

MODERN PHILOSOPHY (1909)

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“Beware lest any man spoil you *through philosophy* and vain deceit after (according to) the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are *complete in Him*, who is the Head of all principality and power.” (Col. 2:8-10)

In the foregoing passage occurs the only mention which the Scriptures make of philosophy. Nothing is more highly esteemed among men than philosophy. It is on all hands regarded as the supreme exercise and occupation of the human mind and is indeed an occupation for which but very few men have the requisite intellectual equipment. As far back as the tradition of men goes, philosophy has held this high place in human estimation; and it is, therefore, a fact of much significance that, in all the Bible, philosophy is but once named.

Even in our day the deference paid to philosophy is such that there are not many teachers of the Bible who would venture to warn their fellow-men of its dangers; for philosophers have managed to maintain in Christendom the same eminence which they occupied in heathendom. Indeed, a course in philosophy is now, and for some generations has been, considered an essential part of the education of a man who is preparing for the Christian ministry; and this is not the only one of the “rudiments of the world” which has found its way into our theological seminaries. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in the teaching imparted by these seminary graduates, philosophy holds a very different place from that assigned to it by the Bible.

NOT A HUMAN UTTERANCE

We may be very sure, then, that the passage quoted above is not a human utterance. It does not express man’s estimate of philosophy—far from it. In pronouncing that warning Paul is not repeating what he learned while pursuing his course in philosophy

at the school of Gamaliel. No *man* would ever have coupled philosophy with vain deceit, or characterized it as a dangerous process against which God's people should be cautioned, lest thereby they should be despoiled of their possessions. No man ever defined philosophy as being according to human tradition and the basic principles of this evil world, and not according to Christ. This warning is from God Himself; but, alas, like many other of His solemn warnings, it has been despised and utterly disregarded. The thing against which this earnest warning was spoken has been welcomed with open arms, and incorporated into the theological machinery of our ecclesiastical systems. The consequences of this contemptuous disregard of God's warning are such as might have been expected.

This word "beware" (sometimes rendered "take heed" in our version) does not occur very often in the New Testament. There are not many things whereof believers are bidden to "beware." Some of these are "the scribes," "dogs," "evil-workers," "the concision," and an "evil heart of unbelief" (Mark 12:38; Phil. 3:2; Acts 13:40; Heb. 3:12). The warning of our text is addressed to believers who have been instructed as to their oneness with Christ in His death (at the hands of the world), His burial, and His resurrection. Additional emphasis is given to the warning by the connection in which it occurs. The word rendered "spoil" signifies literally to make a prey of, as when one falls into the hands of robbers and is stripped by violence of his goods, or into the hands of smooth-tongued and plausible swindlers who gain his confidence, and by means of their arts fleece him of his valuables. It is heavenly treasure that is in contemplation here, even the Modern Philosophy believer's portion of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Hence empty deceit is contrasted with the fulness of the Godhead which dwells in Christ; and the despoiled condition of one who has been victimized through philosophy is contrasted with the enrichment of those who have apprehended by faith their completeness in Him who is the Head of all principality and power. But why, we may profitably inquire, is philosophy described as an instrument of spoliation in the hands of artful men? And why is it characterized as being after (i. e. , according to) the rudiments, or basic principles, of the world? The word rendered "rudiments" occurs four times in Scripture. In Col. 2:20 it is again rendered "rudiments." In Gal. 4:3 and Gal 4:9 it is rendered "elements." It seems to convey the idea of basic or foundation principles of

the world-system. These elements are described in Gal. 4:9 as “weak and beggarly.” They do not strengthen and enrich, but weaken and impoverish those who resort to them.

PHILOSOPHY DEFINED

The reason is perceived, in a general way at least, when we ascertain what philosophy is, namely, the occupation of attempting to devise, by the exercise of the human reason, an explanation of the universe. It is an interminable occupation for the reason that, if the explanation which philosophy is forever seeking were to be found, that discovery would be the end of philosophy. The occupation of the philosopher would be gone. It is interminable for the stronger reason that the philosopher is bound, by the rules of his profession, to employ in his quest only human wisdom, and it is written that the world, by its wisdom, does not come to the knowledge of God (1 Cor. 1:19-21, 1 Cor 2:14). Incidentally, a large part of the time of the philosopher is occupied in criticising and demonstrating the unreasonableness or absurdity of all philosophical systems except that espoused by himself. This, however, is merely the destructive part of his work, the constructive part being, as has been said, the employment of his reasoning faculties in the task of devising a system which will account, after a fashion, for the existence and origin of, and for the changes which appear to take place in, the visible universe. Having settled upon such a system, the philosopher must thenceforth defend it from the attacks of philosophers of opposing “Schools” (who will put forth weighty volumes demonstrating to their entire satisfaction that his philosophical system is a tissue of absurdities), and in replying to their many and various objections and criticisms.

“NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST”

We may thus see at a glance that philosophy is, in its essential character, in accordance with human tradition and the fundamental or primary principles of the world-system; and that it is not according to Christ, who is hated by the world, and who has laid the axe at the root of all its principles. Prominent among the elements of the world and of human tradition is the principle that the world reflects the grandeur of man, and that human reason is the highest and mightiest factor in it. In our day it has become a tenet of popular theology that the human reason is the final court of appeal in all matters of

doctrine. In man's world human achievement is exalted to the highest place, and no limit is set to what may be accomplished by human ingenuity. "Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven and let us make us a name" (Gen. 11:4), is the program of humanity, as announced by those who established the basic principles of the world. In the great world-system that only is valued and lauded which is attained by the effort of man and redounds to his credit. Philosophy adheres strictly to this tradition and to these principles in that its various explanations, in order to receive recognition as "philosophical," must be purely the products of human reason exercised upon the results of human investigations. Modern Philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY VS. REVELATION

It follows of necessity that philosophy and divine revelation are utterly irreconcilable. The very existence of philosophy as an occupation for the human mind depends upon the rigid exclusion of every explanation of the universe which is not reached by a speculative process. If a philosophy admits the existence of a God (as the philosophies just now in favor do), it is a god who either is dumb, or else is not permitted to tell anything about himself, or how he made and sustains the universe. Should the philosopher's god break through these restrictions, there would be straightway an end of his philosophy. For it is not the pursuit of truth that makes one a philosopher. The pursuit of truth, in order to be *philosophical*, must be conducted in directions in which truth *cannot possibly be found*. For the discovery of what philosophers pretend to be seeking would bring their philosophies to an end, and such a calamity must, of course, be avoided. Therefore, the moment one receives an explanation of the universe as coming from God who made it, he can have no further use for philosophy. One who has obtained the truth is no longer a seeker. The value of philosophy, therefore, lies not in its results, for there are none, but solely in the employment which its unverifiable speculations afford to those whose tastes and intellectual endowments qualify them to engage in it.

PHILOSOPHY VS. CHRIST

Again, philosophy is "not according to Christ" for the simple and sufficient reason that the testimony of Christ puts an end, for all who accept it, to all philosophical

speculations concerning the relations of humanity to God and to the universe. Christ set His seal to the truth and divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. He, moreover, revealed the Father; and finally He promised further revelations of truth through His apostles under the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit. These revelations are not only directly opposed to philosophical speculations, but they cut the ground from under them. The testimony and teaching of Christ were not communicated to men for the purpose of informing them how man and the world came to be what they are—though they do reveal the truth as to that. The purpose of the doctrine of Christ and of His personal mission to the world was to show to men their true condition, as under the dominion of sin and death, and to accomplish eternal redemption for all who believe the good tidings and accept the gift of God's grace. The doctrine of Christ not only instructs men as to the way into the kingdom of God, but also entitles those who accept it to the *immediate* possession and enjoyment of many and valuable rights and privileges which can be acquired in no other way. If, therefore, you are a believer in Christ Jesus, trusting the merit of His sacrifice for your acceptance with God, beware lest any man despoil you of these inestimable rights and privileges through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him, and not elsewhere, dwells the fulness of the Godhead; and in Him, and not elsewhere, the believer may be filled to his utmost capacity. Philosophy can strip men of part of the inheritance of faith. It has nothing to offer them in exchange.

FRUITS OF PHILOSOPHY

It would be quite possible, for one who had the requisite leisure and curiosity, to trace the main developments of philosophy, and to examine the many different "Schools" to which it has given rise during a period of several thousand years. Having done so, he would find that philosophy consists, as already said, in the pursuit of the unattainable, and that, among all the varied fields of human activity there is none which has witnessed such an absolutely futile and barren expenditure of energy as the field of speculative philosophy. A philosopher of repute at the present time has declared that "philosophy has been on a *false scent* ever since the days of Socrates and Plato."

The following of a false scent for more than two thousand years is surely not a record to boast of; and yet it is true that, so far as *results* are concerned, philosophy has nothing more encouraging than this to offer as an inducement for engaging in it.

We do not, however, propose anything so stupendous (and so unprofitable) as a review of the history of philosophy, but merely a brief statement setting forth the status of philosophy at the present day. And this we undertake in order that the non-philosophical reader may be able to ascertain the character of the influence which philosophy is exerting, in these times of change and mental unrest, upon the immediate problems of humanity, and upon what is called "the progress of human thought."

The great majority of men do no thinking beyond the matters which lie within the little circle of their personal interests. This unthinking majority takes its thoughts and opinions from an intellectual and cultured few, or from leaders who manage to gain their confidence. It is important, therefore, to ascertain what ideas are prevalent among those who are in a position to influence the opinions of the mass of mankind. This may easily be done by sampling the current philosophical teaching at the great universities of the English-speaking countries.

THEISTIC AND ATHEISTIC PHILOSOPHY

The various schools of philosophy which have flourished through the ages may be divided into two main classes, namely, *theistic* and *atheistic*. The former class embraces all philosophic systems which assume a god of some sort as the originator and sustainer of the universe. It may be remarked in passing that theistic philosophies are more dangerous to humankind than the atheistic class, for the reason that the former are well calculated to ensnare those who, by nature or training, have a repugnance to atheism. We need pay no attention to atheistic philosophy, for the reason that it is quite out of favor at the present day and shows no sign of ever recovering a respectable status.

DUALISM AND PANTHEISM

Confining our attention, therefore, to theistic philosophies, we find several classes of these, namely, "Dualistic" and "Pantheistic." *Dualism* is the name which philosophers

have been pleased to bestow upon those systems which maintain that God (or the “First Cause”) created the universe as an act of His will, and has an existence distinct and apart from it. These systems are called “dualistic” because they count God as one entity, and the universe or creation as another entity, thus making two entities. The reader should understand clearly that when a learned professor of philosophy speaks of “dualism” he has Christianity in mind.

MONISM AND PLURALISM

Pantheism, on the other hand, maintains that God and the universe are one being. There are several varieties of pantheism which have followers among living philosophers, c. g., monism and *pluralism*. Monism is that variety of pantheism which is most in favor at the present day. This system assumes as the basis of reality an “absolute” or “all-knower”—a monstrosity which comprehends in its vast being all things and all their relations and activities. Monism, therefore, asserts that there is but one *entity*. God has no existence apart from the universe, and never had. The latter is, therefore, eternal, and there has been no creation.

It is a remarkable and highly significant fact that the basic principle of this ruling philosophy of our day is also the basic principle of the rapidly rising religio-economic system of socialism. For socialism is grounded upon the proposition that *man is organically and essentially one with God and with the universe*. From this strange agreement—this strange meeting of extremes—far-reaching results may be expected.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

In order to obtain for our consideration a fair and accurate statement of the position of present-day philosophy, reference will be made to the “Hibbert Lectures” of 1909, on “The Present Situation in Philosophy,” delivered by Professor William James, of Harvard University, at Manchester College, Oxford. These lectures have been published in a volume entitled “A Pluralistic Universe” (Longmans, Green & Co.).

Professor James is one of the very few philosophers of note who reject the teaching of monism. He advocates a theory styled “Pluralism,” of which a sufficient idea may be gained from the quotations to follow. It is of first importance to us to learn from

Professor James what is the present status of dualism, since, as we have seen, that class embraces old-fashioned or Bible Christianity. As to this, he says:

“Dualistic theism is *professed* as firmly as ever at all *Catholic* seats of learning, whereas it has of late years tended to disappear at our British and American Universities, and be replaced by a monistic pantheism more or less open or disguised” (page24).

According to this competent authority, the Roman Catholic colleges are the only ones of any consequence wherein the statements of the Bible regarding the creation and government of the universe, the origin of living creatures, including man, the origin of evil, etc., are even “professed.” The great universities of England and America, which were founded for the purpose of maintaining the doctrines of Scriptures, and spreading knowledge of them as the revelations of the living God, and as the foundations of all true learning, have been despoiled of all that made them useful for the nurture of young minds, and that made them valuable to the communities wherein they have flourished; and this momentous change has been accomplished through the agency of philosophy and vain deceit, according to the ancient tradition of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not according to Christ.

A STRANGE PHENOMENON

Herein, as it seems to the writer, we have an explanation for the strange phenomenon that Romanism is gaining ground rapidly in Protestant England and America, while steadily losing influence in those countries where it has had almost exclusive sway over the consciences of the people. The latter countries have never enjoyed the privileges of the open Bible. They have never had any links attaching them to the living Word of God. All they have had is “the church,” and that they are now judging by its fruits.

But in England and America it is far otherwise. For many generations, from father to son, the people have been knit by many strong and tender ties and associations to the Word of the living God. Its influences upon the customs and life of the people have been many and potent. Only those whose minds are blinded will deny the mighty influence which the Bible has exerted as a factor in the national prosperity of the English-speaking countries. The great universities have been their pride and have been

counted among the national bulwarks; and the Bible has been the foundation stone of the universities. But now a change has come—so swiftly and so stealthily that we can scarcely realize what has happened. The universities have discarded the teaching of the Bible and have repudiated its *authority* as the divinely inspired teacher. Only at “Catholic seats of learning” is its teaching professed. What wonder, then, in a time of general disintegration and unrest, that the children of Bible-loving ancestors should be drawn by thousands to a system which has the appearance of stability, where all else is falling to pieces, and which, with all its errors, does proclaim the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures! Whoso is wise will consider these things.

A SUDDEN CHANGE

Professor James, in his lectures at Manchester, treats the teaching of the Bible as being now so utterly discredited and Modern Philosophy out of date as to call for only a brief, passing reference in a discussion purporting to deal with “the present situation in philosophy.” He says:

“I shall leave cynical materialism entirely out of our discussion as not calling for treatment before this present audience, and I shall *ignore old-fashioned dualistic theism for the same reason*” (page30).

It is also important for our purpose to note the *suddenness* of the great change which has taken place at our universities, whereby Christian doctrine has been relegated to a position of obscurity so profound that it calls for no consideration in a discussion of this sort. The lecturer, after remarking that he had been told by *Hindoos* {sic} that “the great obstacle to the spread of Christianity in their country was the puerility of our dogma of creation,” added: “Assuredly, most members of this audience are ready to side with Hinduism in this matter.” And then he proceeded to say that “those of us who are sexagenarians” have witnessed such changes as “make the thought of a past generation seem as foreign to its successor as if it were the expression of a different race of men. The theological machinery that spoke so livingly to our ancestors, with its finite age of the world, its creation out of nothing, its juridical morality and eschatology,

its treatment of God as an external contriver, an intelligent and moral governor, *sounds as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish savage religion*" (page 29).

ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Let the reader not fail to grasp the significance of the statement. For hundreds of years the instruction imparted to the youths of England and America has been grounded upon the Scriptures as the oracles of God; and, in fact, the work of teaching has been carried on mainly by ministers of the Word. The positions which England and America have gained among the nations during those centuries is known to everyone. God has greatly blessed them with national prosperity and world-wide dominion. But now, we are told (and it is true), that *within a single generation* the framework of our educational systems has been so changed that the language which expressed the abiding convictions of our ancestors sounds as strange in the atmosphere of our great universities as the language of a "different race of men," uttering the formulas of some "outlandish savage religion." Whether the change is for the better or for the worse is not, for the moment, in question. What we wish to impress upon our readers' minds at this point is simply the fact that a *tremendous* change has taken place, with *amazing suddenness*, and in regard to matters that are of vital importance to the whole world, and particularly to the English-speaking people.

EFFECT UPON PLASTIC MINDS

The effect upon the plastic minds of undergraduates of such words as those last quoted can easily be imagined. They artfully convey the suggestion that these young men are, in respect of their philosophical notions, vastly superior to the men of light and learning of past generations, and that it is by the repudiation of Christianity and its "lively oracles" that they furnish convincing proof of their intellectual superiority. There are few minds among men of the age here addressed, or of any age—except they be firmly grounded and established in the truth—which could resist the insidious influence of such an appeal to the innate vanity of men.

Such being then the influences to which the students at our universities are now exposed, is there not urgent need of impressing upon Christian parents (there are yet a

few remaining) the warning of our text, and exhorting them to beware lest their children be despoiled through philosophy and empty deceit?

A GREAT PERIL

What does this sudden and stupendous change portend? Is not the very existence of Christianized civilization (i.e., the Modern Philosophy social system which has been reared under the influence and protection of Christianity) imperiled by it? *Beyond all doubt* it is. Nor is our reasonable apprehension in this regard in any wise allayed by Professor James' statements that the principal factors of this change are "scientific evolutionism" and "the rising tide of social democratic ideals." Great is the mischief already accomplished by these mighty agencies of evil, and we are as yet but at the beginning of their destructive career. One more word Professor James speaks on this point: "An external creator and his institutions may still be verbally confessed at Church in formulas that linger by their mere inertia, but the *life is out of them*" (page 34).

And with this agree the words of the risen Christ to the church in its Sardis stage, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. *Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die*" (Rev. 3:1; Rev 3:2).

BUDDHA OR CHRIST?

It is now in order to inspect briefly that system of philosophy which, in its several forms, has crowded out of our universities the doctrine of Christ (and which has incidentally made Him a liar). We have already stated that this reigning system, now holding almost undisputed sway in "Christian" England and America, is pantheism, which has flourished for thousands of years as the philosophical religious cult of India. We have seen how Professor James defers to the *Hindoo* estimate of the Bible doctrine of creation, and sides with it. If the test of a doctrine is the way it is regarded by the *Hindoos*, it is quite logical to go to them for the interpretation of the universe which is to be taught at our schools and colleges.

The philosophers of today have, therefore, nothing to offer to us that our ancestors did not understand as well as they, and that they were not as free to choose as we are. Did our ancestors then prefer the worse thing to the better when they chose, and founded

great universities to preserve, the doctrines taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, rather than (as they might have done) the doctrines associated with the name of Buddha? Our present-day teachers of philosophy appear to say so. But if there remains any judgment at all in the twentieth-century man, he will remember, before lightly acquiescing in the removal of the ancient foundations, that whatever there may be of superiority in the social order of Christianized England and America over that of pantheistic India is due to the choice which our forefathers made when they accepted the teaching of the Gospel of Christ, and to the fact that *every subsequent generation until the present has ratified and adhered firmly to that choice.*

WHAT BENEFIT?

What benefit, then, can any sane man expect as the result of this sudden and wholesale repudiation of teachings which are vital to Christianity, and the acceptance in their stead of the ancient doctrines of heathendom? Surely there never was a generation of men so unwise, so blinded by its own conceit, as this foolish generation, in thus casting away the guidance of that Book which has put England and America at the head of the nations, and which has been the source of everything that is commendable in so-called “civilized society,” and in accepting in its place the brutalizing and degrading doctrines of pantheism.

In whatever our eyes can rest upon with satisfaction in our past history or our present institutions, our art, literature, ethics, standards of family life and national life, etc., etc., we see the evidences of the influence of those teachings which have now been discarded by the wise men of our day as “puerile” in comparison with those of heathen philosophy. How long will it be before the righteous judgment of God overtakes the peoples who have thus turned with contempt from the source of all their greatness?

The warning, therefore, should be sounded out, not only to the young men and women who are likely to be the direct victims of the “higher education” of the day, but to every dweller in civilized lands, to beware lest any man make a prey of them through philosophy and vain deceit. For the matter we are considering vitally affects the interests of every civilized community.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

From the Bible and from secular history we learn that God deals not only with individuals on the ground of privilege and responsibility, but with nations also. Because of the extraordinary privileges granted to the Israelites, a heavier responsibility rested upon them than upon other nations, and they were visited for their unfaithfulness with corresponding severity. And now we are living in that long stretch of centuries known as “the times of the Gentiles,” during which the natural branches of the olive tree (Israel) are broken off, and the branches of the wild olive tree are grafted into their place; that is to say, the period wherein the Gentiles are occupying temporarily Israel’s place of special privilege and responsibility. The diminishing of them has become the riches of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11-25).

In dealing with a nation God looks to its rulers or leaders as responsible for its actions. The justice of this is specially evident in countries where the people choose their own rulers and governors. In our day the people are all-powerful. Rulers are chosen for the express purpose of executing the popular will. Likewise also the time has come when the people not only elect their rulers, but also *heap to themselves teachers*, because they will not endure sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3, 2 Tim 44). We may be sure, then, that the persons we find in the professional chairs of our colleges are there by the mandate of the people, who have turned away their ears from the truth and give heed to fables which please their itching ears.

By the very constitution of a democratic social order the teachers must teach what the people like to hear, or else give place to those who will.

God will surely judge the privileged nations for this. The change has been great and sudden. The judgment will be swift and severe. Until our day, whatever may have been the moral state of the masses of people of England and America, governments were established on the foundations of Christian doctrine; kings and other rulers were sworn to defend the faith; the Bible was taught in the schools; and no one was regarded as fit for a position of public responsibility who was not a professed follower of Jesus Christ.

As for the teachers in our schools and colleges, not one could have been found who did not hold and teach as the unchanging truth of God the doctrines of Bible Christianity.

A GREAT APOSTASY

Recognizing these facts, which all must admit to be facts, however much they may differ as to the significance of them, it follows that we are living under the dark shadow of *the greatest national apostasy that has ever taken place*. During all the history of mankind there has never been such a wholesale turning away from the Source of national blessings, in order to take up with the gods of the heathen.

SOLEMN NONSENSE

We have already stated that the regnant philosophy, *i.e.*, pantheism, is expounded in our universities in two forms, known respectively as “monism” and “pluralism.” Professor James, although a vigorous critic of monism, admits that the latter has almost complete possession of the field, and that his own cult of “pluralism” has very few adherents. These two species of pantheism are, however, alike in the essential matter that “both identify human substance with divine substance.” From a Christian standpoint, therefore, it is not very important Modern Philosophy to distinguish between them. The principal difference is that monism (or “absolutism”) “thinks that said substance becomes fully divine only in the form of totality, and is not its real self in any form but the *all-form*”; whereas pluralism maintains “that there may ultimately never be an *all-form* at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected * * * and that a distributive form of reality, the each form, is logically as acceptable, and empirically as probable, as the *all-form*” (page34).

“For monism the world is no collection, but one great all-inclusive fact, outside of which there is nothing;” “And when the monism is idealistic, this all-enveloping fact is represented as an absolute mind that makes the partial facts by thinking them, just as we make objects in a dream by dreaming them, or personages in a story by imagining them.”

“The world and the all-thinker thus compenetrates and soaks each other up without residuum.” “The absolute makes us by thinking us.” “The absolute and the world are one fact.” “This is the *full pantheistic scheme*, the immanence of God in His creation, a conception sublime from its tremendous unity.”

On the other hand, *pluralism* says that “reality may exist in a distributive form in the shape not of an *all*, but of a set of *eaches*.” “There is this in favor of the *eaches*, that they are at any rate real enough to have made themselves at least appear to everyone, whereas the absolute has as yet appeared immediately to only a few mystics, and indeed to them very ambiguously” (page 129).

I have transcribed the foregoing specimens of this solemn nonsense in order that the reader may be informed of the choice which our great universities now set before the thousands of eager and receptive minds that throng them in quest of knowledge. The rulers of these educational institutions virtually say to their students, You *must* accept a pantheistic conception of the universe, but you may choose between a monistic universe and a pluralistic universe—between a universe which consists of a single ponderous “All,” or one comprising an indefinite number of miscellaneous “Eaches.”

CONFLICTING SCHOOLS

Whichever of these “weak and beggarly” conceptions our young student adopts, he must be prepared to hear it assailed by the adherents of the rival school and criticized as highly irrational and absurd; and for this his course in philosophy prepares him. Thus the advocates of monism declare that pluralism is “infected and undermined by self-contradiction.” On the other hand, Professor James maintains that the “absolute” of the monist “involves features of irrationality peculiar to itself.” He points out that, upon the theory of absolute idealism, the all-knower must know, and be always distinctly conscious of, not only every fact, characteristic, and relation of every object in the whole universe, but also all that the object is not—as that a “table is not a chair, not a rhinoceros, not a logarithm, not a mile away from the door, not worth five hundred pounds sterling, not a thousand centuries old,” etc. , *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseam*.

“Furthermore, if it be a fact that certain ideas are silly. the absolute has to have already thought the silly ideas to establish them in silliness. The rubbish in its mind would thus appear easily to outweigh in amount the more desirable material. One would expect it fairly to burst with such an obesity, plethora, and superfoetation of useless information” (page128).

And how about things that are criminal, vicious, and impure? These are of necessity just as much the thought-forms of the absolute as their opposites.

A PHILOSOPHER'S VERDICT

Again, after mentioning certain difficulties of the idealist theory. Professor James speaks disparagingly of “the oddity of inventing as a remedy for the inconveniences resulting from Modern Philosophy. this situation a *supernumerary conceptual object* called an ‘absolute,’ into which you pack the self-same contradictions unreduced” (page271).

Once more we quote:

“When I read transcendentalist literature * * * I get nothing but a sort of marking of time, champing of jaws, pawing of the ground, and resettling into the same attitude, like a weary horse in a stall with an empty manger. It is but a turning over the same threadbare categories, bringing the same objections, and urging the same answers and solutions, with never a new fact or new horizon coming into sight” (page265).

This is what a philosopher of the front ranks says of the ruling philosophy of the day, whose speculations are being impressed upon the minds of our brightest college students. One comment may be permitted, namely, that if a foolish absolute did not create men by thinking them, certainly foolish men have created an absolute by thinking it; and it is difficult to conceive how they could have employed their minds more foolishly.

AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK

This is the situation brought about, now that Christianity has been politely bowed out of our schools and seminaries in order to make room for the irrational philosophy of *Hindooism*! Very pertinent in this connection are the words of the prophet: "The wise men are ashamed; they are dismayed and taken. Lo, they have *rejected the Word of the Lord*, and what wisdom is in them?" (Jer. 8:9) For the occupation in which our philosophers are engaged is the impossible task of trying to establish an explanation of the visible universe after having rejected the true account thereof received from its Creator. The god of the ruling philosophy is one who is not permitted to speak or make himself known in any way. Philosophy must needs put these restraints upon him for its own protection; for, should he break through them, the occupation of the philosopher would be gone. So he must remain in impenetrable obscurity, speaking no word, and making no intelligible sign or motion, in order that philosophers may continue their congenial business of making bad guesses at what he is like.

A WARNING

It is not difficult for one who has come to the knowledge of the truth through receiving the Word of God, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13), to perceive the folly and futility of all this. But who shall deliver the ignorant, the innocent, and the unwary from being victimized and eternally despoiled by these men who, professing themselves to be wise, have become fools? We can but sound the alarm and give warning, especially to those who are responsible for bringing up children, of the dangers which infect the intellectualistic atmosphere of our universities, colleges and seminaries.

A REASON FOR IT

In closing we may with profit to our readers point out a profound reason why the enemy of Christ, and of the men whom He seeks to save, should be desirous of impressing upon the minds of the latter the conception of pantheism. That doctrine wholly excludes the idea that man is a sinner and hence it puts redemption outside the pale of discussion. Under the influence of that doctrine man would never discover his corrupt

nature and his need of salvation, and hence if not delivered from it, he would die in his sins. An enemy of man could devise against him no greater mischief than this.

GOD MALIGNED

But the doctrine which the philosophy of our day has imported from India works not only destruction to men, but also dishonor to God. Herein may its satanic character be clearly perceived by all who have eyes to see. Its foundation Modern Philosophy principle is that God and man are truly one in substance and being, and that the character of God is revealed in the history of humanity. This evil doctrine makes God the partner with man in all the manifold and grievous wickednesses of humankind. It makes Him *particeps criminis* in all the monstrous crimes, cruelties, uncleannesses and unnamable abominations, that have stained the record of humanity. It makes Him really the prime actor in all sins and wickednesses, since the thought and impulses prompting them originate with Him. Thus God is charged with all the evil deeds which the Bible denounces, and against which the wrath of the God of the Bible is declared.

SATAN'S PLEDGE

It may be that, somewhere in the dark places of this sinful world, there lurks a doctrine more monstrously wicked, more characteristically satanic than this, which is now installed in our seats of learning and there openly venerated as the last word of matured human wisdom; but, if such there be, the writer of these pages is not aware of its existence. That doctrine is virtually the assurance, given under the seal of those who occupy the eminences of human culture, learning and wisdom, that the pledge of the serpent given to the parents of the race of what would result if they would follow his track, has at last been redeemed. "Ye shall become as God," he declared; and now the leaders of the thought of the day unite in proclaiming that man and God are truly one substance and nature. Beware! Beware! This teaching is, indeed, according to human tradition—the most ancient of all human traditions;— it is according to the basic principles of the world and of the god of this world, and not according to Christ. No greater danger menaces the younger men and women of the present generation than the danger that some man, some smooth-tongued, learned and polished professor, may make a prey of them by means of philosophy and vain deceit.