is difficult to keep one's patience and maintain one's decorum in the presence of a colossal and iniquitous sham. It is important nevertheless to preserve our equanimity and Christian serenity in the face even of this most deadly foe. It behooves us to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The danger is most formidable when its approaches are the most insidious. This, however, need not be made the occasion of vituperative malediction, but should nerve us to renewed resistance. Atheism, as has been shown, is not difficult to answer when stripped of its disguises. Let it then be our unceasing effort to apply to it in all its fickle shapes and all its chameleon variations of color, the Ithuriel spear of truth, and thus to reveal its proper form and complexion to our fellow-men. One of the masks of Atheism we have seen to be the negations of the Positivist. Let it be ours to strip that mask off. The rest will be short work. Any child can then administer the *coup de grace*. How is this to be done? In two ways: *first*, by elaborate and exhaustive confutation; tracking the argument of the adversary with deliberation and competent learning, and with unruffled composure, into every den of logical error and every nook and cranny of sophistical absurdity in which it may have been driven to hide its diminished head; *secondly*, by exposing the radical vice which inheres in its fundamental principles. The former method is indispensable to an adequate and philosophic reply that shall exhaust the subject and set the question at rest forever. Atheism, Deism, and Pantheism have in turn been met and confounded

with such a rejoinder. A similar answer is now much to be desiderated to Agnosticism.

The directions given to the Syrian army in the days of Ahab might be repeated now: "Fight ye not with great or small, save only with the king."* The king in this case is Herbert Spencer.† When he falls, the battle with the others will be virtually ended. Darwin leans on Huxley and Tyndall, and Huxley and Tyndall lean on Hume. It is the Indian fable of the elephant and the tortoise again. Spencer on the other hand leans partly on Hume, partly on Mansel (or Hamilton), and partly supports himself by his own unaided exertions. In a certain sense, and to a great extent, Spencer may be said to be without visible means of support. The thoroughgoing overthrow of Spencer is logically tantamount to the overthrow of Tyndall, Huxley, Maudesley *et al.* The Spencerian position as to the unknowable is confessedly the same too with that of Comte. The overthrow of that position, on deep and broad grounds, carries with it therefore the overthrow of Agnostic Positivism in all its branches. Considering the fundamental character and wide prevalence of this Spencerian doctrine of the unknowable, it has hardly yet received the overwhelming and crushing demolition which is loudly called for by the exigencies of the hour, and which it far more richly deserves than ever did the *ignis fatuus* of Darwinism. In the meanwhile the other method of rejoinder is open to every one who is endowed with "discourse of reason" and who is capable of understanding the drift of a syllogism.

H. C. ALEXANDER.

*2 Chron. xviii. 30.

†Spencer is the *ostensible* king. There are many who think, however, that *Hume* is the *real* king—albeit not similarly tricked out in the royal robe of grandiloquent pretension.