

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

NO. 31.—JANUARY, 1895

I. IDEALISTIC MONISM.

I do not care to prefix a rubric of titles of idealistic authors to this criticism, as could be very easily done after the pretentious and pedantic fashion of some review writers. I could cite quite a list, beginning with Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, down to Herbert Spencer, Kuno Fischer, of Heidelberg, and Paul Deussen, of Kiel, and could profess to give outlines of their several phases of Monism from histories of philosophy. But my object is to instruct students who are guided by common sense and their Bibles in the central doctrines of this pretended philosophy which are common to all its phases, and to expose their common errors. No two idealists are consistent with each other, nor even with themselves; hence the attempt to particularize their different schemes would be tedious and hopeless, and would disappoint my practical aim.

Idealism is, in plain terms, that doctrine which tells us that the whole universe, including ourselves, consists of ideas only, and contains no other perdurable substantive beings, material or spiritual, distinguishable from mere trains of ideas or actions. Monism is the doctrine which insists that there is no distinction of mind and matter, that both are one and that there is no true philosophy until all things are traced to one single principle of being. The monism of idealists is, that the universe exists for me only as my representation in thought. Thought and real being are identical. To think a thing is to give it existence, the only kind of existence which anything has. There is not, and cannot be, any creation *ex nihilo*, even if there were an almighty

God to attempt it. The absolute, eternal, first cause is not an infinite personal Spirit, but an infinite, impersonal, universal Consciousness, the Absolute *Ego*. It produces the worlds with all things in them, physical and mental, including me and my readers, simply by thinking them; and all of us have no other substance or being than this continuous producing thought in this absolute consciousness. So we, deceptively thinking ourselves individual minds, produce all the objective things which we know by perception merely by thinking them; and their objective natures, even when most hostile to our own wills, are really the unconscious self-limitations of our own thought. When a tree, a horse, a crag, presents itself to our eyes, a wall to our impact, a thunder-clap to our ears, these visual, tactual and acoustic perceptions are nothing but the subjective affections of our limited *ego*, somehow self-produced, and they give us no evidence whatever that tree, or horse, or wall, or thunder clouds have any substantive reality, nor do they authorize us to believe that we, who do the seeing, touching and hearing, are substantive beings. For they say consciousness authorizes us to know nothing but that of which we are immediately conscious, *i. e.*, the subjective affections. So that I am not authorized to believe there is any real substantive tree external to me, nor any substantive spirit underlying these subjective affections within me. My ontology, as to myself, is absolutely limited to this: I am merely a series of mental modifications, a non-substantive consciousness.

The pious Bishop Berkeley, indeed, does not go so far in his idealism. After proving, as he thinks, that our perceptions evidence no objective realities causing them, he returns a little towards common sense. Unquestionably we have these impressions in consciousness; whence do they come? We answer, God directly produces them in our spirits. Thus God, not an outward substantive universe, is sole source and cause of all cognitions. And he claims that this is the best way to reëstablish our belief in God and our own spirits; that this way brings God nearest to us in faith and piety. This phase of idealism, whose religiousness entirely fails to redeem its absurdity, we now dismiss; it is too religious to have any followers in our day, among the Ger-

mans at least. We shall aim to make out our criticism by discussing *seriatim* the cardinal points common to idealistic-monists:

I. Examination shows that the very spring-head of all idealism and pantheism, ancient and modern, that of the Eleatics down to Heraclitus, of Plato, of Bruno, of Spinoza, of the Germans to our day, is the false *dictum* that there can be no such thing as really substantive being that is contingent. All real being must be necessary, and therefore eternal being. The creation of real substantive being *ex nihilo* is unthinkable and impossible. Hence it follows by strict logic that no really substantive thing ever begins, or ever ends. Experience seems to show us multitudes of things that both begin and end, including, indeed, everything, even our own bodies, in the objective world. But as these beginnings and endings cannot really be, they must be accounted for in some other way; either as entirely deceptive with Zeno, the Eleatic, or with Heraclitus and Plato in his later moods, as the perpetual recurring of the transition between the becoming and the ending; or with Spinoza, as temporary modifications of the one eternal substance; or with the later idealists, as passing phases of consciousness projected either in thought or will from the Absolute *Ego*. In anywise, all that appear to us common mortals to be temporal and separate things are identified in reality with the eternal necessary One. Thus the desired result of Monism is reached. Reviewing this simple statement we see that it is reached logically, if once the fatal premise be granted. Here, then, is the dividing point between the philosophy of the Bible and that of Monism, Pantheism and Atheism. Is not this the reason why infinite wisdom set the contrary, the true proposition at the very beginning of revelation? (Gen. i. 1.) "In the beginning *God created* the heavens and the earth;" and why the apostle (Heb. xi. 3) propounded this as the first and the fountain-head of all the teachings of Christian faith, expressly avowing it as alien and hostile to all merely human philosophies that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Thus our Bible rejects as false this prime corner-stone

of the pagan and the idealistic metaphysics. We hear from them no other argument for it than this flimsy assertion, that the creation in time, *ex nihilo*, of real being cannot be true, *because they cannot imagine how even Omnipotence goes about it*. Of course we cannot. But how paltry is this, in view of the facts that not only all philosophy, but all practical knowledge, runs up into mysteries not explicable in our thought, or pictured in our imaginations! The scriptural proposition must be shown to be not only mysterious, but contradictory to the necessary principles of thought, to justify its rejection. It does not conflict with the principle of causation, "no cause, no effect"; for it assigns for dependent beings a cause infinitely sufficient, the creative power of an omniscient and almighty God. That the work should not be comprehensible in our imaginations is just what we are to expect; for no human has ever had or can have consciousness or empirical knowledge of this action. Each human mind began in such a creation; but it had to be created before it could have consciousness or experience. Again, we are not to expect that we can have any *a priori* comprehension of how dependent being begins (but only of the fact that it does begin), because the only knowledge we have of the *essentia* of substantive things is approached by us *a posteriori*, namely, by the empirical perception of their properties. But the evidence which philosophy gives of the fact is sufficient. It appears in the form of this *reductio ad absurdum*, that if we deny it we shut ourselves up to hopeless absurdities and self-contradictions. Our subsequent criticism shall show that this is what idealistic Monism does.

II. We may grant that when our minds perceive an object our immediate consciousness is, strictly speaking, not of the external object but of our subjective perception thereof, and not of the substantive spirit which perceives but only of its act of perceiving. But none the less is the inference of the idealist worthless, that therefore we have no real knowledge of substantive spirit, but only of a train of consciousnesses. For it is an immediate, necessary, universal law of thought, that there could be no consciousnesses unless there were beforehand substantive spirit to think them. Here is a necessary intuition which every human

mind recognizes when not blinded by its crotchet: that there must be a substantive agent in order that any action may be; that there must be a substance present in order that any properties may be. He whose mind had really and wholly lost this first principle of consciousness and perception would be idiotic. Let the universal common sense of men answer these questions. How can action be unless there is already a something to act? How can attributes be thought unless there be already a something to which to attribute them? In the logical sense, the substance must be before all its actions and attributes. It is very true that a kind of being may be thought whose activities are essential: God is such a being. Then, in the chronological sense, the existence of this being and its actions will be coëtaneous. But even here in the logical, or productive, sense the substantive existence must precede its attributes and actions, for it is in order to them.

Let this principle of thought be tested by the common sense of natural minds in any one of myriads of cases such as these: Your fellow-man hears you speak of the attribute white, for instance, and asks you of what white thing you are speaking—of snow? of milk? You answer, I am speaking of a *white nothing*. Then his mind must answer: nay, you are mocking me; if you do not perceive some *white substance* you perceive no white. A rational child comes for the first time from his rural home to the city. He hears for the first time the sonorous clangor of a church bell; he asks: "Father, do you hear that noise; what makes it?" Let us suppose the father's answer to be: "Yes, my son, we hear a great and strange noise, but it is made by a nothing." Everybody knows that this answer is impossible for that child's mind, unless he were idiotic; his answering thought must be: were it only a nothing there could be no sound. Then the father gives the true answer: These sounds are made by a church bell. The child's rational curiosity then asks: "What is a church bell? Of what substance is it made?" Let the father answer: "The bell itself is composed of nothing but sounds; these successive ting-a-lings are themselves the sole material of the bell!" Again, the child's rationality would be confounded; the answer would be impossible for his

mind, unless it were idiotic. These principles of thought we find equally governing the highest conclusions of modern science, the trained logical mind just as much as the rustic. We have seen the Newtonian theory of light give place to the undulatory theory. As soon as physicists deemed the latter proved, they at once postulated the existence of the ether, an imponderable substance diffused through the interstellar spaces. If there are undulations there must be a something to undulate. This ether is described as a substance too refined to be perceived by any sense or tested by any apparatus, the most delicate; yet we are taught its existence throughout the universe. Such is the irresistible power of this intuition. Therefore, although the substance which thinks and the substance which is perceived be not immediately in our consciousness, yet are they, by the mediation of consciousness with rational intuition, as necessarily known as consciousness itself.

III. These points have prepared the way for some account of the historical genesis of the recent idealism. Its teachers usually claim Emmanuel Kant as its father. It has pleased the Germans to reverence this ingenious and acute, but treacherous, thinker as a sort of philosophic demi-god; hence idealists seek to build on his pretended authority. They do so disingenuously. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, with that wilful subtilty which characterizes the author, is pleased to detach our two rational intuitions of abstract or empty space and of duration from their class, and to describe them as merely the thought-forms of the human understanding (the faculty of empirical knowledge). He holds that these two concepts, as he calls them, are merely subjective in our minds, and yet the universally necessary forms of thought for us. He teaches that, on the one hand, nothing but empirical perceptions demonstrate to us any content of true being in any of our concepts; while, on the other hand, it is impossible for us to think any being except as posited in space, or any phenomenal event except as posited in time. But we have no rational warrant for inferring that these forms of thought are valid for any other intelligences than the human in its present state. Kant, like a true philosopher, asserts positively the exist-

ence of real beings as proved to us by our empirical knowledge, but he then, unfortunately and wantonly, admits that we have no sufficient evidence that these beings really are what they appear to our perceptions to be as to their properties. To pure rational minds there is unquestionably a world of real beings, his "noumenal world." But we cannot know that it is like our "phenomenal world," because our two necessary thought-forms of space and time shape and mould all our empirical knowledge of the properties by which alone we know real beings. And as these thought-forms are but subjective in us, they give us no warrant to believe that the real beings of the noumenal world are what they seem to us to be.

Such is the Kantian theory of the human understanding. It is true that when he comes to make his destructive application to our ontological or metaphysical beliefs he also joins the necessary principle of causation, by a sort of after-thought, to the two other thought-forms, space and time. Then, in his famous *Antinomies of Reason*, he seeks to destroy all the certainty of the fundamental rational beliefs, and to lay all metaphysics in ruins. Such is the final result of this famous critique! Setting out professedly to refute the destructive skepticism of Hume, it lands us in a skepticism deeper and, if possible, more ruinous than his. It is true that Kant afterwards, in his *Critique of Practical Reason or Conscience*, professes "richly to restore" the ontological beliefs (in spirit, God, freedom, immortality) which he thinks he destroyed in his *Antinomies*. Sound philosophers have long ago proved that his restoration would be worthless had his destruction of these beliefs been valid. Thus, if the practical reason or conscience is merely an instinctive sensibility, or merely (with H. Spencer, *et al.*) a set of utilitarian inferences from our lower empirical knowledge, then it gives no premises from which to prove any higher rational principles. Man is no more entitled thus to a valid metaphysic than a sensitive horse or dog. On the other hand, if conscience is an *a priori* rational principle, which Kant himself strongly asserts, then it must ever remain as justly subject to the suspicion of being a merely subjective thought-form in us as the other rational intuitions of time, space and causality.

There is for Kant the fatal argument *ad hominem*. We must hold with DeQuincy, that, if the Kantian *Critique of Reason* is correct, it is the utter destruction of all metaphysics for man.

The cry of the recent idealists is, that Kant created idealism. We pronounce this dishonest. When Fichte first claimed this in his *Wissenschaftslehre*, the aged Kant promptly denied it in a public journal, and in his last edition of his *Critique* expurgated the sentences which seemed to give pretext to Fichte's idealism. Kant still held fast to a universe of real objective beings, only teaching that their noumenal reality may always be different from their phenomenal appearances to us. Idealists deny all objective realities, asserting that the universe is literally nothing but the totality of mental modification forever going on in the absolute consciousness, or the finite consciousnesses; and that my universe is to me nothing but my mental representation. Idealists arrogantly claim that because they are Kantians they alone can have any metaphysics. Kant claimed that he had made all metaphysics impossible. This contrast is almost biting enough to chastise the insolence of these men, who, believing in no real being, yet claim that they alone can have a true ontology! That is to say, they alone can construct a science of real being who deny that there is any real being. The only true bricklayers in the world are those who deny that there is any such thing as a brick in the world!

But Kant, while a rational realist, becoming a victim to his own ill-starred subtilty, did give subsequent idealists a partial pretext. This was his doctrine that our intuitions of space and time, while *a priori* and necessary, are no more than the subjective thought-forms of the human understanding. We shall show that here is a wanton leap across a wide chasm, unbridged by any reason. This, we repeat, is our thesis: the *a priori* and necessary character of our rational notions and judgments of space, time and (if you please) causality, *does not prove* that they are merely subjective thought-forms for us, but just the contrary. Here let us signalize the equal ignorance and dogmatism of Deussen, where he reconstructs with great parade of formality the argument for the *a priority* of our time and space cognitions; and then ar-

rogantly turns upon us with these two assertions: that Kant was the first to prove this; and that, proving this, he proved them to be merely the thought-forms of the human understanding. Both assertions are false. Kant was not the first to establish this primariness of these notions. Shaftesbury had asserted it against the great empiricist Locke a hundred years before. Leibnitz and Wolf had taught it. Decartes, the founder of modern philosophy, had taught it virtually. Bishop Butler and Dr. Richard Price had taught it. Dr. T. H. Reid had taught it against Hume. And next, our rational notions of time and space are not mere thought-forms for us, because they are *a priori*; but for that very reason are to be held universal laws of thought, valid for all intelligences; or else our human intelligence is a lie, and practical idiocy our only consistent attitude. Here is the tug of our war. We therefore ask our readers to bear with us while we reproduce some of the refutations, long advanced by sound philosophy, against this Kantian crotchet:

(1.) Here should be noted those golden words of Thornwell: That every necessary law of our thought must be held to be also a universal law of truth and of reality. For why? To dispute this is to teach the deadliest metaphysical skepticism. Between Thornwell's rule and the ghastly nihilism of Hume there is no consistent medium. If apodeictic truth is not immutable, permanent and equal for all intelligences, then there is no logic, no certain knowledge, no philosophy of any school; man is but a brute, more wretched than his brother apes, in that he must live under the perpetual delusion that he knows propositions which cannot be known. If any one necessary law of my thinking, as universal for man as any other, may be found invalid, then I must suspect all my other similar laws of thought. There is opened for me the gulf of absolute skepticism! In fact, all forms of idealism are but skepticisms; and their tendencies need only to be developed to give us blank nihilism. The faculties common to man which give him substantive objective realities and their true essential properties appear to the general intelligence just as valid as man's other faculties. If we must admit that they cheat us, we must think that the rest will do so; *falsus in uno, falsus in*

omnibus. History confirms this. Says Victor Cousin: After idealism has always come skepticism; after the Eleatics in Greece come the Sophists—the New Academy, and Pyrrho. With Berkeley came Hume. After German idealism we have Bakunin and his murderous nihilists. (2.) I next demand, what is this jugglery by which the Kantians claim to separate our rational intuitive cognitions of time and space (and then of causality) from their own proper class, including our other rational intuitions? How was Kant entitled to degrade the first two as the thought-forms of the lower faculty, the understanding, while leaving the others (where he does not ignore them) to the higher faculty of reason? Were there any ground for just distinction between the faculties it could only be this: that the *reason is the faculty of a priori, necessary, supersensuous truths*. If it is not this, what is it, pray, other than any cognitive faculty? But our notions of space and time and of power in cause are as completely supersensuous as any, and, as Kant well proves, as *a priori*, as necessary, as universal for men. It will be well to compare these with the full list. True philosophy finds in the human reason all these primary supersensuous notions and judgments coördinate in rank and quality, not learned *by inference from* sense perceptions, but given forth in the light of the soul's own essential intelligence *upon occasion of* sense perceptions. We state them in pairs:

NOTIONS OF.	JUDGMENTS ABOUT.
1. Substance.	There can be no attributes without substance.
2. Substantive Agent.	There can be no action without an agent.
3. Power in cause.	There can be no effect without an efficient cause.
4. Identity.	I am constantly an identical unit.
5. Abstract Space.	Substantive being exists only in space.
6. Duration.	Every event happens in time.
7. Infinitude.	The finite implies the infinite.
8. Spontaneity or freedom.	I am a free agent.
9. The moral good and obligation.	I am bound to do right.
10. Axioms of pure thought.	Judgments of identity, contradiction, and the excluded middle.

Simple inspection is enough to show that the notions and judgments of time, space, and power in cause belong to this list as thoroughly as any others in it. They are no more subjective, and

equally supersensuous, immediate, necessary, and universal. I press the question, On what pretext are these three detached from their class, and restricted as merely subjective thought-forms of the human understanding, invalid anywhere outside of its sphere? Idealists now babble much about the "spontaneity of the reason." From this they would have us infer that the reason itself is capable of emitting all ideas making up the ideal universe of mere representations in consciousness, without being moved thereto by the sense-impression of any real objective being. Their own Kant shall refute them. By the spontaneity of the reason they here mean, not freedom in willing, but the fact that the "pure" notions and judgments of the reason are not mere effects or products of sense-perception, but are from the reason itself upon occasion of sense-perceptions. This Kant taught, along with previous philosophers; but he also taught that these "pure" cognitions could have no judgment of reality, no "content," until this was furnished to them by some empirical perception. They are, therefore, in themselves, but conditions of knowing, not cognitions of any actualities, and, therefore, according to Kant himself, they alone cannot make any beginning of an actual universe. Our intuitions are, indeed, not caused by our perceptions, but these are their necessary occasion. In the absence of the *conditio sine qua non*, the effect no more takes place than if the cause itself were absent. Therefore, this "spontaneity of the reason" is inadequate to generate an objective world.

When Kant infers that, however clearly we know the attributes of things, we do not know the things in themselves, he mistakes the true connection of attributes with their substances. He seems to imagine it a loose one, like the connection of a man's clothing with his body. To-morrow, the man whom we see may change his apparel, and in his new suit we may not recognize him. The true relation of substance and attribute is wholly different: it is a permanent, not a changeable, relation; an essential, not an accidental, one. The essential properties of things are true causes of our perceptions of them; they are powers inherent in the objects perceived. Therefore, knowing these essential properties, we know things in themselves; else knowledge is impossible, and our intelligence is a delusion.

Our cognitions of space and time are *a priori*, but not therefore one whit more limited to the subjective sphere of our consciousness than any other *a priori* notion or judgment possible to our minds. Indeed, they are less so than some others, as our intuitions of self-identity and freedom. We absolutely know space, not as our attribute, but as an external entity; not, indeed, a substantive entity, yet wholly without the *ego*, the unit-spirit, which, while always posited in space, does not occupy any part of space measurable by extension. Thus we know space as external to ourselves, yea, as extending infinitely beyond ourselves. So we know duration. Now, then, our demonstration against Kant is perfect. Without these *a priori* regulative principles of thought, any true, distinct acts of intelligence would be inconceivable. This, Kant himself teaches. Our space- and time-cognitions are no more subjective than any or all other *a priori* ones. If, then, the supposed subjectivity of these two forbids our knowing things in themselves truly, then, for us men correct knowledge of anything is absolutely inconceivable. The only just inference would be, not idealism, but inevitable nescience.

IV. "True philosophy must be monism." Here we have an instance of wanton dogmatism. Monists tell us imperiously that it must be so, but they never deign to prove why it must be so. Thus Fichte, the earliest, and Herbert Spencer, the latest, among modern monists. The former, in his famous attempt to generate subjective idealism, admits fully (what all sane persons have to admit) that every possible judgment is conditioned on the distinction between subject and object. Take the simplest possible judgment, as that of the child who exclaims, "I see the horse": this perceptual judgment is possible only as the intelligence separates the horse seen from the *ego* which does the seeing. But immediately after this inevitable admission, Fichte proceeds to postulate that, somehow, this subject and object must be reduced to a unity. Either subject must be reduced to object, or object to subject; and, as the former is impossible, a way must be found to do the latter. Common sense asks, *Why must it?* Why not let this distinction between subject and object stand as real, seeing that it is given in the unforced intelligence of every human mind in the

world? No answer or proof is deigned! Thus, Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles*, declares that there is no true philosophy until all the phenomena in the universe are reduced to effects of one substance, "matter," and of one energy, "force." Common sense asks, Why? He condescends to give no proof. These philosophic popes only publish their *bulls* that thus it shall be. Recent idealists are fond of saying: "Oh, the Cartesian dualism is untenable." Why untenable? Their deceptive answer is, to point us to the erroneous theories of sense-perception invented by Descartes's followers: Malebranche, all objects seen in God; Guilinet, occasionalism; and Leibnitz and Wolf, preëstablished harmony. If idealists were not either ignorant or unfair, they would give us the true historical account of these vagaries, which would show that they are mere excrescences, for which the Cartesian dualism is in nowise responsible. But of this, more anon.

If Monism has any pretext, we can find it only in these propositions: That all truths must be permanent and inter-coherent, and therefore the true system of cognitions will possess that degree of unity; that all the departments of nature disclose to scientific observation coherent interactions, showing that they are parts of one plan. All this we grant. And manifestly this unity is abundantly provided for by the doctrines of dualism, creation, and monotheism. This was Descartes's own Cartesianism. Knowledge begins in the indisputable, inevitable recognition of my own substantive existence as a spirit, contained in my constant consciousness of my own acts of spirit. "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" Consciousness indisputably tells me that I have myriads of sense-impressions coming from multitudes of objective things external to, and different from, my *ego*. I know that I am not the voluntary cause of these impressions, and, since there can be no effects without causes, these objective things, the only known causes of these myriad impressions in my consciousness, must be real, and are correctly separated and set over against myself as not self. Next, my *ego* is a substance wholly antithetic in essence to the things in this world of not self. *Ego* is an absolute unit; these exist in multiplicity. To *ego* no attribute of extension can be thought; all these objective things present the attri-

butes of extension, and these alone, since every attribute of spirit—absolute unity, indivisibility, freedom, self-action, feeling, and thought—is absurdly and utterly irrelevant to them. Thus, I truly know the distinction of mind and matter. I know that they form two worlds of temporal contingent substances. From them I rise by necessary lines of thought to the independent, eternal, infinite Spirit, God; and I find the only rational source of existence for the two dependent worlds in his almighty creation. Why did this result in a dualism of beings? “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Now, against the wilful monistic fancy I urge first the same objection which Cousin advances so wisely and so powerfully against Locke’s sensualistic theory of knowledge. He and the monists raise and decide first that question which should have been handled last, the question of the source and origin of cognitions. The modest, true philosophy begins with the faithful observation and ascertainment of the qualities of our mental action. It places ontology after psychology. The monist begins with his dogmatic ontology, and then tyrannically forces his theory of knowledge into its fetters, though at the cost of breaking up every law of reason and common sense.

“But if mind and matter are substances essentially distinct, then there can be no real, direct interaction of the one substance on the other.” Yes, this had been, for hundreds of years, the unquestioned dogma of the peripatetics. But from this dogma they did not infer a denial of the distinction between mind and matter (monism); but they inferred that mind can have no direct sense-perception of the material world; and hence their representationist theories of perception: that mind does not see outward material things at all, but is looking at some intermediate “*forma*,” “*species*,” “*idea*,” or “*phantasma*” of the thing seen, which has somehow gotten from it into the mind. Now, it was unquestionably this same dogma which betrayed these misguided followers of Descartes into their vicious theories of perception and volition. The analysis and logical consequence can be easily thought out by the reader. *But does it follow* from the distinction between the substance of matter and the substance of mind that direct

interaction between them must be impossible? That is the hinge-point, and there we shall find again a mere *dictum gratis*, which befooled these scholastics, befooled the spurious Cartesians, and is now equally befooled the monists. What was the old argument? Simply this: That the essential distinction between mind and matter is such that all the attributes of extension must be irrelevant to, and impossible for, spiritual substance; and therefore, since the attributes of matter cannot be imprinted on mind, it must be impossible that the ideas of these attributes can be directly produced by matter upon the mind. For instance, should we say that a mind has directly received ideas of the material attributes of size, figure, and weight, this would be as bad as saying that this mind itself is now qualified by the attributes size, figure, and weight. I reply, *This old argument is worthless, because it proves too much.* Were it valid, it would equally prove against the scholastics that their own representationist theory of perception was worthless and impossible; for, let the reader take notice, that theory says that our minds do obtain ideas of the size, figure, and weight of material bodies somehow, namely, through the jugglery of these supposed "sensible species" somehow present in the mind. But I repeat, Were the assertion true that the mind could not have its own spiritual ideas of these properties of matter without being itself qualified by them, this roundabout scheme of perception would be precisely as impossible as the direct, common-sense one. Now let us add the fatal point of Dr. Thomas Reid's immortal refutation: No representationist theory of perception could give any certain knowledge of an objective world, because on its own terms comparison would be impossible between the mind's supposed sensible species and the outward objects of which they are imagined to be pictures. Thus, all these peripatetic theories really tend to the blank skepticism of Hume, and so does modern monism. The true key to the scholastic sophism is this: it is not the same thing for a mind to have its own spiritual cognitions of the attributes of matter and to be itself actually qualified by these attributes. There is the confusion of thought. If that confusion is to be asserted, then the whole vast mass of objective cognitions which men have concerning the objective

world, at least seemingly qualified by attributes of extension, would be an impossibility except for blank materialists; *as impossible for the idealist on his scheme as for us.* Look and see.

Well would it have been for Germany if the notorious egotism of her philosophers had permitted them to look westward (or anywhere out of Germany, except to pagan India and Greece), and learn something from Dr. Reid. He would have taught them that a true theory of knowledge must be built, not upon wilful, dogmatic assumptions, but upon *facts* ascertained by faithful observation in the inner sphere of consciousness and the outer sphere of objective knowledge; that, in fact, there is no evidence of the existence of these sensible species or other intermediate means of intercourse between mind and the outer world, save our own sense organs; that true science must take the facts actually given her, whether mysterious or not, since all science of finite minds begins and ends in mysteries; that the facts we really have are these: Here am I known to myself by an inevitable intuition as a unit spiritual substance; and here are involuntary, distinct impressions on my consciousness, which I know were not self-produced, and therefore must have had real objective sources, which sources must have been real causal powers, named by us essential properties of those objective things. And if anyone says still that the mystery is not explained how material attributes can be revealed to immaterial minds, I add: This mystery is precisely what we are to expect; there ought be for our spirits an interspace of darkness at the point where organic nerve action is translated into cognition, because in that transition point it is ceasing to be merely organic and is only becoming strictly spiritual. The Almighty could provide for the doing of it; our finite minds cannot see through the method. Thus dualism remains indeed a mystery, but we shall show idealistic-monism to be a stark contradiction.

V. (1.) Idealists claim Kant for their father, and they say their idealism is a metaphysic and the only true one. But their father says he has destroyed all metaphysics! They say his critical process is indisputable when he reduces ^{*}our intuitions of space and time to mere subjective thought-forms of the human understanding,

which may be entirely invalid for the pure reason and for all other intelligences (he does, indeed, afterwards attempt to give us back a metaphysic through his criticism of the conscience and will; but we have proved this futile, and we do not find idealists now using it). Kant says that these thought-forms, while thus unsafe, are yet absolutely universal and imperative in all human minds. If human beings are to think at all with their own understandings, they must think in these forms. Idealists also admit that our thought shaped by these forms does lead us to believe in personality, individuality, the principle of causation, and objective realities. Their metaphysic assumes that there is some way by which they properly get beyond and above these spatial, temporal and causal thought-forms, and it is thence they learn their metaphysic of impersonality and idealism. Now, I assert that, according to their own admissions, such a metaphysic must be utterly visionary, and, therefore, no science at all; for it can have no data. It is admitted that every cognition which any human being has ever actually and validly had was under these thought-forms; then no human being can possibly have a particle of ground for supposing that there are any other. It is mere nonsense for him to plead that there must be some other and transcendental forms of thought, though nobody on earth now exercises them or ever did, because the results of our present thought-forms lead to mysteries. For it is far more reasonable to believe in mysterious propositions, supported by valid proof, than to take up imaginary ones supported by no facts at all. If Kant is right in his criticism, then the only possible source for a transcendental metaphysic must be a direct revelation from some higher personal intelligence, entirely superhuman, and absolutely uninvolved in these human thought-forms. But idealists do not admit such direct revelation. Let us take a plain parallel: There was a world occupied wholly by one race of percipient animals. From the very beginning every eye of every one of these animals had been covered perpetually by red spectacles. The consequence was as universal as unavoidable, that all of them had always seen the sky at the zenith to be red. In fact, that zenith might be to unspectacled eyes not red but azure. If we admit that some

being from another planet, where red spectacles had never misled the vision, should visit this first world and tell its misguided inhabitants that the zenith was azure and not red, then there might be much surprise, much inquiry, and possible converts to the azure theory. This would be by direct revelation, which idealists disdain. But if no such visitant ever came, manifestly it would be impossible that any of the red-spectacled beings could ever have even an imaginary concept of azure sky (whence could it come to them?), or that the inquiry whether there were such a sky could ever enter or ever be debated among them, or that there could ever be, in that world any grounds for asserting an azure sky there or anywhere else.

(2.) The most acute attempts of idealists to reduce the subject and the object in thought to unity have proved impracticable and worthless. Do they try to persuade me, for instance, that my perceptive idea of the wall which bars my path does not assure me of an objective wall, as a second reality opposed to myself, but is only a self-produced limitation of my own cognition, wrought somehow by my consciousness upon itself? I reply, no principle of consciousness or common sense informs me of any such self-limitation. Every such principle tells me that I and my consciousnesses are one thing, and that this wall is another and an opposite thing. I know I did not determine myself to think a wall, but something else, not myself, made me think it. I willed no such objective; on the contrary, if I could I know I would will it away, for, I wish to pursue my path. If I say, I will be for the nonce an idealist; I will act towards that "objectified self-limitation," the wall, as only an idea; surely a strong man can walk through a mere idea: that wall bruises and pains me. But I know I did not bruise myself; my whole volition was, and is, not to be bruised if I could help it. I know the cause of this involuntary bruise and pain is not self, but something different from and opposite to self. Have I become idiotic? How is it that self is doing such strange and cruel things to itself, of which yet self knows nothing?

The simple, logical judgment is the universal form of every affirmative cognition of the human mind. But every logician

teaches that the possibility of a judgment is absolutely conditioned upon the distinction of subject and predicate. Must the validity of logical thought be destroyed, then, to make room for this impossible reduction of the two to one? Fichte thinks that he has found a way to do this by applying to all our ideas two of the axioms of pure thought, in the way of a continuous analysis and subsequent synthesis. Hegel, with less pretension of technical exactness, proposes to do the same thing by means of the assertion that the negative proposition implies an affirmative, and therefore the disruption between the two may be united in an implied third. One answer applies to both. Fichte says the first and simplest cognition ranks itself under the first axiom of pure thought, "all A is A." He virtually admits that the distinction of the object from the subject must place the mind under the second axiom, that of contradiction, "no non-A is A." Now, it is the simplest remark in the world to say to Fichte: If the three logical axioms rule the mind to the production of your idealistic result, why do you utterly omit the third axiom, that of "excluded middle"? The answer is quite plain: he could not but see that this third principle is death to his scheme! Between the axiom of identity and that of contradiction, any middle proposition is impossible. All A is A; no non-A is A; any given object of thought is either A or non-A, and the distribution is so absolutely exhaustive as to permit no possible middle. That is to say, this idealistic scheme is rendered impossible by the necessary laws of logic. Take either or both the propositions in our little parable: "I see the wall, or I am bruised by the wall." The object, wall, is distinguished from the subject I in both these first propositions. If A represents me then the wall is non-A, and cannot be A, *i. e.*, cannot be I, and the law of excluded middle utterly estops every process of re-identification. But, says Fichte, at this stage of thought the mind seizes the abstract concepts of quantity and divisibility, and is thus enabled to judge the synthetic proposition non-A the same with a part of A, while different from the remaining part of A. One fatal answer is, that A, *i. e.* *Ego*, has no parts. That which thinks cannot be qualified by either quantity or divisibility; it is a spiritual monad. Here, then, the whole fictitious process breaks down into worthlessness.

(3), The other necessary postulate of idealism is equally false. It says that in its (only true) metaphysic, thought and being are identical; that my world is nothing but my representation in thought; that the universe is nothing but the absolute *ego's* representation in thought. This is denied by the first intuition of reason, that of substance. To think a substance *does not make* a substance. The thought of the inventor does not give existence to the new machine which he is thinking out. The girl's mental image of a new spring bonnet does not place that bonnet on her head. The boy's eager thought-picture of the coveted pony produces no living animal. The imaginary pony, bonnet, machine, remain nonentities until the productive processes follow and execute the thought. Everybody knows that, from the first man to this day, the first instance has never been found where man has brought a substantive thing into actuality by merely thinking its idea. Thus the universal experience and common sense of mankind refute this postulate. Idealists shall not be permitted to resort to the subterfuge that, since the individual *ego* is at bottom identical with the absolute, it is the all-potent thought of the Absolute *Ego*, of which their philosophy says that to think a thing is to give it existence. They even pretend to quote Scripture, where it says: "God spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." We reply that this subterfuge cannot avail them, since they identify the mode of operation of the individual with the absolute consciousness. They say, My thought is God's thought. They shall not play thus fast and loose, thus making the one phase of the world-consciousness *per se* infinitely productive, while experience proves the other phase utterly non-productive. But the Scripture does not ascribe their postulate to the infinite God in their sense. Scriptures ascribe to him a sovereign omnipotence such that his will is always effectuated. They recognize the fact that, being pure spirit, he has no bodily members through which he effectuates his will as we do ours. But they do not represent God as mere thought without will and power; they do not teach that the mere thought of God gives dependent substantive existence without the forthputting of his substantive power as well. Against that idealistic conception of God lie these

fatal objections: (1), If it were true, the necessary distinction between God's *scientia simplex* and his *scientia libera* could not obtain. Search and see. (2), Since God's *scientia simplex* is eternal, the universe would have to be eternal. (3), Since God's *scientia simplex* is infinite, the created universe would have to be infinite. (4), Since God's *scientia simplex* is immutable, from eternity to eternity, it would have to be a universe absolutely without change!

Once more: Were thought and existence identical, the being of any substantive object not endowed with thought must be annihilated whenever conscious thought about it in all other minds was suspended. But, in fact, nothing is more false. All but insane persons, who own horses, for instance, know that these animals exist continuously in their stables, while there are frequent intervals during which neither their owners nor any other persons are thinking of them at all. Should the house-dog, which does not think, enter the stable during any of these intervals, he should see no horse there; but the horse is there, and the dog does see him, although neither the master nor any other human being is there "thinking him into existence." No escape can be found by saying that the Absolute *Ego* is still thinking horse all the time, and that this makes the horse's existence continuous; for, since the thought of God is eternal and unchangeable, this would give us, instead of an actual animal, lately a colt, and now ten or eighteen years old, an eternal, unchangeable horse. Is there such a horse? Plato might say, Yes, in the form of the eternal archetypal idea of generic horse. Must we, then, be Platonic realists?

(4), Hegel was scarcely dead, when this phase of idealism began to fall under these crushing objections of the common sense of scientific men themselves. Then came Schopenhaur with his substitute: It is not the mere thought of the absolute *ego* which generates dependent phenomenal universe, but the will thereof. This infinite, impersonal will is what projects itself in the seeming forms of temporal, dependent being; for it is not thought, but will, which is power, and it is power which creates. And this new theory becomes for a time the refuge of those who are determined to be idealists. But next comes Hartmann, with his

Philosophy of the Unconscious, and tumbles Schopenhaur along with Hegel into ruins. He reasons irresistibly that, as mere thought without power can be productive of nothing, and Hegel's phenomenal universe could be only an aggregate of nonentities, so will without intelligence formulate nothing, and Schopenhaur's phenomenal universe would be a chaos of effects without intelligent plan. Hegel would cheat us with a universe of effects, yet without any efficient cause; Schopenhaur, with another universe without any final cause. We add further, Schopenhaur violates the very conception of rational being by making will the primal source of all things. Hartmann has shown that to the eternal first cause both intelligence and will must be ascribed. While these two attributes, viewed from the chronological point of view, act coëtaneously, from the logical point of view intelligence is before will. Thought must teach the will what to choose, or otherwise will is blind. Once more: Schopenhaur derives all the parts of the phenomenal universe alike from the will of the Absolute *Ego*—rational men, animals, trees, mountains. He must, therefore, represent all the different, the contrasted, energies of all as common manifestations of the one will-power. So his recent followers expressly admit and teach. Volitions in rational men are but the will-power of the Absolute *Ego*. Animal instinct and impulse in brutes are the same. The vegetative power in the tree is still the same. Yea, the attraction of gravitation in the rock and the water, the chemical affinity between molecules in material compounds, are still the same! And consequently all are alive, the rock, the clod, as truly, though not as vividly, as the human soul! For, as the absolute will is the sole original of beings, it is the only life; and wherever it is, there life is. But plainly, in order to admit this, we must deny not only all common sense, but every established principle of modern science, both mental, biological, and inorganic. These all teach us that mechanical and chemical forces are not the same with the vital, but heterogeneous and antithetic. For instance, the grand function of the vital energy in plants and animal bodies is to resist and overrule the chemical attractions. The very signal of the departure of life is this: that the chemical energies now resume their natural force, and begin

to disintegrate what the vital energy had constructed. Consciousness tells us that what the human will has to do with the external world of matter is always to resist its mechanical forces, or to conquer its inertia. Finally, the impassable gulf between rational will and material force is established by this grand fact, that inertia is the first law of matter, while mind is free and self-moved; matter exhibits no motion save that propagated upon it from without, while mind is a true inward source of spiritual actions

(5.) Once more, the whole theory that we generate an external world by the objective limitations of our own thought or will lies under this fatal objection, that consciousness tells us absolutely nothing of such processes in us. It is this, obviously, which drives Hartmann into his *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, resolved not to come back to the philosophy of common sense and of personal theism, to which he approaches so near; he has nothing left him but to antedate these wondrous fictitious processes before the rise of consciousness in us or the Absolute *Ego*. He usurps the doctrine admitted by many since Leibnitz and Hamilton, that there are beginnings or rudiments of mental modifications latent to consciousness. To this class, Hartmann holds, belong all those mental processes by which we generate our world as our representation. That long course of events which Christians call creation and providence is to be conceived of as nothing but the continuous struggle of the Absolute *Ego* up from its surd condition to completeness of consciousness. When it reaches this the universe will be consummated. Individuality and personal consciousness will be all merged in the Absolute *Ego*; and with this, sin and suffering will finally cease, and matter and mind be resolved into identity.

Against this we here urge only one point: Hartmann has by this resort virtually pleaded himself clean out of the court of science. It is a confession that idealism is a dream and not a scientific theory, not only without evidence, but by its own hypothesis impossible to be evidenced. Mental science has no other field than that of consciousness. In that field it must get all its *data*, or it can have none. Hartmann might attempt to escape

by asking us: Must there not be some scientific and valid method for ascertaining the facts of those mental processes which are supposed to go on back of consciousness? If not, how did Leibnitz ascertain that there were such processes? There must then be some philosophy of the unconscious. We reply, yes, just so far as there are valid *a posteriori* evidences connecting seen results in the mind with their unseen roots, but no further. The gardener does not see with his eyes the sprouting of his beans, for they are covered from eyesight by the mould during this process. Yet he rightly believes that they did sprout, and that these luxuriant plants above ground are their products. For why? Because he did see the dry unsprouted beans placed beneath the rich soil. He does see the new plants emerging from the same spots and showing the same generic properties with the parent bean-plants of the previous season from which he gathered these dry seeds. Either he or other gardeners can testify that they have seen with their eyes the sprouting of similar beans in the intermediate stage of growth. He has the evidence of a perfect analogy. Now no idealist can pretend that there is any parallel between this evidence and his assumption that we generate our world merely as our representation in this sphere of unconsciousness; there is no *a posteriori* proof. There is not one particle of experience in the whole testimony of sane men on which to ground it. Every experiential cognition of all men points them not within—back of consciousness—for the source of their objective perceptions, but without, to objective realities as the true causes of the sense impressions which our understandings interpret into perceptions. In the sense of the idealist there can be no philosophy of the unconscious; there is no bridge of proof passing from this dreamland to the solid ground of actual, valid cognition.

VI. I write chiefly for Christians. The most serious feature for us in this idealistic-monism is its strong anti-Christian tendency. Many men are cheating themselves into the belief that they may be such idealists and remain Christians. The two creeds are antagonists. No man can attempt to hold them both without forcing his mind and conscience into inconsistencies and mental dishonesties which tend to betray him into infidelity, and

which are more unhealthy to the soul than candid infidelity itself. No man can serve the two masters.

(1.) Monism expressly contradicts Scripture, which, if human words can teach anything, asserts dualism. Gen. i. 26 and ii. 7: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (spirit and body). Eccl. xii. 7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Luke xxiii. 46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Acts vii. 59: Stephen said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 8: Paul is "confident" and "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," etc., etc. If the Bible teaches anything as its distinctive doctrine it is this: that while the bodies of the saints moulder into dust in their graves for hundreds or thousands of years, their spirits are separated and enjoy a continuous conscious existence with God until the resurrection. This is dualism, and cannot be honestly made monism or materialism.

(2.) The scheme has an irresistible tendency to materialism. Its modern advocates frequently avow this. How can it be otherwise, when they insist upon monism? They say that all the beings in the universe must be held to be of one kind of substance, and all the events in the universe manifestations of one energy, otherwise it is no philosophy. Then, of course, there can be no substantive distinction between mind and matter. Hence all spirit must be resolved into matter, or all matter into spirit. Which? Sense perceptions, which are of matter only, form far the largest part, the earliest part, and the most obtrusive part of our cognitions. What so reasonable, then, if we must be monists, as that matter should take the front in our creed and be the all? Thus we find them more and more boldly teaching that mind is nothing but brain.¹ "Extremes meet." We now see the one extreme, idealism, coalescing with its odious opposite, materialism. Do they seek to console us for the blank horrors of the latter by

¹ See my *Spirituality and Immortality of Mind*. Presbyterian Committee of Publication.

assuring us that their metaphysics lift up matter again and refine and idealize it into spirit? How? By sublimating both into nonentities. Scant consolation this, which invites us to take refuge from the brutish fate of mere matter in the abyss of annihilation.

(3.) For it can consistently allow us no personal immortality. German idealism now delights in its close affinities to Buddhism. The only heaven known to this is Nirvana, the final cessation of desire of life, of consciousness, of individuality, and absorption into the infinite Brahm. So Hartmann defines salvation. With them salvation is but practical annihilation; and this is correct from their deadly premises. Thought and existence are identical. All thought, as all existence, is primarily the consciousness of the Absolute *Ego*. Our concepts of space, time, and causation are but the subjective thought-forms of the human understanding. These are also the "principles of individuation." The true knowledge of being in itself is conditioned on our rising above those thought-forms. Therefore the more we know real truth, the less we shall know ourselves as individuals. So that the real consummation can be nothing but Nirvana.

(4.) The scheme must, of course, tend to drift into pantheism. Most of its advocates of every phase have avowed themselves pantheists. Even the pious Schleiermacher, after becoming a Hegelian, found himself impelled to change his Christianity into a species of pan-Christian. And why not? Their universe must contain but one species of substance: it must be all matter or all spirit. Or rather, since they cannot away with substantive matter or substantive spirit, and admit no being except thought or will, it must be all mere modal manifestations of consciousness in the Absolute *Ego*. Their process must be the same as that of Spinoza, the absolute pantheist, in its starting point and its results; or it must be closely parallel to it.

And hence follow these monstrous and impious inferences, that their God himself is the source and subject of sin and misery. Such are the unavoidable teachings of all pantheism. After one has identified all dependent beings with God, he must also identify their volitions and their miseries with God's. Whose doing was it at first that the human consciousness fell under those mis-

leading thought-forms, the spatial, temporal, and causal concepts, which so hide from us being in itself and transcendental truth, thus making error and sinful volitions man's fated lot in his state of individuation? It must have been the doing of the Absolute *Ego* in its beginning, because we are but the projections of his consciousness, *i. e.*, of his being. It is by his original action that we are necessitated to think and to err in these perverting forms of thought. Should not he bear the responsibility? Or let us say with Schopenhaur, that the will to exist in the Absolute *Ego* is the essence of all being. Then, should not all the evils in the wills of the creatures be charged upon that originating will? *Absit blasphemia.* Again, many of these monists, like Spinoza, subject individuals to a stark necessity, as they are logically constrained to do. Pantheism should allow no freedom to the creature. But without freedom there is no just responsibility. Thus, again, morality is made impossible for the creature. Nor is there any room for surprise that Schopenhaur and Hartmann should announce themselves absolute pessimists. They say this is the "worst possible world." Why should not those think thus who teach that the great First Cause is himself bad and wretched? How can that state of existence be otherwise than evil, which is so conditioned that we can only escape the grasp of the errors which necessitate sin and misery by the cessation of all personal existence? After personality is forever gone, the very possibility of any compensating personal bliss is also gone. The state of Schopenhaur's mankind would be precisely that of a man who had been suffering all his life from a hereditary, and in this life, incurable, disease. There remains one way to deliver him from its pains: that is to cut off his head.

(5.) Idealistic-monism makes all distinction impossible between philosophic thought and Bible inspiration. The individual mind is but a part of the Absolute *Ego*. Hence all the thoughts of all men are God's thoughts. If the thoughts of folly and sin are, in a certain sense, God thinking, much more is philosophic thought God's thought. If the former half of this sentence gives expression to that impiety which is the trait of all pantheism, the latter half remains an equally unavoidable inference. To the idealist

his philosophy is at least as truly inspired as the teachings of Moses and Christ. Plato is inspired in the same sense with Paul. Gautama is as truly inspired as Isaiah. The Bible can never have any higher place than that of an equal alongside of all the other influential theories of pretended philosophy, those of Confucius, Buddha, Brahm, Zoroaster, of Socrates, of Mohammed, of Spinoza. Nay, idealists generally place any or all of these above Christ and his apostles and prophets. They applaud their moon-struck speculations with fewer subtractions and qualifications than those of the sacred Scriptures. Now and then we find them condescending to recognize in one or another text of Scripture some gleam of philosophic truth, but they speedily hasten to qualify their approbation by describing it as only a fanciful or figurative expression, and proceed to show us how it is marred by the mixture of "Jewish myth," or "Christian fable and superstition." But when they quote the speculations of Hindoo Vedantists, of Neo Platonists, or of German Pantheists, they can admire and applaud without drawbacks. The Christian doctrines of a personal God, of sin, of regeneration, of righteousness, of immortality, are to them rather gropings after philosophic truth than realizations of it. But they can speak of the benignant influence of the doctrine of transmigration of souls without any detraction, and they are sure that the Nirvana of the oriental pantheists is much the most scientific and consoling conception of the good man's future existence. Let the Christian reader estimate the outrage thus tacitly offered to our faith and to our God. These dreary dreams of Hindoo moon-calves in the twilight of a barbaric antiquity are rather to be preferred to the divine and holy precepts and doctrines of sacred Scripture, in spite of the contrast in their fruits. Oriental idealism has given to Hindostan polytheism with its millions of false gods; it has given its filthy fakirs, its insane asceticisms, its car of Juggernaut, and its burning of living widows; it has given polygamy, infanticide, and almost universal fraud and falsehood; it cursed the race with ruthless despotisms; while the religion of the Bible gave to Israel and to Christendom the morality of the decalogue and of the "Sermon on the Mount," the purity of Christian homes, and the

charities, the integrity and the political freedom of the Protestant commonwealths. But the philosophy of India is idealistic! Hence their preference.

The reception which this insolent philosophy meets with from many nominal Christians among us is a disclosure of gullibility sufficiently mortifying to sensible people. These teachers condescend to bestow on Christianity a species of disdainful patronage. They borrow the biblical terms God, soul, sin, righteousness, redemption, salvation, by which to denominate their metaphysical propositions. They compliment Christ as a true revelator. They even call their creed the philosophic Christianity! In view of all which, this kind of gullible Christians become extremely happy and grateful that a philosophy so immensely profound condescends to give some sort of recognition to our creed. Book publishers, nominally Christian, expend their capital profusely to give translations of this philosophy to the English-speaking peoples, assuring them that they will find in it new, luminous and valuable supports for the old Bible doctrines (provided these be duly modified to suit!); while they are probably no more qualified to distinguish false philosophy from true than the mechanics in their factories. And silly preachers set to work obsequiously to remould and squeeze the plain old doctrines of the Bible into such novel forms as the spurious philosophy dictates. But its real meaning in all those honored terms is a travesty, or a deadly perversion. Even the venerable name of God means something wholly different from that which Christians see in it, not a true, personal, extra-mundane, infinite Spirit, but a shadowy Something—Nothing, an infinite impersonal consciousness, indistinguishable from aggregate humanity, and consequently as really qualified by the follies, miseries and crimes of mankind as by the partial charities, virtues and wisdom of our race. Let the guardians of our church beware. Here is another subtle stream of poison oozing through even our religious literature and our education.

(6.) Idealistic monism necessarily denies the personality of God. Hear its first founder in our century, Fichte. He asserts that Kant has utterly destroyed all the old rational arguments for the

being of a God—the *a priori*, the cosmological, and the teleological. But Kant then professes to give us back theism by his one famous argument from the imperative of conscience. Now, says Fichte, this rational concept of obligation to duty gives us, not a personal God, but only a principle or rule of action. This, therefore, is the only form in which idealism can recognize deity. It is not a person, but only a general rule of living. Let us pause here to expose the shallowness of this subterfuge. We assert, with Kant and all the sounder philosophers, that necessary, intuitive judgment of obligation to the right does imply, not only a rule, but a personal ruler.

First, what is right conduct? Surely it is that which is conformed to righteousness. But what is our true concept of righteousness? *A personal attribute*, qualifying none other than a perfect person endowed with intelligence and will. Second, an essential part of this intuition of obligation to the right is, as Bishop Butler has shown, our necessary judgment of good desert for right conduct, and ill desert for wrong; of rewards and punishments. Now, how can a mere rule distribute these, without a personal ruler? As well might a multiplication-table work out the problems in arithmetic without any arithmetician. Where rewards and punishments are distributed to persons according to their respective deserts, there must be not only an intelligence to discriminate them, but a personal will to execute them. The utilitarian Paley was but a crude analyst, but the half-truth in his famous definition, "Obligation—the forcible motive arising out of the *command* of another," is nearer to the truth than the false subtilty of Fichte.

Among the latest of monists we find Professor Deussen thus scouting the personality of God (page 31): "Biblical metaphysics conceives being-in-itself as a personality, but retracts the limitations implied in this idea, when it maintains as attributes of God, (1), Eternity, that is, timelessness, (2), Omnipresence, that is, spacelessness, (3), Immutability, that is, exemption from causality." The author had just asserted that "where there is no change there can be no causation." This sophist here begs the question whether there may not be an infinite Person, where he

asserts that when we deny limitations to God we make his personality inconceivable. True philosophy says: Person is an individual substantive thing endowed with rationality and will. The more highly a being is qualified by these, the more thoroughly is it a person. The infinite Person has, of all others, the truest and most perfect personality. This writer then proceeds, with an utter misapprehension of the attributes of eternity, omnipresence, and immutability. He represents us, when we ascribe the first two to God, as stripping him entirely of the space and time relations. In truth, we do just the opposite: he who is eternal occupies the whole of infinite duration; he who is omnipresent fills the whole of infinite space; he is more related to time and space than any other being. Were, then, this author's pet dogma true, that the time and space concepts are the "principles of individuation," it would make God the most individual of all beings. He equally misconceives God's immutability as a mechanical one, such as that of the earth rotating unchangeably upon its axis from west to east, and therefore incapable of revolving from east to west. But it is not such. True philosophy tells us that it is an *immutability in substance, essential attributes, and will*. Therefore it is that the unchangeable God can be cause of every effect conceived in his infinite intelligence and ordained in his sovereign will; can be—what the empty Absolute *Ego* cannot be—universal first cause. On page 313 we read: "If we may give to the most significant of all objects the most significative name; if it is meet to leave to the obscurest thing the obscurest word, it is this principle of denial, and nothing else, which we might designate by the name of *God*. Yet, under this name, nothing less is to be understood than a personal, consequently limited, consequently egoistic, consequently sinful, being. If one tries to understand—which seldom happens—what personality really means, one will be inclined to regard the conception of the Being of beings as personality almost as blasphemy. It is far rather a supernatural power, a world-turning principle, a something which no eye sees, no name denotes, no concept reaches, nor ever can reach. And this Being, in the last and profoundest sense, are we ourselves. For it is we of whom a hymn of *The Rigveda* sings that one part

of our being constitutes this universe, and that three parts are immortal in the heavens."—From *The Elements of Metaphysics*.

On which side the blasphemy lies we leave the reader to judge. *The Rigveda* is here much higher authority than the Bible. How utterly this philosophy contradicts Scripture may be seen thus: Its God is what "no concept reaches, nor ever can reach," but the Holy Spirit says by Job, "*Acquaint thyself* with God and be at peace." The Son of God said, "This is life eternal, that ye *may know God* and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." The plainest mind can see how this agnosticism equally outrages reason. Those who are not moon-struck know that all emotions, such as love, fear, reverence, are conditioned on some intelligible concept of their object; that no man can have any feeling towards what he knows nothing about, and that there can be no ethical volition where there is no intelligible cognition of any object of will. The briefest reflection will show us, from the self-evident laws of the Spirit, that such philosophy must end in *practical atheism*. He who makes everything God, virtually has no God.

We have carried throughout this criticism the consciousness of this difficulty, namely: that to the good sense of the unprofessional reader idealism appeared, as soon as it was defined, too baseless to need refutation. "Why labor through thirty-two pages to overthrow that which has no foundation but mist?" Our readers may think with sturdy old Dr. Johnson when one detailed to him Bishop Berkeley's ingenious idealism and asked how it was to be refuted; whereupon the great man merely struck sharply upon the pavement with his stout cane, saying: "That is answer enough." The senseless wood was enough to prove to his common sense that the stones were real substances, and not ideas. Let us take any common incident of life and attempt to construe it upon the idealist's plan. Farmer Hodge, for instance, is sitting in his cottage during a moonless evening, when he hears the known voice of a neighbor calling him from his barnyard. He issues from his door, descends his steps, walks toward the barnyard gate, bruises his shins against the unseen wheelbarrow which his careless boy Tom had left in the alley, and falling over it flattens his nose upon the gravel, etc., etc. Now, farmer Hodge

was as certain that his ears received the organic impression of his friend's voice as that he is alive; but in fact there was neither material ear on his head nor atmosphere to pulsate in it, but only a subjective idea of the well-known voice, the product of his own limitation and objectification of his own thought. Yet farmer Hodge knows that he was not thinking about his friend or his friend's voice at all; and he is wholly unconscious of this wondrous self-limitation of this idea non-existent in himself. Farmer Hodge rises from his chair, which is not wooden but ideal, and carefully plants his stout ideas of feet encased in ideas of hob-nailed shoes, not upon his stone door-step, but upon an idea in the figure of a *parallelepipedon*; whereupon his ideal ears are greeted only by the idea of the clank of the supposed steel upon the erroneously imagined stone. He then tramps along heavily, not upon solid ground, but upon ideal horizontality. Then he unwittingly collides with the idea of a wheelbarrow, which makes him most erroneously believe that the material skin is torn from his very material shins. It also appears to him that this idea must have a good deal of real solidity so to bruise his unlucky nose as to draw from it a stream of blood. But no, it is only an idea of blood from an ideal nose. His pains above and below also seem to him very real, and he feels pretty hot anger and discharges some very strong words against that careless scamp, Tom, for setting this trap for him in the dark. But this is all grossly unjust to Tom, for Hodge placed that wheelbarrow there himself, the world being nothing but his own representation, by his own objectified thought. Thus he is the cause of his own pain, notwithstanding he knows perfectly that his whole will and choice were not to hurt himself. Thus the absurdity may be carried out to any extent.

But they will say that by these paradoxes we are only making game of them; for, idealism being true, men's sense-perceptions will, of course, be paradoxical. We will waive, then, this question, and will rise to the higher sphere of their abstract concepts. Here, again, we find their metaphysics bristling, not with mere paradoxes, but with hard contradictions. A true philosophy may lead to mysteries, but not to contradictions. The second of the

axioms of pure thought is the law of non-contradiction. The man who discards this ceases to be a reasoning animal. That of two contradictions one must be false is the premise of every argument by the *reductio ad absurdum*; but this is recognized in the most exact sciences as the surest demonstration. We are required to adopt this metaphysic at the cost of such fatal dislocations as these: I am consciously free, yet I act always under a fatal necessity; the dog that bit me, and his bite, are both thought into existence by my own representing act, yet I know perfectly that I was not thinking dog, and that my whole will was not to be bitten; in Nirvana I shall enjoy perfect salvation, but there will then be no individual nor conscious *ego* to know or feel anything about it; "self-preservation is the first law of nature," but I only attain to the completion of my nature by the utter denial of the will to live; mental action and true being are identical, yet I am to perfect my being by the entire cessation of mental action—which is to say, that I perfect my existence by ceasing utterly to exist; I know by my consciousness that I am an individual, finite person, yet I am identical with the Absolute *Ego*, which cannot possibly be personal or finite; to say that God is personal, that is, limited and individualized by the thought-forms of space, time, and causation, is blasphemy, yet the actual universe, including ourselves, exists only because the Absolute *Ego*, which is the universe, has put itself under these thought-forms; my fellow-man's virtue must consist essentially in this, that he shall equitably and supremely respect my will to exist as he expects me to respect his, but my complete virtue will consist in my own utter repudiation of my will to exist; etc., etc.

When we demur against being reduced to idiocy by receiving into our minds all these contradictions, which are simply destructive to all our laws of intelligence, they propose to comfort us with the assurance that when we rise to that higher stage of cognition beyond these limiting thought-forms, all these contradictions will disappear, and their idealistic monism will be found beautifully consistent. This comfort is ruined, for us, by two thoughts: First, they say that when we get rid of these naughty thought-forms, "the principles of individuation," we shall no

longer know anything or feel anything individually; consciousness will have come to a final end. Compensations which come after a man is dead are too late. Second, how does anybody know that there is any such higher sphere of cognitions? Idealists admit that these spatial, temporal, and causal forms of thought are, and always have been, necessary and universal for us men ever since there was any human consciousness. Therefore it follows necessarily that no human being ever had, or can have, any valid thoughts except under these forms. Therefore this future higher metaphysic must remain, for us, as much a dream as "Utopia," or "the house that Jack built," in our nursery fables. But we are weary. *Eheu! jam satis!*

Yet our sensible readers may be assured that this criticism is not useless. Vain as this philosophy may appear to their common sense, it is widely spread, influential, and aggressive. It is influential in spite of its absurdities, or, probably, by reason of its absurdities; for, unfortunately, most people have this conception of metaphysics, that it is a kind of obscure cloudland, where neither the guide nor the follower can expect to see straight. Consequently, obscurities, paradoxes, and inconsistencies of thought may actually commend a philosophy as signature of profundity. There is, even among Christians and Christian ministers, a species of vainglory keenly prompting them to be "wise above that which is written" in their old-fashioned Bibles. To such persons any novel scheme which puts a new phase upon the plain old doctrines is a seduction. The churches of Christ are to experience in the future a long and harassing warfare from this enemy, in which many who are unstable will fall.

R. L. DABNEY.