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ART. I.—*The Union of Church and State in the Nicene Age, and its Effects upon Public Morals and Religion.* An Historical Essay.

THE name of Constantine the Great marks an important epoch in the history of Christianity. With him the church ceased to be a persecuted sect, and became the established religion of the Roman Empire. Since that time the church and the state, though frequently jarring, have remained united in Europe, either on the hierarchical basis, with the temporal power under the tutelage of the spiritual, or on the cæsaro-papal, with the spiritual power merged in the temporal; while in the United States of America, since the end of the eighteenth century, the two powers have stood peacefully but independently side by side. The church could now act upon the state, but so could the state act upon the church; and this mutual influence became a source of both profit and loss, blessing and curse, on either side.

The martyrs and confessors of the first three centuries, in their expectation of the impending end of the world, and their desire for the speedy return of the Lord, had never once thought of such a thing as the great and sudden change, which meets us at the beginning of this period, in the relation of the Roman state to the Christian church. Tertullian had even held the Christian profession to be irreconcilable with the office of a

course, would talk, and some agitation was felt. Dr. Hoge knew what was going on. He called his session together. They sent for the persons who were causing dissension. They insisted on remaining in the church. He and his session insisted that they should bind themselves to live quietly, or at once take regular dismissals. The pastor and session prevailed. All were dismissed, and there was no further disturbance.

Hardly anything has struck us as more remarkable than the uniform agreement of men in estimating Dr. Hoge's character. Just as we were closing this article our eye lighted on an estimate of him in the *Cleveland Herald*. The editor says:

"Dr. Hoge was one of the remarkable men of the age. He was not only an Old-school Presbyterian, but an Old-school Christian gentleman. Tall, erect, active, and inured to the privations and hardships of pioneer life, he bore the weight of accumulating years with unusual vigour and strength, and did not shrink from the great work of his youth and manhood in old age. Modest, affable, benevolent, talented, and full of good sense, Dr Hoge held the even tenor of his way among the same people for nearly three-score years, baptizing their children, marrying the young, consoling the dying, burying their dead, each year binding closer the bonds of union."

ERRATUM—On page 100, for Hackett read Sackett.

CHARLES  
HOGES

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ART. IV.—*Can God be known?*

THIS is a question which lies at the foundation of all religion. If God be to us an unknown God; if we know simply that he is, but not what he is, he cannot be to us the object of love or the ground of confidence. We cannot worship him or call upon him for help. Our Lord tells us that the knowledge of God is eternal life. How is it then that there are some among us, who say that God cannot be known?

There are, however, three answers given to the question which we purpose now to consider. The one is a distinct affirmative answer; another as distinctly negative; and the third

is a qualified affirmative. Among the ancient philosophers there were some who asserted that the nature of God could be as distinctly and as fully determined as any other object of knowledge. This opinion, however, was confined to a small class, until the rise of the modern speculative school of philosophers and philosophical theologians. With the disciples of this school, it is a primary principle, that what cannot be known cannot exist. And consequently that God is, only so far as he is known. To say, therefore, that God cannot be known, is to deny God, or, as Hegel says, it is the sin against the Holy Ghost. *Werke* xiv. p. 219. *Mansel*, p. 301.

How God is thus known in his own nature, these philosophers differ among themselves. Schelling says, it is by direct intuition of the higher reason. He assumes that there is in man a power which transcends the limits of ordinary consciousness, and by which the mind takes immediate cognizance of God.

Hegel and his followers say, it is by a process of thought; our thought of God is God. Our knowledge of God is God's knowing himself. We know of God all that God knows of himself. This knowledge is God's self-consciousness. *Werke* xii. p. 400. *Mansel*, p. 245. Hamilton's *Discuss.* p. 10. Cousin finds this knowledge in the common consciousness of men. That consciousness includes the knowledge of the finite and infinite. We know the one as we know the other, and cannot know one without knowing both. "God in fact exists to us only so far as he is known." These philosophers all admit that the infinite can only be comprehended by the infinite, and, therefore, man to know God must be himself God. Reason in man, according to Cousin, does not belong to his individuality. It is impersonal, infinite, divine. What is personal to us is our free and voluntary activity; what is not free and voluntary does not constitute an integrant part of our individuality. See Hamilton's *Discuss.* p. 15. *Princeton Review* on Cousin's Philosophy, 1856.

This theory starts, as we have seen, with the idea of the absolute, which is defined to be that which exists in and of itself, and is independent of any necessary relation. From the absolute, which is the object of immediate knowledge, in one of the methods above mentioned, are determined the nature

of God. 2. His relation to the world; and, 3. What the world is. As to the nature of God, it follows from the nature of the absolute, that he is all things. "What kind of absolute Being is that," asks Hegel, "which does not contain all that is actual, even evil included." *Werke* xv. p. 275. *Mansel*, p. 77. It also follows from this idea that neither intelligence, will, or consciousness can be predicated of the absolute being as such. For all these imply limitation and relation. He is indifferent substance, which manifests itself, and comes into existence in the world. This determines his relation to the world. It is that of identity, so far as the world is the existence of God. It is coeternal with him. Creation is necessary as the self-evolution of God. And the world itself is merely phenomenal. It is the ever-changing mode of the divine existence. It has in itself no reality, except as the actual of the divine being is the real. Man has no individual subsistence, no personal immortality, no liberty, no accountability. Such is the doctrine of those who pretend to a knowledge of the infinite. In opposition to this doctrine, so monstrous and destructive, others have gone to the opposite extreme, and maintained that God is not knowable. We know that he is, but not what he is. This proposition has been understood in very different senses by those who use it. Plato has said, the search after God was difficult, and when found, his nature could not be declared. And Philo still more definitely asserts that the divine essence is without qualities and attributes; and as we can know nothing of any essence but by its distinguishing qualities, God in his own nature must be to us altogether unknowable.\* So the devout Pascal, (*Pensées*, partie ii., art. iii. 5.), says, "We know there is an infinite, and we are ignorant of its nature—we may well know that there is a God without knowing what he is." This is repeated continually by the Greek and Latin fathers, many of whom intended nothing more than that the infinite God is incomprehensible by his creatures. Others again in this declaration of the incapacity of man to know God, refer to the spiritual blindness occasioned by sin. And, therefore, while they deny that God can be known by the unregenerated, affirm that he is

\* Strauss's Dogm. i. p. 527.

known by those to whom the Son has revealed him. The sense in which so many Christian fathers, philosophers, and theologians have pronounced that God cannot be known, is very different from the sense in which that proposition is asserted by Sir William Hamilton, Mr. Mansel, and others of the same school. These distinguished writers had for their object the refutation of the monstrous system of modern pantheism which is founded in what is called a philosophy of the absolute, or, in the language of Hamilton, of the unconditioned. In opposition to the doctrine that we can know only the properties and phenomena of the world within and around us, and must from the limitation of our faculties be ignorant of the real essence which underlies these phenomena, the pantheistic or transcendental school of philosophy, assert that experience is unworthy the name of science, and that there can be no philosophy unless we can know things as they are, or can directly cognise the absolute (or unconditional), "As philosophy is the science of the unconditioned (*i. e.* the absolute and infinite), the unconditioned must be within the compass of science." Sir William Hamilton, p. 30. This assumption the philosophers just referred to have effectually proved to be unfounded. 1. By showing that the immediate knowledge of God, *i. e.*, of an absolute and infinite, is impossible. They have demonstrated that the immediate intuition of Schelling, which Hegel ridiculed, is a chimera; and that the dialectics of Hegel, which Schelling denounced, was a mere play of words, (see p. 31); and that Cousin's impersonal reason which enters into our consciousness, but not into our personality, is a gratuitous assumption. If these pretended methods of attaining an immediate knowledge of the infinite are unavailing, the knowledge itself must be unattainable. Existence is revealed to us only under specific modifications, and these are known only under the conditions of our faculties of knowledge. Things in themselves, matter, mind, God, all in short that is not finite, relative, phenomenal, as bearing no analogy to our faculties, is beyond the verge of our knowledge." Hamilton's *Discuss.* p. 23. 2. In the second place, this claim to the immediate cognition of the infinite is proved to be false, by the admission that none but the infinite can know the infinite. The assumption that man is infinite,

which this philosophy involves, shocks the reason and common consciousness of man, as well as outrages his religious and moral convictions. 3. In the third place, Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Mansel have abundantly shown that assuming the definitions of the absolute and infinite given by the transcendentalists, the most contradictory conclusions may be logically deduced from them. "There are three terms," says, Mr. Mansel, "familiar as household words, in the vocabulary of philosophy, which must be taken into account in every system of metaphysical theology. To conceive the Deity as he is, we must conceive him as First Cause, as Absolute, and as Infinite. By *First Cause*, is meant that which produces all things, and of itself is produced by none. By the *Absolute*, is meant that which exists by itself, having no necessary relation to any other being. By the *Infinite*, is meant that which is free from all possible limitation; that than which a greater is inconceivable, and which, consequently, can receive no additional attributes or mode of existence, which it had not from eternity." Accepting these definitions in the sense in which they are intended to be understood, it follows, first, that the absolute and infinite must amount to the sum of all reality. This, says Mr. Mansel, although rejected with indignation, as referring all evil to God, or making God to include all evil that is either real or possible, must be admitted as a necessary inference. "For that which is conceived as absolute and infinite, must be conceived as containing within itself the sum, not only of all actual, but of all possible modes of being. For if any actual mode can be denied of it, it is related to that mode, and limited by it; and if any possible mode can be denied of it, it is capable of becoming more than it now is, and such a capability is a limitation." P. 76. Secondly, if the absolute and infinite be as above defined, it necessarily follows that they cannot be the object of knowledge—for to know is to limit; it is to define; it is to distinguish the object of knowledge from other objects. We cannot, for example, says Hamilton, conceive of an absolute whole, that is of a whole so great that we cannot conceive it as a part of a greater whole. Nor can we conceive of an infinite line, nor infinite space, nor infinite duration. We may as well think without thought, as to assign any limit beyond which there can

be no extension, no space, no duration. "Goad the imagination to the utmost, it still sinks paralyzed within the bounds of the finite." Hamilton, *Discuss.* 35. It follows, therefore, from the very nature of knowledge, that the absolute and infinite cannot be known. Thirdly, another no less necessary inference is, that as the infinite cannot be known, neither can it know. All knowledge or thought, say these philosophers, is limitation and difference. There is a difference between subject and object, between what knows and what is known. But in the absolute and infinite there can be no such difference, and therefore there can be no knowledge. Intelligence, therefore, whose essence is plurality, (*i. e.*, includes subject and object,) cannot be absolute, p. 39; nor the absolute intelligent. Fourth, it follows also from the nature of the absolute and infinite that it cannot be conscious; for consciousness involves a distinction between the self and not self. It is the knowledge of ourselves as different from what is not ourselves. "There must be a conscious subject, and an object of which he is conscious." Even if only conscious of itself, there is the same distinction between subject and object; the self as subject, and a mode of the self as the object of consciousness. *Mansel*, p. 78, sec. 79. "The unanimous voice of philosophy," says Mansel, "in pronouncing that the absolute is both one and simple, must be accepted as the voice of reason also, so far as reason has any voice in the matter," p. 79. "Consciousness is the only form in which we can conceive it, implies limitation and change—the perception of one object out of many, and a comparison of that object with others," p. 95. The conception of an absolute and infinite consciousness, contradicts itself, p. 79. Fifth, it is no less clear that the absolute and infinite cannot be cause. Causation implies relation, the relation of efficiency to the effect. It implies also change, a change from inactivity to activity. It implies also succession, and succession implies existence in time, which cannot be predicated of the infinite and absolute. "A thing existing absolutely, (*i. e.*, not under relation,) and a thing existing absolutely as a cause," says Hamilton, *Discuss.* p. 40, "are contradictory." He quotes Schelling as saying, that he would deviate wide as the poles from the idea of the absolute, who would think of defining its nature as *activity*. "But he who

would define the absolute by the notion of cause," adds Hamilton, "would deviate still more widely from its nature; inasmuch as the notion of a cause involves not only a determination to activity, but a determination to a particular kind of activity," p. 40. "The three conceptions, the Cause, the Absolute, the Infinite, all equally indispensable, do they not," asks Mr. Mansel, "imply contradiction to each other, when viewed in conjunction as attributes of one and the same being? A cause cannot as such be absolute; the absolute cannot, as such, be cause. The cause, as such, exists only in relation to its effect; the cause is the cause of the effect, and the effect is the effect of the cause. On the other hand, the conception of the absolute implies a possible existence out of all relation." Sixth, according to the laws of our reason and consciousness there can be no duration without succession, but succession as implying change cannot be predicated of the absolute and infinite, and yet without succession there can be no thought or consciousness, and, therefore, to say that God is eternal, is to deny that he has either thought or consciousness. Seventh, "Benevolence, holiness, justice, wisdom," says Mansel, "can be conceived of us only as existing in a benevolent and holy and just and wise Being, who is not identical with any of his attributes, but the common subject of them all in one person. But personality, as we conceive it, is essentially a limitation and relation. To speak of an absolute and infinite person is simply to use language to which, however it may be true in a superhuman sense, no mode of human thought can possibly attach itself." P. 103.

What then is the result of the whole matter? It is that reason and the laws and necessities of human thought, lead us into a labyrinth of contradictions. If there be an absolute and infinite Being, he must be the sum of all existence, evil as well as good, possible as well as actual; if admitted to exist, such a being cannot be an object of knowledge, for we know and can know only the finite; and as the infinite cannot be known, neither can it know. It can neither be self-conscious, nor a cause, nor a person, nor the subject of any moral attributes. What is the inference from all this? The first inference drawn by Sir William Hamilton from these premises, is that a



philosophy of the Absolute is a sheer impossibility. It cannot be known "any more than a greyhound can outstrip his shadow, or the eagle soar higher than the atmosphere." The human mind can think only under the limitations which confine its knowledge to the phenomenal and finite. Consequently, the whole modern transcendental philosophy is a baseless fabric. In this conclusion we may well acquiesce, and feel deep gratitude to the man whose unequalled learning and matchless power have been employed in unmasking the pretensions of this stupendous system of pantheistic atheism, whose highest results are the deification of man and the deification of evil.

But unfortunately Hamilton does not stop here. He infers that all that is said of the Absolute by the transcendentalists is true of God. That is, that so far as human faculties are concerned he is not an object of knowledge; that if we conceive of him as absolute and infinite, we cannot conceive of him as cause, as intelligent, as conscious, as a person, or possessed of any attributes. He is pure nothing—the simple negation of all thought. "A God understood," he says, "would be no God at all. To think that God is as we can think him to be, is blasphemy. The last and highest consecration of all true religion, must be an altar—*Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ*—To the known and unknowable God." *Discuss.* p. 22. Nevertheless he admits, and Mr. Mansel admits, that we are forced to think of God as absolute and infinite, to believe that he is such, and also that he is a person, self-conscious, the first cause of all things, benevolent, wise, holy and just. They admit that he is declared to be all this in the Scriptures, to the authority of which they bow. How are these things to be reconciled? How can our reason lead us inevitably to the conclusion that the absolute is unconscious, without intelligence, will, activity, or moral perfections, when the constitution of our nature, and the word of God, declare the very reverse? To meet this difficulty, they have recourse to two principles. First, that this contradiction is merely in our own minds, or arises from the limitations of human thought. It determines nothing as to what the absolute, or God, is in himself. And, second, that the Bible is not intended to teach us what God really is, but what he chooses that we should think

him to be. As to the former of these principles, Mr. Mansel says, "It is our duty to think of God as personal, and it is our duty to believe that he is infinite. It is true that we cannot reconcile these two representations with each other; as our conception of personality involves attributes apparently contradictory to the notion of infinity. But it does not follow that this contradiction exists anywhere but in our own minds: it does not follow that it implies any impossibility in the absolute nature of God. . . . It proves that there are limits to man's power of thought; and it proves nothing more." P. 106. On the second principle, that our knowledge of God is mere *regulative*, he says, we must be "content with those regulative ideas of the Deity, which are sufficient to guide our practice, but not to satisfy our intellect—which tell, not what God is in himself, but how he wills that we should think of him." P. 132. "Though this kind of knowledge is," says Hampden, (*Bampton Lectures*, p. 54, quoted by Mr. Mansel, p. 303,) "abundantly instructive to us in point of sentiment and action; teaches us, that is, both how to feel and how to act towards God—for it is the language we understand, the language formed by our own experience and practice—it is altogether inadequate in point of science." Regulative knowledge, therefore, is that which is designed to regulate or determine our character and practice. It need not be true, much less adequate or complete. All that is necessary is, that it should be trustworthy, *i. e.*, such as we can safely act upon. As our senses, it is said, give us only relative, and not absolute knowledge, telling us what things appear to us to be, not what they really are, so the revelation which God has made of himself in our moral nature and in his word, reveals him as he appears to be, as he wills that we should regard him, but not at all as he really is. But as we can safely trust to our senses, and act as though the knowledge which they give us is real and not merely regulative; so we can safely act on the assumption that God is what he declares himself to be, whether he really is in his own nature what we think he is or not. All that the Bible and our own nature reveals of God we are to believe—that is, regard as trustworthy—although we must remain in profound and absolute ignorance whether

these revelations are true, that is, answer to objective reality or not.

This whole theory which teaches that God cannot be known, appears to us self-contradictory and destructive.

1. In the first place, it cannot even be stated, without involving a denial of doctrine in the very terms in which it is presented. For example, Mr. Mansel says, after Sir William Hamilton, that we cannot know whether God is a person or not. We must think of him as a person, and feel toward him as such, but this is only a *regulative* revelation, designed to control our thoughts, feelings, and conduct. But what is regulative truth, but truth designed to accomplish a given end? And what is design, but the intelligent adaptation of means to an end? And what is intelligent adaptation of means but a personal act? Unless, therefore, God be in reality a person, there can be no regulative truth. Mr. Mansel says, we do not know what God is in himself, "but how he wills that we should think of him." Here will is attributed to God, and the personal pronouns, He and Him, are used, and must be used, in the very statement of the doctrine. That is, it must be assumed and asserted that He is a person in the very assertion of the principle that our knowledge is regulative and not real.

2. This theory contradicts itself, in that it both affirms and denies the veracity of consciousness, and the authority of our intuitive convictions. Thus it admits that our consciousness teaches absolute truth when it declares the real existence of the objects of sense. We know they are; but we do not know that they are what we take them to be. Consciousness, however, teaches the one as well and as clearly as the other. If Kant, Hamilton, and Mansel are right in repudiating the authority of consciousness when it teaches us that things are what they appear to be, why may not Spinoza repudiate its authority when it teaches that the external is real? Again, Mr. Mansel says, consciousness teaches us not only that we are, but what we are, and its testimony as to both parts must be received with implicit confidence as the foundation of all science, religion, and morals. "I think, *therefore*, I am," or rather, as M. Bartholemiss, *Histoire des doctrines religieuses*, i. p. 23, (quoted by Mansel, p. 288), renders the *ergo, c'est à dire*, "that is to say, I who see, and hear, and think, and feel, am

the one continuous self, whose existence gives unity and connection to the whole. Personality comprises all that we know of that which exists; relation to personality, all that we know of that which seems to exist." P. 105. Consciousness gives us the knowledge of *substance*. We are a substantive existence, p. 288. "Kant," he says, "unquestionably went too far in asserting that things in themselves *are not* as they appear to our faculties; the utmost that his premises could warrant him in asserting is, that we cannot tell whether they are so or not. And even this degree of scepticism, though tenable as far as external objects are concerned, cannot legitimately be extended to the personal self. I exist, as I am conscious of existing; and conscious self is the *Ding an sich*, the standard by which all representations of personality must be judged, and from which our notion of reality, as distinguished from appearance, is originally derived." P. 291. That is to say, when we see a tree, we are authorized to conclude there is something seen—but not what that something is—that is, a real subsistence in a given form, with given properties and attributes. All we know is, there is something, but whether a substance, a force, an idea in our own mind, or a mode of God's existence, we cannot tell. But when we are conscious not of a sense-perception—but of our own thoughts and feelings, then it is not merely an unknown something of which thought and feeling are phenomena, which is assumed, but really a substance, the existing self. This seems to us a contradiction, as it affirms in one sentence what is denied in the next. Consciousness no more directly apprehends the substance self, than it does the substance tree. And if in the perception of a tree, we cannot infer (or rather assume as given in) the phenomena what the something is that we perceive; neither are we authorized to infer, or to assume, the substance self, to account for the phenomena of thought and feeling. As many men deny the one as deny the other. The application of this principle to the case of our knowledge of God is obvious. As we know, says Mansel, that sensible objects are, but not what they are, so we know God is, but not what he is. But as we do know that a tree is not merely an unknown something, but a tree; as we know that we are an intelligent feeling acting substance—and not merely that the

phenomena of thought and feeling exist, so we know not only that God is, but what he is. We know from our consciousness what a spirit is, as Mr. Mansel admits. And therefore, when it is revealed in consciousness, as he also admits, that we stand in relation to God as to another spirit, on whom we are dependent and to whom we are accountable, it is thereby revealed in consciousness or in the laws of our nature, not only that God is, but that he is a spirit. And this obscure revelation given within, which so many men in their blindness misread or neglect, is authenticated by the express declaration of Him who is truth itself. God is a spirit. It is not true, therefore, that God is unknown and unknowable, and the theory which leads to that conclusion is not only false, but, as we have endeavoured to show, self-contradictory.

3. This is not the worst. This theory involves not only at one time the admission, and at another the denial, of the veracity of consciousness; it causes scepticism beyond the limits assigned to it in other departments of knowledge. Mr. Mansel says that Kant is wrong in asserting that the objects of sense *are not* what they appear to our faculties; we simply do not know what they are. They may be what we take them to be, or they may not. But Sir William Hamilton says it is blasphemy to think that God is as we can think him to be. He and Mr. Mansel both say the absolute cannot be a cause, the infinite cannot be a person. "A thing—an object—an attribute—a person—or any other term to signify one of many possible objects of consciousness, is by that very relation necessarily declared to be finite." P. 107. That is, if we think of God as a person distinct from other persons, ourselves for example, it is impossible to think of him as infinite. He is thereby necessarily declared to be finite. This theory, therefore, does not merely teach that we do not know what God is, but that we do know that he is what we think him to be; he is not cause, intelligent, conscious, or person. If he is absolute and infinite, it is said, he cannot be any of these.

4. But these distinguished writers are devout Theists. They believe in an absolute, infinite, personal God. They say the existence of such a being is a matter of faith. We may believe what we cannot know, and, it seems, what we know is self-

contradictory. On this doctrine, that we may and must believe what the reason pronounces to be impossible, we would remark, in the first place, that it supposes a conflict between the constitutional elements of our being inconsistent with rationality. The reason of a man is the man himself; so is his conscience; and so are his other faculties. It is the one substantive self that thinks, feels, and wills. To assume, therefore, that by necessity we should think one way and feel another; that the laws of our reason should declare that to be true which our conscience or senses declare to be false, is to destroy our rationality. In the second place, it destroys the foundation of all knowledge. The ultimate ground of knowledge is confidence in the veracity of God. How do we know that consciousness is not a delusion or a lie? How do we know that the laws of belief impressed upon our nature, and which we are forced to obey, are not all false? If laws of our reason necessitate the belief of what is not true, or necessarily lead to false conclusions, why may not the senses, and conscience, and consciousness itself, be equally fallacious? We do not see what Hamilton or Mr. Mansel can have to say to the Pantheist who pronounces the finite to be a show and delusion. All foundation of confidence is gone, if we once admit that God has so constituted our nature that it cannot be trusted; that reason, conscience, or the senses, acting according to the laws he has given them, lead us into contradictions and absurdities. It does not avail to say that this evil arises from men attempting to transcend the limits which God has assigned to the human mind. It is conceded that there are such limits, and that they are very narrow, and that all beyond them is for us darkness and chaos. But it is not a question about what is beyond these limits, but as to what are the legitimate results of human thinking. These philosophers say that the right use of reason leads inevitably and of necessity to the conclusion that the absolute and infinite is not a cause, intelligent, or a person. But this conclusion is admitted to be false, and it therefore follows that God has made it necessary for us to believe what is not true. To say that the difficulty arises from the fact that the absolute is not an object of knowledge, and hence it is that we of necessity err when we attempt to reason about it, is

equivalent to saying that because sound is not an object of vision, the right use of our eyes necessarily leads to a false theory of acoustics. If a man assumes that the incomprehensible can be comprehended, his reasoning will no doubt be vicious and his conclusions false. But this is only saying that false premises and false reasoning lead to false conclusions. But according to Hamilton and Mansel, right premises and correct reasoning lead to false conclusions; which is a very different thing, and a direct impeachment of the Author of our rational nature, and destructive of the foundation of all knowledge. In the third place, the principle that reason may legitimately pronounce absurd that which nevertheless we are bound to believe, renders faith itself impossible. If our reason, acting according to the laws which God hath given us, teaches that the infinite cannot be a person, then it is impossible that we should believe in his personality. It is important, however, that we should distinguish between the incomprehensible and the impossible. We may not be able to understand how the infinite can be a person; but this is very different from seeing that the two ideas are incompatible, so that an infinite person is an impossibility. We may be utterly unable to understand the law of gravitation, or how matter can attract matter in proportion to its quantity and the square of the distance between one portion and another, but this is very different from seeing that such attraction is impossible. As faith is the inward affirmation of the mind that a thing is true, and impossibility or contradiction is an affirmation or perception that it is not and cannot be true, it is evident that faith cannot coexist in the mind with the conviction that its object is an impossibility. If, therefore, Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Mansel are right in saying that the absolute and infinite cannot be cause, intelligent, conscious, or a person; if reason, as they say, pronounces these ideas contradictory, then faith in them becomes an impossibility, or, if possible, it would be irrational and irreligious. Just as all Protestants pronounce the faith of the Catholic, that the consecrated wine is blood, both irrational and irreligious. It supposes God to require us to believe what the constitution of the nature which he has given us declares to be false. The theory under consideration reduces, therefore,

Theism to a level with transubstantiation; a doctrine which cannot be believed without renouncing our rationality and our allegiance to God. It concedes every thing to the transcendentalists. For while it demonstrates that their conclusions are false, it admits the validity of their premises; and from these premises, either their conclusions or absolute scepticism must follow. This objection that Hamilton's doctrine renders faith impossible is not met by the remark of Mansel, that the contradictions referred to are only in our own minds. So is faith in our own minds. We cannot believe what is contradictory to us. Other and higher intelligences, to whom these things are not contradictions, may believe them. But no rational being can believe what to him is a contradiction.

5. Sir William Hamilton's doctrine that God is unknown and unknowable, not only as we have endeavoured to show, involves self-contradictions, or is inconsistent with itself; it not only denies the veracity of consciousness, and leads to absolute scepticism by destroying the foundation of both knowledge and faith; but, as a farther objection, it is, as it seems to us, illogical. It is a specimen of false reasoning. He starts with a certain definition of the absolute and infinite; from that definition he deduces by a strict process of reasoning, a mass of contradictions. The legitimate conclusion from this fact is, that the premises are wrong; that he has assumed something as belonging to the absolute which does not really belong to it. But instead of admitting any error in his definition, he asserts that the absolute is entirely unknowable. This is certainly a *non-sequitur*. If a man chooses to define the human soul as an idea, or as a mode of God's existence, instead of an individual self-conscious substance, and from that definition draws any number of contradictory conclusions, that does not prove that the soul is absolutely unknowable. It only proves that the definition is wrong. So when Hamilton and Mansel draw from the definition of the absolute and infinite as given by the transcendentalists, what the former calls a whole fasciculus of contradictions, the conclusion is decisive as against the transcendentalists and their definitions, but altogether illegitimate as against those who repudiate the premises as well as the conclusions. Hamilton and Mansel, however, admit the premises,



and therefore are reduced to the alternative of absolute scepticism, or a blind, irrational and impossible faith. What right have these philosophers to define the absolute as that which existing by and in itself, and without necessary relation to any other being, in such a sense as to deny any possible relation whatever. If the idea of the absolute exclude the idea of relation—then the absolute must be absolutely all that is, whether potential or actual, whether good or evil. Then, also, it cannot sustain the relation of cause to effect, or of subject to object. Then, as these philosophers teach, it cannot be intelligent, conscious, or a person. But suppose we define the absolute to be the self-existent, having no necessary relation to any thing out of itself, then none of these conclusions follow. If the self-existing being is a spirit, then it has and must have power, intelligence, and will; the distinctions and relations involved in activity and intelligence are not inconsistent with its nature. What right again have they to define the infinite so as necessarily to exclude the finite. If, say they, the infinite does not include the finite, then it can be greater than it is, and therefore not infinite. But, if the infinite implies the negative of only such limitations as is inconsistent with perfection, then these absurdities do not follow. If, as Hamilton and Mansel, after the transcendentalists, say, that all thought is limitation, then such limitation is an excellence. An infinite that is intelligent is surely higher than an infinite that is unintelligent. There is nothing, therefore, in the idea of the absolute or the infinite, legitimately understood, which is inconsistent with the absolute and infinite God, that is, God considered as self-existing and of infinite perfection, being the cause of all things out of himself; a self-conscious, intelligent person, holy, just, and good. The contradictions said to be involved in this idea, all flow from arbitrary definitions, the incorrectness of which is demonstrated by the absurdities to which they lead.

6. Another fallacy in the argument of Hamilton and Mansel, to prove that God cannot be known, is found in their use of the word *to know*. If all knowledge be limitation, not only in the subject but in the object, if we must limit God's power in order to know it; if we limit omniscience in order to

have any knowledge of it; then, of course, the infinite cannot be known. And this is the sense in which Hamilton uses the word. He often, indeed almost habitually, interchanges the words to conceive and to know, the conceivable and the knowable. What, therefore, we cannot conceive of, we cannot know. But in the ordinary sense of the word, and in that sense in which Hamilton and Mansel, at least, often use it, *to conceive* is to form an image of. "All conception," says Mr. Mansel, (*Prolegomena Logica*, p. 24,) "implies imagination. To have a conception of a horse," he adds, "we must be able to combine the attributes constituting the definition of the animal into a representative image." "Conception," is also defined by Taylor in his *Elements of Thought*, as "the forming or bringing an image or idea into the mind by an effort of the will." In this sense of the word all must admit that the infinite is not an object of knowledge. We cannot form an image of infinite space, or of infinite duration, or of an infinite whole, or of an infinite part, or of an infinite God. And it is well we cannot, for that would be mental idolatry. No wonder that Hamilton says it is blasphemy to think God is what we can think him to be, if by thinking or knowing him, we must of necessity limit or make a mental image of him. A second sense in which these writers use the word *to know*, is that of comprehending, understanding. To know the absolute, in this sense of the word, is to have such a comprehension of its nature, as to be able, *a priori*, to determine all about it; to decide what is and what is not consistent with the idea. It is so to understand what it is, as to make it the foundation of all science. The incomprehensible, the inconceivable, and unknowable, are in the philosophy of Hamilton, and in the reasoning of Mr. Mansel, convertible terms. They are, however, all clearly and easily distinguishable. The incomprehensive may be knowable, but it cannot be conceived of, or reduced to a mental image. It is, therefore, far from following that because God is incomprehensible and inconceivable he cannot be known.

"Knowledge," says Archbishop Whately, (*Logic*, book iv. chap. ii., and *e* note), implies three things: "1st, firm belief; 2d, of what is true; 3d, and on sufficient grounds." This

may not be an accurate statement, as it does not sufficiently discriminate between knowledge and faith. The difference lies in the ground of the firm persuasion which is common to both. The ground of knowledge, is sense, consciousness or deduction. In faith it is adequate testimony, or authority. But this does not concern the present subject. If knowledge be the firm belief of what is true, on sufficient and appropriate grounds, then all the arguments of Hamilton and Mansel to prove that God cannot be known fall to the ground.

7. If our knowledge of God be merely regulative; if God be not in reality what the Scriptures declare him to be; if the design of the revelation he has made of himself in the constitution of our nature, in the external world, in his word, and in Christ, is not to teach us what God is, but simply to regulate our feelings and conduct, then it is deceptive and powerless. This theory not only assumes that God may be altogether different from what we think him to be, but it is certain that he is not what we think, or can think him to be. We think he is a person, that he thinks, and feels, and acts. Although we are bound to believe this, it is nevertheless a delusion. It not only may be a mistake, but it certainly is a mere form of subjective knowledge, to which the reality does not correspond. Mr. Mansel indeed says, that the objects of our sense-perception may be what they appear to us to be, and so God may be what we think he is. But then, he also teaches that this assumption induces endless contradictions and absurdities. If that is so, it cannot be true and cannot be believed. And Sir William Hamilton says, that it is blasphemy to assert that he is what we can think him to be. He is unknown and unknowable. And Mr. Mansel says, "the infinite cannot be an object of thought at all," p. 194. Then, of course, to us he does not exist. What is not and cannot be thought has no reality for us. What is said about the infinite, that is about God, cannot be any thing more for us than imagination, delusions, and fanciful representations. We can imagine the whole universe to be peopled with intelligent agents, fairies, or gods and goddesses, and this imagination may have a regulative power, as it doubtless had over those who adopt these fancies. But it is all a delusion. In like manner, we may have the notion of an absolute

and infinite being who is the first cause of all things, a person who thinks, feels, and acts, who takes cognizance of human conduct, and judges men according to their works. And this notion or imagination may have great power over those who believe it. But according to this philosophy it is not true. It is only the form under which an unknown truth is presented to our minds. All we certainly know is, that our thoughts do not represent the reality. God treats men as some parents educate their children, by fictions and fairy tales. It should be remembered, however, that the power of regulative truth depends on the belief that it is true. If a mother tells her child that there is no Christkind or Santa Claus, the giver of Christmas presents—that she is the real giver, of course, the power of the delusion of a supernatural giver is gone. Or, to take a more elevated illustration, if a philosopher had convinced the Greeks that there was no Neptune, or death-dealing Apollo, to be propitiated, the regulative power of the belief in those deities would be lost. In like manner, if Sir William and Mr. Mansel can convince the world that God is not what we think him to be, the power of the thought—that is, the power of the doctrine of theism—will be gone. What we call God may be a mere unconscious force, or a moral order of the universe, or an idea with no objective reality at all. The principle which these philosophers apply to the doctrine of God must, if sound, be applicable to all the doctrines of religion, natural and revealed. If what is taught concerning God is merely regulative, then what is taught of sin and atonement, and Christ, and heaven and hell, must be merely regulative. Then, the whole system of truth, the external universe, the world of mind and thought, is one vast illusion, a phantasmagoria, having semblance but not reality. We do not forget that Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Mansel are devout men, that they write not against the truth, but in its defence. They believe in God, and in the doctrines of his word. It is not against them or their beliefs that these remarks are directed, but against their philosophy. The conclusions to which their principles, as it seems to us, inevitably lead to the overthrow not only of theism, but of all rational faith in the doctrines of religion.

We have endeavoured to show, 1. That the principles of this

philosophy are self-contradictory. 2. That they involve at once the assertion and denial of the veracity of consciousness. 3. That they destroy the foundation of all knowledge, which is confidence in God that he has not so constituted our nature as to force us to believe what is not true. 4. That they destroy the possibility of faith, as they require us to believe what our reason declares to be impossible. 5. That the system is illogical, as it adopts principles which necessarily lead to false conclusions; and instead of renouncing the premises, it falsely concludes that God, or the Infinite, cannot be known; whereas the only thing the argument proves is that the *a priori* ideas of the Absolute and Infinite on which the system is founded are incorrect. 6. That the whole doctrine of regulative truth, adopted to save us from absolute scepticism, is itself delusive and destructive. And 7. That the system itself is founded on an arbitrary and false notion of the nature of knowledge.

We come now to state in what sense, according to the Scriptures and the common faith of the church, God can and may be known. 1. It is admitted that God is inconceivable in the same sense that infinite space, infinite duration, or any form of infinitude is inconceivable. That is, it is conceded, that we cannot form a conception or representative image of an absolute and infinite being. The same, however, is true of many other objects of knowledge. We know that substance is, but we can form no conception of what it is. Neither can we form any representative image of the soul, or of any thing that is not at once finite and material.

2. It is admitted that God is incomprehensible. To comprehend is to know fully. It is to know all that is to be known of its object by any intelligence, even by the highest. Such knowledge is impossible in a creature, either of itself or any thing out of itself. It includes, *a.* The knowledge of the essence as well as the attributes of its objects. *b.* A knowledge not of some, but of all its properties. *c.* Of the relation in which these attributes stand to each other and to the substance to which they belong. *d.* Of the relation in which the object of knowledge stands to all other things. Such knowledge of God can belong to no one but to God himself. We do not know his essence, we do not know all his attributes. He

apprehension, not comprehension

may have, and doubtless has, many perfections of which we have no idea. Neither can we comprehend his relation to things out of himself. That is, of the infinite to the finite. But the same may be said of every thing else, even of our own souls. We do not know its essence; we do not know all its capacities. We have only an imperfect knowledge of those powers which are called into exercise in the present life. The soul doubtless has faculties of which we at present have no knowledge whatever, but which will be developed in a future state of existence. These, and other limitations of our knowledge of ourselves, however, are not incompatible with definite and certain knowledge of our nature and capacities to a certain extent. And as this knowledge is real, and not merely regulative, as we are sure that we really are what we are conscious of being, so, in like manner, our knowledge of God is real, and not merely regulative. He really is what we take him to be, so far as our views are determined by the revelation which he has made of himself.

3. It is also conceded that our knowledge of God is not only imperfect in the sense that there is much that is true concerning him which we do not know at all; but also that our knowledge of what is revealed concerning him is merely partial and inadequate. We know that God knows; but there is much relating to his mode of knowing, as well as to the extent of his knowledge and of its relation to its objects, of which we are ignorant. We know that he acts, but we do not know how he acts, or the relation which his activity bears to time, or to the things out of himself. We know that he feels, that he loves, pities, is merciful and gracious, that he hates sin. We know that these representations convey real truth, *i. e.*, they answer to what is objectively true in God, and are not merely modes in which we express our subjective convictions. The emotional element of the divine nature is covered with an obscurity as great, but no greater, than that which rests over his knowledge, thoughts, and purposes. Here again our ignorance, or rather the limitations of our knowledge, in relation to God, finds a parallel in our ignorance of ourselves. We know that we perceive, think, feel, reason, and act, but how, we do not know. It is perfectly inscrutable to us how the mind, which is

immaterial, takes cognizance of what is material; or how matter can act on spirit; or how the mind can act on the body. These are facts of consciousness which are as incomprehensible to us as the modes in which God acts on his creatures. But as partial knowledge of the facts of consciousness is not inconsistent with the reality and correctness of that knowledge as far as it goes, so our partial knowledge of God is not incompatible with the reality or correctness of our knowledge of him. Mr. Mansel's argument against the claim of partial knowledge of God, is a remarkable specimen of that play on words with which the most distinguished men often delude themselves and confound their readers. "To have a partial knowledge of an object," he says, "is to know a part of it, but not the whole. But the part of the infinite which is supposed to be known must be itself either infinite or finite. If it is infinite, it presents the same difficulties as before, (*i. e.*, it cannot be known.) If it is finite, the point in question is conceded, and our consciousness is allowed to be limited to finite objects." *Limit*. p. 98. It might as well be said that we can have no partial and yet definite knowledge of duration, unless we can comprehend eternity, nor of space, unless we can comprehend infinite space, or of knowledge, unless we understand omniscience, or of power, unless we are conscious of omnipotence. There is such a thing as partial knowledge, even of the infinite, as our knowledge of the finite is in all directions partial. "We know in part," says the apostle, a much higher authority than any philosopher.

The limitations, therefore, which belong to our nature as finite beings, do not impose on us any such ignorance of God as that which belongs to irrational creatures or to idiots, to whom the name and attributes of God have no meaning; nor yet the ignorance under which the blind labour with regard to colour. The blind have nothing in their experience or consciousness which answers to that word, and they can attach to it no definite idea. They know there is something which other men call colour, but what it is they cannot tell. This is a form of ignorance which the theory under consideration would ascribe to men in reference to God, but which the human consciousness instinctively rejects. Nor again are we ignorant of

God in any such sense as we are, or should be, if a geometrical figure were proposed to us in its elements, which we could demonstrate was a square, and with equal certainty prove it to be a circle. This again is a form of ignorance which this theory attributes to man in relation to God. By one process we can prove he is a person, and by another that he cannot be a personal being; that he is a cause, and that he cannot be a cause; that he is intelligent, and that he cannot be intelligent; that he is holy, just, and good, and that he cannot possess moral attributes.

In opposition to all this, the Scriptures declare and the whole church believes, that God is a proper object of knowledge; that while we cannot conceive of him in infinitude, nor comprehend his nature, his perfections, nor his relation to his creatures, yet our partial knowledge is correct knowledge; that he really is what he declares himself to be—a self-conscious, intelligent, voluntary agent, infinite, eternal and immutable in his being and attributes. By knowledge is meant, not full comprehension of its object, but a firm belief of what is true on appropriate grounds addressed to our reason. That such belief is of the nature of knowledge, Sir William Hamilton himself admits. The primary truths revealed in the constitution of our nature, and vouched for by the common consciousness of men, he calls primary cognitions or beliefs. We know that we ourselves are, and that we are intelligent, personal subsistences; we know that the external world exists, and that the primary qualities of matter really belong to it. These things are matters of knowledge. We are commonly and correctly said to know whatever is given in consciousness, or that can be fairly deduced from these primary truths or intuitions. It is in this sense we know God. We know that he is, and that he is what we know him to be. We have in the constitution of our nature the knowledge of what a spirit is, and, therefore, we know what God is, when our Lord declares he is a spirit. We know what knowledge, power, will, and moral excellence are, and therefore we know what is meant when these attributes and perfections are ascribed to God. As he is infinite in being and perfection, we necessarily remove all imperfection or limitation from these attributes, as they belong to God. But this does not destroy their nature. Knowledge does not cease to be knowledge,



because it is omniscience; nor does power cease to be power, because it is omnipotence. If men frame to themselves such a notion of the infinite that an infinite being must include all other beings; or such a notion of knowledge that an infinite mind cannot know; or such an idea of the absolute, that an absolute being cannot act, this only proves that their notions of the infinite and absolute are wrong, and not that the infinite being cannot be known. We form our notion, or idea, of God, therefore, by attributing to him the perfections of our own nature without limitation, and in an infinite degree. And in so doing we attain a definite and correct knowledge of what God is; while we admit there is in him infinitely more than we know anything about; and while we are duly sensible that our ideas or apprehensions of what we do know are partial and inadequate, we are, nevertheless, assured that our knowledge within its limits is true knowledge; it answers to what God really is.

The ground, or reason, why we are authorized to ascribe to God the perfections of our own nature, is that we are his children. He is the Father of spirits; we are of the same generic nature with him; we were created in his image; we are, therefore, like him, and he is like us. This is the fundamental principle of all religion. This is the principle urged by the Apostle in his address to the Athenians. Inasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like to gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, or man's device. On the same ground we ought not to think of him as the unconscious ground of being, or as a mere abstraction, or a name for the order of the universe, nor as the unknown and unknowable, but as a Father—whose image we bear, and of whose nature we partake. This, in the proper sense of the term, is anthropomorphism, a word much abused, and sometimes employed in a bad sense, to express the doctrine that God is altogether such an one as ourselves, a being of like limitations and passions. But in the sense above explained, it expresses the doctrine of the church in all ages, and of the great mass of mankind. Jacobi (von den göttlichen Dingen, *Werke* iii. p. 418, 422,) well says, "We confess accordingly, to an anthropomorphism inseparable from the conviction that man bears the image of God; and maintain that besides this anthro-

pomorphism, which has always been called Theism, is nothing but atheism or fetichism."

To this it was of old objected, as it has been by sceptics of every class in mōdern times, that other creatures, as for example, the beaver or reindeer, if possessed of religious feelings, would also conceive of the Deity with the limitations of its own personality. This is only saying that if irrational creatures were rational, they too would bear the image of God, and, of necessity, conceive of him as rational. That this method of framing our ideas of God is trustworthy, or that God really is what we are led to think him to be, is proved: 1. Because it is the law of our nature. That all men do thus think of God is admitted. Even in the lowest form of fetichism, the life of the worshipper is assumed to belong to the object of worship. The power dreaded is revered, and is assumed to be possessed of a life like our own. So under all the forms of polytheism which have prevailed in the world, the gods of the people have been intelligent, personal agents. It is only in the schools of philosophy that we find a different mode of conceiving of the godhead. They have substituted the abstract for the concrete—*τὸ ὄν* for *ὁ ὤν*, *τὸ θεῖον* for *ὁ θεός*, *τὸ ἀγαθόν* for *ὁ ἀγαθός*. It is here as with regard to the knowledge of the external world. The mass of mankind believe that they have immediate knowledge of the objects of perception, that they see and feel the things themselves. It is the philosophers who contradict this universal and necessary belief, and say that it is not the things themselves that we perceive, but certain ideas, species, or images of the things. Now as the philosophers are wrong here, and the people right, so in the mode of conceiving of God, the people are right and the philosophers wrong. In other words, the conviction that God is what he has revealed himself to be, rests on the same foundation as our conviction that the external world is what we take it to be. The ground of assurance in both cases is the veracity of consciousness, or the trustworthiness of the laws of belief impressed upon the constitution of our nature. "Invincibility of belief," according to Sir William Hamilton himself, "is convertible with truth of belief." *Wight*. edit. p. 233. "That which is by nature necessarily BELIEVED to be, truly IS." P. 226. This

principle he makes the foundation of all philosophy and of all knowledge. No man has more nobly or more ably vindicated this great truth. "Consciousness," he says, "once convicted of falsehood, an unconditional scepticism, in regard to the character of our intellectual being, is the melancholy, but only rational result. Any conclusion may now with impunity be drawn against the hopes and dignity of human nature. Our personality, our immateriality, our moral liberty, have no longer an argument for their defence. Man is the dream of a shadow; God is the dream of that dream. The only question, therefore, is, Are we invincibly led to think of God as possessing the attributes of our rational nature—as an intelligent personal being, infinite in being and perfection? This is not denied. "Fools," exclaimed Mansel, against the transcendentalists, "to dream that man can escape from himself, that human reason can draw aught but a human portrait of God." P. 57. True, he denies the correctness of that portrait, or at least asserts that we cannot tell whether it is correct or not. But that is not now the question. He admits that we are forced by the constitution of our nature thus to conceive of God; and by the fundamental principles of his own and of Hamilton's philosophy, what we are forced to believe is true. It is true, therefore, that God is what we thus think him to be.

2. In the second place, all men are conscious of accountability to a being superior to themselves, who knows what they are, and what they do, and who has the will and purpose to reward or punish men according to their works. The God, therefore, who is revealed to us in our moral nature, is one who knows, and wills, and acts: who approves and disapproves; that is, he is revealed as a person, an intelligent, voluntary agent, possessing moral attributes. Now, this revelation of God must be assumed to be conformed to the truth. God must be what he thus declares himself to be, or our whole nature is a lie. All this Mr. Mansel admits. He admits that a sense of dependence on a superior power is a "fact of the inner consciousness;" that this superior power is "not an inexorable fate or immutable law, but a being having, at least so far, the attributes of personality, that he can show favour or severity to

those dependent on him, and be regarded by them with the feeling of hope, and fear, and reverence, and gratitude." P. 120. No man, however, is, or can be, grateful to the sun, or to the atmosphere, or to force, or law. Gratitude is the tribute of acknowledgment of a person to a person. Again, the same author admits that "The moral reason, or will, or conscience of man, call it by what name we please, can have no authority, save as implanted in him by some higher spiritual being, as a law emanating from a lawgiver." P. 121. "We are thus compelled," he adds, "by the consciousness of moral obligation, to assume the existence of a moral (and of course of a personal) Deity, and to regard the absolute standard of right and wrong as constituted by the nature of that Deity." P. 122. Both in a sense of dependence and consciousness of moral obligation, he says, "We are compelled to regard ourselves as persons related to a person." P. 130. Our argument from these facts is, that if our moral nature compels us to believe that God is a person, then he is a person; and therefore, we arrive at a true knowledge of God by ascribing to him the perfections of our own nature.

3. The argument from our religious, as distinguished from our moral, consciousness, is essentially the same. Morality is not all of religion. Men must worship as well as obey. The one is as much a law and necessity of their nature as the other. To worship (in the religious sense of the word,) is to adore. It is to ascribe infinite perfection to its object; it is to address to that object acknowledgments for the blessings we enjoy; it is to seek their continuance or increase; it is to confess, and praise, and pray. Can we worship the law of gravity, or unconscious power, or mere order of the universe? Our whole religious nature, which demands an object of supreme reverence, love, and confidence, demands a personal God—a God clothed with the attributes of a nature like our own, who can hear our confessions, praises and prayers, and who can supply all our wants, and fill all our capacities for good. Thus again, it appears that unless our whole nature is a contradiction and a falsehood, we arrive at true knowledge of God, when we attribute to him the perfections of our own nature. Mr. Mansel admits that our nature does demand a personal and moral

Deity; but he says, "The only human conception of personality is that of limitation. The very conception of a moral nature is itself the conception of a limit; for morality is the compliance with law; and a law, whether imposed from within or from without, can only be conceived to operate by limiting the range of possible actions." P. 127. Therefore, God is not a person after all, neither can he have a moral nature. We must, he tells us, (in a passage already quoted,) "renounce all knowledge of the absolute, and be content with those *regulative* ideas of the Deity, which are sufficient to guide our practice, but do not satisfy our intellect; which tell us not what God is in himself, but what he wills that we should think of him." That is, we must not rely on our instinctive beliefs; we must not regard as true what God has rendered it necessary for us to believe. This is the subversion of all philosophy as well as of all religion. And why? Why is this contradiction between reason and conscience, between our rational and our religious nature, assumed to exist? Simply, because these philosophers choose to define personality and morality in a way which forbids them being predicated of an infinite being. Both, they say, imply limitation, and therefore the infinite cannot be either personal or moral. But we deny that either imply any limitation inconsistent with absolute perfection, or which is not necessary to it. We do not limit God when we say he cannot be irrational as well as rational, unconscious as well as conscious, the finite as well as the infinite, evil as well as good. The only limitation admitted is the negation of imperfection. Sense is not limited, when we say it is not also nonsense, or spirit when we say it is not also matter; or light when we say it is not also darkness, nor space when we say it is not also time. We do not, therefore, limit the Infinite when we exalt him in our conceptions from the unconscious to the conscious, from the unintelligent to the intelligent, from an impersonal something, to the infinitely perfect, personal Jehovah.

4. If we are not justified in referring to God the attributes of our own rational and moral nature, then we have no God. The only alternative is between anthropomorphism, in this sense of the term, and atheism. For an unknown God; a God of whose nature and of whose relation to us we know nothing, to

us is nothing. And, as an historical fact, those who reject this method of forming an idea of God, who deny that we are to refer to him the perfections of our own nature, have become atheists. They take spirit, and strip from it consciousness, intelligence, will, and moral attributes; and the residue, which is blank nothing, they call God. Hamilton and Mansel take refuge from this dreadful conclusion in faith. They admit that reason leads to the denial of all these attributes to the Infinite and Absolute, but they say that faith protests against this conclusion. But this protest of faith is unavailing, unless it can be shown that it is well founded; that the conclusions against which she protests are fallacious. When Kant proved that there is no rational evidence of the existence of God, and fell back from the speculative to the practical reason, (*i. e.*, from reason to blind faith,) his successors universally gave up faith in a personal God entirely. It is admitted that we can form no idea of God unless we think of him as possessing the attributes of our own nature, and therefore, if this procedure lead us to false apprehensions, and be repudiated as invalid, we are left in total darkness, without God and without hope. Mr. Mansel acknowledges that "anthropomorphism is the indispensable condition of all human theology." P. 241. He quotes Kant, (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, p. 282,) as saying, "We may confidently challenge all natural theology to name a single distinctive attribute of the Deity, whether denoting intelligence or will, which, apart from anthropomorphism, is anything more than a mere word, to which the slightest notion can be attached, which serves to extend our theoretical knowledge." Unfortunately, however, these writers, while they admit that this is the only possible method in which we can know God, deny that we thereby attain any true knowledge. It does not teach us what he is, but simply what we are forced (against reason) to think He is.

5. A fifth argument on this subject is, that the works of God manifest the attributes of a nature like our own. It is a legitimate principle that we must refer to the cause whatever attributes are required to account for the effects which that cause produces. If the effects manifest intelligence, wisdom, power, and moral excellence, these qualities or properties

must belong to the cause. As, therefore, the works of God are a revelation of all these attributes on the most stupendous scale, we are under a rational necessity to ascribe them to the cause of the Universe. This is only saying that the revelation made of the nature of God in the external world, authenticates the revelation of himself which he has made in the constitution of our own being. In other words, it proves that the image of himself, which he has enstamped on our nature, is a true likeness.

6. The Scriptures declare God to be just what we are led to believe he is, when we refer to him in an infinite degree, the perfections of our own nature. We are self-conscious; so is God. We are spirit; so is God. We are voluntary agents; so is God. We have a moral nature, miserably defaced indeed; God has moral excellence in absolute perfection. We are persons; so is God. All this the Scriptures declare to be true. The great primal revelation of God is as the "I Am," the personal God. All the names and titles given to God in the Scriptures, all the attributes ascribed to him, and all the works attributed to him, are revelations of his nature. He is the Elohim; the Mighty One; the Holy One; the Omnipresent Spirit. He knows all things. He is the Maker; the Preserver; the Governor of all things. He is our Father; the Hearer of Prayer; the Giver of all good. He feeds the young ravens; He clothes the flowers of the field; He is love. He so loved the world that he spared not his own Son, but freely gave him for us all. He is merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth. He is a help in every time of need; a refuge; a high tower; and an exceeding great reward. The relations in which we are represented as standing to him are such as we can sustain only to a person. We are bound to fear, worship, love, trust, and obey him. He is our Ruler, our Father, with whom we can have communion. His favour is our life; his loving-kindness is better than life. This sublime exhibition of God in his own nature and in his relation to us, is not a delusion. - It is not mere regulative truth, or. it would be a mockery. - It makes God known to us as he really is. We know God, although no creature can understand the Almighty unto perfection.

7. Finally, God has revealed himself to us in the person of his Son. No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him. Jesus Christ is the true God. The revelation which he made of himself while on earth, was the manifestation of God in the flesh. He and the Father are one. The words of Christ were the words of God. The works of Christ were the works of God. The love, mercy, tenderness, and forgiving grace, as well as the holiness, severity, and power manifested by Christ, were manifestations of the nature of God. We see, therefore, as with our eyes what God is. We know that, although infinite and absolute, he can think, act, and will; that He can love and hate; that He can hear prayer and forgive sin; that we can have fellowship with him as one person can commune with another. Philosophy must veil her face and seal her lips in the presence of God thus manifest in the flesh, and not pretend to declare that he is not, or is not known to be, what he has just revealed himself as being. As this doctrine concerning the nature of God, as the object of certain and true knowledge, lies at the foundation of all religion, it was necessary to devote the more time to its explanation and vindication.

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ART. V.—*A History of Christian Doctrine.* By WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, D. D. In two volumes. New York: Charles Scribner. 1863.

THE title of this work, coupled with the author's reputation, will awaken large expectations in all who take an interest in the scientific unfolding of Christian doctrine. These expectations will not be disappointed, in the case of those who love the distinctive truths of Christianity, and who study these volumes sufficiently to understand their significance and power. In our judgment, no production of greater moment has been given to the public for a long time. It will, beyond doubt, attract great attention, and exercise a commanding and permanent influence in shaping opinion, in regard to those highest Christian doc-