

F
Sc 74 6014

PANTHEISM'S

DESTRUCTION OF

BOUNDARIES

By ABRAHAM KUYPER, D.D.

PANTHEISM'S
DESTRUCTION OF
BOUNDARIES

BY

ABRAHAM KUYPER, D.D.

FREE UNIVERSITY, AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND

TRANSLATED BY

J. HENDRIK DE VRIES, M.A.

BRONXVILLE, N. Y.

(First published in Methodist Review, New York, July and September, 1903.)

Copyright, 1893, by
J. HENDRIK de VRIES, M.A.

PANTHEISM'S DESTRUCTION OF BOUNDARIES

ART. II.—PANTHEISM'S DESTRUCTION OF BOUNDARIES.—PART I.*

It is not our desire to be classed with those who have no good word for pantheism in any form. The difference between our age and the age which preceded it is too deeply marked for this. Then it was deism, cold, and grave; a rationalism which withered the spirit; a conventional affectation on every hand; a state of society such as exists in the waiting-room of the house of one dead, inanimate and weaned from every ideal. In its place we have now an age full of animation and thrift; a boiling and a fermentation of all the elements of society; a spirit to dare everything, together with development of power which is astonishing. Were ours the choice, therefore, between frozen deism, which causes the blood at length to coagulate in the veins, and this melting pantheism, which from the midst of a tropical wealth communicates to the soul a thrill of its own delight, there would be no room for hesitation. In India we should have been Buddhists, and perhaps have approved the Vedas. In China we should have preferred the system of Lao-Tse to that of Confucius, and in Japan we should have turned our back upon the official Shinto, that we might share the hardships of the oppressed priests of Buddha.

For do not forget that the deepest trait of pantheism consists of a false love; a love which, it must be allowed, steps across appointed boundaries, but which, even in this false and unrighteous form, is born, nevertheless, from the motive of love. It repels not, but it attracts. Its purpose is to unite, and not to separate. Call it spiritual adultery, but adultery, nevertheless, born of affectionate inclination, the outcome of homesickness and of the pathos of sympathy. For all pantheism is religious pantheism at first, and only later on is crystallized into a philosophic system; and only by its degenerating effect does it work its prae-

* Copyright, 1893, by J. Hendrik de Vries.

[The above article, although a translation, is of such a quality as to render it desirable for the pages of the *Review*. As is well known, its author is a distinguished leader in the evangelical orthodox movement of the Reformed Church in Holland; and as the article in the original is accessible to but few American readers we have accepted for publication the following admirable translation by the Rev. Mr. de Vries.—ED.]

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

tical destruction in life. The soul seeks after God ; and when the light of revelation is wanting, and he cannot be found by the dusky glimmerings of reason, the soul becomes impetuous with longing and indiscreet even to the borders of the irreverent, and agonizes after God, to enter his presence, to fathom the hidden depths of his being, and rests not until it has lost itself in him or unconsciously made him become manifest in itself. This trait, this motive, is one and the same all the world over ; and whether you hear the Hindoo utter his heart-breaking cry after his nirvana ; or whether you see the Gnostic delight himself in his syzygies ; or Böhmé, coloring his pantheism with Christian tints, theosophically ; or Madame de Gnyon, quietistically ; and anon Schelling, in a philosophic style, it is with them all the one strong effort to restrain the soul from its impetuous longings, to lose itself in the depths of the being of God. Let us call it once more a spiritual adultery ; but it is the glow of a tragic passion, which is far more attractive and captivating than the cold egotism of the matter-of-fact man, who may not question the existence of God, but has no further dealings with him than *pro memoria*. And also in our age it is noteworthy how the newly aroused Christian religion in Schleiermacher has kissed the hand of pantheism, and how Schelling (provided that the theistic name be retained) has allowed himself deep draughts from the foaming cup of pantheism. True piety shrank back from the rationalistic coldness and from the conventional mechanism of our supranaturalists. But at the hand of Schelling it regains its mysteries, its holy Trinity, its Incarnation, including even the doctrine of the resurrection.

But, however luxuriantly this pantheism grew, like grass in prairie lands, under that grass did hide a poisonous adder. That, which in the tents of the saints received its corrective from piety itself, lost this corrective the moment it began to sparkle from the philosopher's desk ; for then philosophic pantheism quickly repressed the religious element. With Hegel every religious motive sank away in dialectics ; and after him the spirit of our age captured for itself the magic formula of pantheism, in order that, being freed from God and from every tie established by him, it might melt the world as it found it and cast it into a new form for every man in accordance with the desires of his own heart.

Three motives simultaneously impelled our age in this direction: its overwhelming feeling of power, its exaggerated sense of human excellence, together with its penetration into the riches of nature. In comparison with the age which preceded it this age feels like a Titan, who carries everything on his broad shoulder, storms the heavens, and cannot rest until everything has been put in a new, that is, a modern, form. By this overwhelming feeling of power its sons have been aroused to an impassioned and exaggerated sense of human excellence. In its thought man is both alpha and omega—an anthropotheism, as some have named it; a worship first of the ideal human, and then of self, however cynically deep this brutal self may have sunk below the human; an Ego-theism which extends to its most repulsive consequence. In the intoxication of his passionate self-esteem man cast himself with his exceeding power upon defenseless nature, and he has put it under foot, and ever since has led it about behind the triumphal car of his science and of his materiality. And these three motives taken together, that feeling of infinite power, that sense of self-esteem, and that alliance into which the spirit of man has entered with the spirit of nature, even without the mention of more satanic or lower motives, entirely explain the pantheistic keynote of our age. Hence it was spoken none too boldly when, according to the several sympathies, pantheism was praised as the “favorite system” of our age, or condemned as the “Radikalhæresie” which now lifts its head; or when an English pantheist boastfully asserted that at least ninety out of every hundred scholars of to-day were pantheists, either openly or in secret.

Let no one think, however, that we assert that philosophic pantheism still sways its scepter in the schools of philosophy; for, with Haley excepted, the opposite rather is true. Hegel has long been dethroned, and with this the luxurious growth of systematic pantheism has come to a standstill. Philosophy beholds her lecture-halls deserted. Her votaries groan on every hand under her *Abgelebtheit*, senility, and spiritual impotence. Since new philosophies appear no more, as Erdmann complains, the market is flooded with “*Philosophie-Geschichte*.” Spencer has already exalted agnosticism into a system. The long-forgotten Herbart is now conceded to

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

excel Hegel far in wisdom. The Neo-Kantians go back to Kant; a few even to Leibnitz. And, to show how a man of a very unpoetic name may espy the genius of the spirit of poetry, Professor Knauer, of Vienna, proclaims in flattering terms Robert Hamerling the greatest of all philosophers, by whose hand was placed the keystone in the front of her palace.

But with this the teeth of the "ever-gormandizing, ever-ruminating monster," as Goethe calls pantheism, are not yet broken. When recently, in spite of the interdict of Van Roest, the socialists held their electoral meeting, they placed over their entrance these words of Opzoomer: "Every citizen, as a member of the commonwealth, has a share in sovereignty." Call this an abuse, if you will, of the professorial dictum, but recognize, at least, that such is ever the course of the statement of a principle. It goes out from the desk; but when in the halls of the philosophers it has long been recalled, or weighed and found wanting, it continues many years in the air of the lower spheres, exercises its influence upon the special sciences, predominates in our text-books, takes the premium in our novels, glitters as tinsel in the daily press, vitiates the unction of our poets, colors the tone of conversation by Schlagwörter, and, in the circles of the mediocrity, or of what the Germans call the "Philisterthum," it altogether subverts public opinion. For instance, inspired by Broca and by Von Nägeli, Darwin admitted in the last edition of his *Descent of Man* and *Origin of Species* the insufficiency of his selection theory; but second-hand science, in text-book and public school, has not ceased to honor this defective selection theory as the philosopher's stone.

It means nothing, therefore, that philosophic pantheism lies vanquished at the desk; practically it works its after effects with no less power, both in special studies and real life. A professor who would still indorse the system of Hegel as such would not be abreast of his times, and he would be more sharply hit than Hegel by the irony of the song:

And now he talks of God in us,
Who never is transcendent,
And all his hearers marvel much
That God's a German student.

Methodist Review.

Or with more fairness, since I myself am a professor, let me turn the laugh on the professorate, by quoting Goethe's well-known witticism from his "Xeniën :"

What do I care for your scoff,
Over the All and the One ;
The professor is surely a person,
But God, as surely, is none.

But the deadly effect of this irony does not save us. In the place of one professorial head which is struck off from this monster at the desk, a hundred other heads appear, all equally poisonous, in the lower strata of society. Then we obtain derivative theories, which Marat rightly designates as doubly dangerous, together with their application, in which the principles themselves are passed by, or covered over, or more often not even surmised to exist by those who write, or speak, or act. By way of example recall the enthusiastic worship of progress. However much the onward step has been accelerated there is never a respite, never a rest, but a life without a Sabbath. There is no looking backward upon that which has been done, nor occupancy, much less enjoyment, of that which has been obtained. No new point is reached in the way, but immediately a new start is made from it. It is like the *sausenden Galop* in the "Todtenritt" of Bürger's "Leonore." It is the Wandering Jew this time, because of a passion which absorbs and attracts, and not because of an agony of fear which relentlessly drives on. It goes ever forward and farther, ever hastening on ahead, an Excelsior which may never end. And is the assertion too bold, that, of every thousand who keep pace as well as they can with this hurrying procession, no two discern or surmise the genetical coherence of this feverish progress with the avowed purpose of the pantheistic world? That *πάντα ῥέει καὶ οὐδὲν μένει* * is no longer put as a proposition, but taken up as the life motto, until at length the want of an eternal Sabbath is predicated of God himself, and he, too, as Schüler wittily remarked, has been charmed into "a veritable God of progress."

But enough of this. We were not to treat of Pantheism in general, but merely one of its effects. Therefore we will not even sketch hastily this grasp-elusive Protens, but focus all our

* Everything is in process of becoming, but nothing is.

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

powers on this one point—that pantheism effaces distinctions, obscures boundary lines, and betrays the tendency to wipe out every antithesis. This tendency derives its impulse from the pantheistic principle itself. This is shown by religious pantheism, which, afraid of a God “afar off,” has no peace even with God “at hand,” but in the prayer-mystery here seeks to penetrate the being of God, and, in the hereafter, yearns after identification with the divine Being, until at length every boundary between God and the soul is lost. The same is true of practical pantheism, which restlessly seeks to equalize all things; and, as long as there is any upward growth, is bent, first upon tying down, then upon curtailing and cutting off, until, finally, every distinction between the cedar and the hyssop ceases to exist. But this is most clearly demonstrated by philosophical pantheism, which systematically fuses every thesis and antithesis into a synthesis, and, by the tempting notion of identity, explains everything which seems dissimilar as similar and, in the end, as being of like essence.

Herein lies the explanation: This philosophy does not deal with reality, but with the image which it saw reflected in the mirror of its thought, or which, more correctly, it formed for itself. Kant struck a blow for this in proclaiming that reality escapes us, and that the form, at least, and the dimension of that which we observe have their rise in us. Then came Fichte, who thought it better not to reckon with that which escapes us, and declared that that which seemed the image had been imagined by ourselves, and hence was the only real. And finally Hegel transposed everything which existed into a purely logical formula, and, after the object had been destroyed together with its image, asserted that the idea alone remained. In this wise this philosophy, with ever greater necessity of consequence, transports us from the real, living world into an abstract world of thought; and in this world, of course, it has free play with every distinction and antithesis. For then we deal no longer with living persons, but with heads sketched by ourselves; and from these crayon-sketches all sorts of lines and wrinkles may be effaced and charmed away as by magic, which from the living face will nevermore depart.

And if pantheism in this wise creates for itself the possibility of escape from the dilemma of distinctions which really exist,

Methodist Review.

then the very law of thought compels it to use this possibility with ever greater prodigality. Our thinking occasions the arrangement in a fixed order of the phenomena we observe. Thought, from its very nature, demands system. He who thinks looks for general principles in particulars, in order to explain particulars by general principles. Every dualism antagonizes the processes of thought, and thought can rest upon its laurels only when everything has been grouped under one idea. If now we deal with reality and render homage to its law of existence, then with our mode of thinking we are repulsed, stroke upon stroke, by that which obstinately resists our generalization. But if we live as the pantheist lives, not in the real world, but in a gallery of portraits which we ourselves have painted, then of course there is no opposition; then we tolerate no obstinate resistance from our brush and erase all lines which, as they were drawn, do not fit into our system.

Pardon this somewhat dry demonstration. It was needed to show the inner motive as one of sheer necessity, which compels pantheism everywhere to wipe out boundary lines. Declension and conjugation forms may remain, according to Spinoza's figure in grammar, which differ in time and in mood, in person and in case; but all these forms are simple modifications of the primitive word, which always remains the same. Or, as it is expressed by a German philosopher :

All that appears to our eyes as difference and distinction, however much our consciousness insists upon nonidentity, is nevertheless in essence one and the same; it is but the presentation, the formation, the characterization, the development, alteration, expression, revelation, or form of the single substance which alone exists.

This becomes manifest at once in the relation which is thought to exist between God and the world. For centuries the Church of Christ has guarded its barrier against every open or crypto-panteism by the solemn confession in the inaugural of its Articles of Faith: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" and, in the third century, justly denounced the first weakening of the creation idea, together with the first effort to make the world co-eternal by putting Origen under her ban. The most distinctly

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

marked boundary line lies between God and the world; and with the taking away of this line all other boundaries are blurred into mere shadows. For every distinction made in our consciousness—aye, the very faculty itself of our consciousness to make distinctions—takes root at last in this primordial antithesis. Think it away, and it becomes night, in whose shadowy darkness everything in our horizon dissolves in a somber gray. But every pantheist starts out with the denial of this primordial antithesis, which is mother to every antithesis among creatures. The pantheist stands ready, the moment we open our Bible, to invalidate the solemn inaugural of Genesis. No, not “in the beginning,” he says, for there was no beginning; not “created,” for the world is eternal; and not “the heaven and the earth,” for the beyond is a mere dream. In this way the three most deeply marked lines of our distinction are wiped out with a single stroke, and every boundary is taken away between God and the world, between time and eternity, between the here and the hereafter. And yet, pantheism must needs begin with the revocation of these antitheses. It can do no other. As far as history extends our thinking travels along a smooth path, but stops at the point where history began, as well as at the point where history ends. There it finds before and behind it a bottomless abyss, over which it dares not leap, and which is much less to be spanned by a bridge; and hence it must, at any price, cipher away both that end and that beginning. For the pantheist there is no existence of God and the world thinkable as two individual substances.

Objection may be made by reminding us of what we stated above, namely, that it is another wind which blows in the higher circles of science; that in those better circles pantheism, together with materialism, has long since been shown the door; and while the *non liquet* is freely expressed concerning the origin, basis, and end of things, there is general content to inquire more carefully into the phenomena of the natural and the spiritual world, and to live on poetry for the heart. And this is so. But has the principle of evolution, or the *Descendenztheorie*, as the Germans call it, therefore ceased to be the *Credo* of the science of our day? And what is this evolution theory other than the application of the pantheistic process to the empiric investigation of phenomena? Here, also, the “*natura*

saltus non facit—"nature takes no leap"—is motto. Here, also, everything that appears is explained by a preceding appearance. And here, also, both with spiritual and natural phenomena, are denied all real differences of kind, together with independence of origin, and every deeper distinction of being, in either sphere by itself, as well as between the two spheres mutually; and hence, as a matter of fact, every line which marks a boundary is wiped out, and every boundary post which divides the jurisdiction is leveled to the ground. Von Hartman did not exaggerate when he said that "for our times the Descendenz-theorie is unconditionally correct, and is steadily gaining ground amid the spiritual tempest;" or, as an English writer expressed it, "Science amongst us is at its highest when it interprets all orders of phenomena as differently conditioned modes of one kind of uniformity." Though Darwin himself conceded that his selection theory was insufficient to explain the morphological differences of species, the evolution theory was therefore not dismissed. That which was explained by Darwin mechanically could likewise be interpreted dynamically, and even if need be teleologically, as a spontaneous process in the cosmos which received its impulse from the first germ, whose motive starts from the teleological idea which dominates the entire process. One may therefore be a Darwinist, and with Darwin bend the knee reverently before a "God," for surely God created this "force" which potentially included the entire cosmos within itself; or it was he who determined for the cosmos the aim of its development process. This system is so pliable that more than one Herbartian, in spite of his own principle, is found to side with Darwinism.

This would not be difficult to understand if Darwin, with the help of the fossil discoveries, had succeeded in laying before us the steps of transition in specimens from the plant to man, all which would fit into each other as links of a chain. But this is not so. And it is not merely the search after the missing link; but even if we go back a period of three hundred thousand years, for which it is claimed there is certain proof, traces of species are found in the fossil world which are now extinct, and also deviating forms. But the skeletons of the still existing species are strikingly analogous to the skeletons of our animals. In simple honesty, therefore, Darwin acknowledges that the

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

proof is far from complete, that it is still incomplete in the domain of nature; and let us add that for spiritual purposes it finds no support for a single point. But says he repeatedly, "This, therefore, shakes not my faith in the evolution theory." It follows, therefore, that we are not dealing with a compulsory theorem, which has been conclusively demonstrated, but with an hypothesis which is supported by a most defective induction, whose general applause takes root not in incontestable facts, and much less in complete proof, but in a general mood of spirits; since Darwin's theory places before our learned and civilized public a solution of the world problem which responds to its most secret sympathies. And if it is known that the keynote of our age is pantheistic, and that in the evolution theory there appears one of the richest thoughts of pantheism, namely, that of the ever-continuing process, in its most attractive form, is then the assertion too bold, that in the Descendenz-theorie is found, as its chief motive, the impulsive force of pantheism?

Or, to probe the real motive deeper still, in the evolution theory, even as in pantheism, hides the desire of the human heart to rid itself of God. In spite of his *practische Vernunft* it was this desire which actuated Kant, of whom Baader correctly wrote: "The fundamental error of his philosophy is that man is autonomic and spontaneous, as if he possessed reason of himself; for it transforms man to a god, and so becomes pantheistic." And Feuerbach uttered merely the consequence of this system when he said, "God was my first thought, reason my second, and man my third and last thought. The subject of the Godhead is reason, but the subject of the reason is man;" and by these words he likewise expressed the deepest thought of our age. Buchner, himself an avowed atheist, frankly declares that, even more than that of Lamarck, Darwin's theory is purely atheistic; and we heartily agree with this opinion. For what advantage is it that we trace the course of the law of causality without a break back to the first gaseous nebula and cell or germ, when behind this cell or germ the inexplicable act of a creative God still demands our recognition, and with all our thinking we strike upon the very rock to evade which the whole theory was invented? If it be true, therefore, that the *Moses der modernen Freigeister*, as Feuerbach calls Spinoza, has not led us into the promised land of

philosophic rest, and that the failure of pantheistic philosophy can no longer be concealed, it is still in the evolution theory that the harmful impulse of pantheism works in the most seductive manner, since it spends all its power to maintain the nonexistence of separating boundaries in every department of our knowledge. Valentinus, the most sensible of Gnostics, relegated evolution back of the creation to the βάθος (the deep), but was so much aware of the danger for the erasure of boundaries which concealed itself in this that out of the *Ἀυτοπάτωρ* he makes suddenly a God to appear in the form of the *Horos*, or *Horkos*, that is, the boundary for the maintenance of the fixed order of all that exists. This thought, however strange its form, is nevertheless entirely correct as a poetic image. Faith in the living God stands or falls with the maintenance or removal of boundaries. God created the boundaries. He himself is the chief boundary for all his creatures, and the effacement of boundaries is virtually identical with the obliteration of the idea of God. If, then, it be never so true that modern philosophy "began with doubt and ended with despair" this whole pantheistic stream has left a poisonous slime upon the shore, and it is in Darwin's evolution theory that this slime reveals its power.

It may truly be said that with all differences of opinion this evolution theory is the "formula of unity," which at present unites all priests of modern science in their secularized temple. A few dreamers may utter complaints against this, but they are aged manikins, who, as described by Hartman, "feel themselves incapable of a second education, but whose numbers have so long been diminishing that they are powerless to stop the victor's march of the new truth." This evolution theory has become the fashion-system, not merely with the Darwins and Haeckels, the Spencers and the Nägelis, but equally so with our theologians, with our psychologists and moralists. Even an adherent of Lotze, my learned colleague Dr. De la Saussaye, of the city university, wrote only recently: "Nowhere is a definite frontier between the domains of nature and of spirit clearly demonstrable, nor may an unmixed expression be predicated of either sphere."

But we are most concerned about the favor with which this critical theory gains among our jurists (the divinely appointed

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

watchers of the boundary of the "Mount"), as is shown by the example of the late Ihering. We are second to none in warm admiration of his talents; but it may not be concealed that Ihering was an evolutionist. Being himself no natural philosopher, he withholds an opinion on Darwinism, but definitely declares "that the result which he has reached in his studies of law establishes it most firmly in my profession." The "sense of right has grown with him to be eternal, since everything which comes into being is devoted to destruction." And this eternal process is continued of necessity by evolution, which evolution begins in the brute creation; for, writes he, "By the same necessity under which, according to Darwin's theory, one species develops itself from another does the one end of justice find its origin in another," and then adds, in an altogether pantheistic sense, "Right knows as little of a break as nature; that which goes before must first exist, before that which is higher, of course by evolution, can follow after."

He does not deny, therefore, the existence of God. In his preface he even derives the "purpose" which explains to him everything from a conscious God. But with him, as with all evolutionary theists, this is none other to him than an *x* for this, to him, unknown greatness, of whose authority he rids himself in every concrete case. According to Ihering, the sense of right is not innate, but only "begotten in us" by the evolution of right. Christian ethics, which still holds to eternal principles, he condemns because of this clinging to the absolute; and when rightly he protests against the separation which snatches right from its moral basis, and traces for himself the origin of moral life, he represents this moral life as produced by the "purpose," which is again the process of endless generation. When the question is put, "Who is the subject of this purpose, who ordains it and renders it real?" then theism is again abandoned, and he affirms that "God is not the final purpose of morality; the end and purpose of ethics is society." Whether or not God is still spoken of in the Gnostic sense as "a final end of morality," with this interpretation the Christian ground is entirely deserted. The fulfillment of man's being is looked for in "self becoming one's own end," and whatever has the insolence to attack him in the holy temple of that ideal is treated with contempt. Faith is put in Michael Kohlhaas, who, in Von Kleist's

novel, draws the sword against society. And when we are taught, "Rather suffer wrong," and Christ exclaims in his Sermon on the Mount, "If any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also," Ihering rejects this as apathy, which betrays how blunt and weak the sense of right has grown; and he provokes strife among the citizens by exhorting them never to suffer anything in private life to go unpunished. Hence, if his theory triumphs, not merely our Christian, but even Herbert's system, which in a more Christian way makes right to be born from the æsthetic thirst after peace, must pass under the juridical ban. For then it will not be, "Blessed are the peace makers," but "Blessed every one who as a fighting-cock flies in a passion for his right." And when an heros like Ihering teaches this, what may be looked for at the hands of lesser gods?

To show to what extent the influence of this pantheistic tendency and of the evolution theory which has become its *Credo* has effaced, one by one, all formerly recognized boundaries, must we thread our way across the entire domain of cosmic phenomena and the still broader field of sciences? This is not necessary. Here also "the lion may be known by its claws." And it is quite sufficient for the question in hand that the chief boundary lines which have become blurred be noted, and that as theologians we halt a little longer at the boundary removal on theologic grounds. Now, the blurring of boundaries begins of necessity in our senses and ideas. Real boundaries, such as exist, for instance, between man and woman, are not to be wiped out. It is as true of philosophy as of the English Parliament that "it can do everything except making a man a woman." And though a brilliant scholar, whose oratory has more than once delighted us, once stontly prophesied that, like the diabolic love of unmatre, so also the divinely innate love between man and woman shall extinguish its torch, we venture to deny that among our own contemporaries, or yet among the younger generation, we have ever discovered the slightest decrease of this natural love. No, the boundaries which, independent of our thought, exist in real life, are immovable. Water is never reconcilable with fire. Hence an erasure of boundaries can be spoken of only in our representation, in our senses and ideas; and of these ideas Thilo complains none too strongly that "Finally, all concepts lose themselves in each other amid

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

the one great tangle of the absolute Ego." This was not done all at once. The very majesty of logic, with its unchangeable laws of thought, stood in the way of this amalgamation; hence, violence had to be done to the logical boundaries first, before the other boundaries could successfully be blurred. Thus the unhappy process began. Hegel clearly saw that his identity system would not do for common logic, and therefore did not shrink from attacking logic itself by cutting the sinews of the *principium exclusi tertii medii*. Thus only did he clear the course for his cavalcade of identical ideas. And then he let them file before his thinking spirit two by two and arm in arm—the something with the nothing, the here with the yonder, the finite with the infinite, the ideal with the real, the being with the thinking, the object with the subject, the different with the nondifferent, liberty with necessity, the imaginary light with the imaginary darkness.

And of course he did not stop short with abstractions. His object and that of all his followers was the application to life of the identity idea. Then it became a serious matter. For the boundary between God and the world also fell away, which boundary, according to the formula of old Hellas, may possibly refer to a distinction in thought, but never to a distinction in time or in essence. According to Dr. Mayer's formula, God was "reduced to a world-power," and, worse still, his conscious life dissolved in our human life. In this wise the boundary between God and man was taken away, with the preponderance on the human side. The boundary between man and man must needs follow. We rise as ocean waves and disappear among its waters. We bud as leaves on the tree, that in withering we may give place to the new leaf in spring, which interprets Homer's line, "The wind pours the leaves to the ground," essentially, and not chronologically.

The spiritual boundaries came next. Between our physical and psychical life also every boundary had to fall away. Truth was given in marriage to error. Hirner even boasted of the "Heroism of the Lie." Good and evil, also, and sin and holiness, were to reconcile their hatred. What is good? "Each one is only what he can be." Nero and Jesus are merely different manifestations of one and the same divine impulsive power. The ancient Parsees were no fools when, next to Ormuzd, they

rendered divine homage to Ahriman and his Dévs, because, forsooth, what we call Satan is but another name for the Holy One of Israel. And, when we find in society much that is noble and much that we dislike, the old figure of Böhme declares that in our own organism likewise there is much that is noble in the brain and much in the entrails to rouse our dislike, but that without the entrails these brains could not exist.

In this wise the blurring of boundaries is restlessly continued, not merely in the identification of force and matter, but practically by identifying power and right; by dissolving responsibility into a pitiable atavism; by confusing property and theft, by weakening the antithesis between the authorities and the subject, making both divisors of the one idea of State. In this State, which provides for every want, as Rothe wills it, the Church of Christ also must disappear. The love for native land must give way to cosmopolitan preference. No difference is countenanced between city and village—only communities are known; and no difference is longer tolerated among classes of society, in modes of living or national dress. Uniformity is the curse which our modern life willfully feeds upon. In music Beethoven was the first to grasp this pantheistic tendency of our age, and to voice it for thousands upon thousands of hearts by his C minor and Ninth Symphonies; and after him Wagner has willfully broken down the boundary between the worlds of sound and of thought. Certain stylists incline more and more to confuse the inkpot with the pallet. Yes, there has been formed a circle which would be glad to have the boundary removed between language and language, and which would think the world idealized if it were peopled with fourteen hundred millions, who, from the North to the South Pole, spake none other than one holy Volapük.

But enough. We made no mention of the theory which makes man descend from the chimpanzee, simply because this theme—pardon the term—is too threadbare. Only it is worthy of note that the *N. R. Courant* recently announced that in our zoological garden the orang-outang was not dead but *deceased*; also that the vocabulary of the monkey language now numbers four words, clearly understood by means of a phonograph, which disarms Max Müller, who still thinks language the boundary line drawn between man and animal. But we need say no

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

more on this. For all this theory really asserts is that everything is allied, and whether a stone drops, or rain clatters, or the lark flaps his wings and sings his morning song, or man thinks, composes poetry, and kneels in prayer, it is all one life-utterance, altogether an excitement of feeling and a spontaneous life-utterance of the unknown absolute Spirit.

But the religious interests briefly claim our attention, for with these entered the strongest motive for boundary removals. Our Christian religion drew a new and very deep boundary line between the profane and the sacred, which was rejected by the secularizing spirit almost with insults and sneers. There was no longer room for theology as a science; her metaphysic was identical with philosophy, and, for the rest, was lost in literary, historical, and ethnological studies. The boundary between God and idols fell of itself away, since animism and fetishism were classed with our Christian religion under one head. In this organic connection the origin, essence, and idea of religion could be known from religious phenomena, and in this way arose the newborn "science of religion," which more and more supplants theology. The knowledge of the object of religion is no more cared for, but merely the knowledge of the sensations, representations, and utterances to which religious feeling moves the subject. With this every leading difference in religion fell away, and every boundary between heresy and doctrine; and that which moved the spirits in the world estranged from Christ, was bound, as some affirm, to work its effect in the Church also with utmost pliancy. And then—O, why not otherwise?—the "Vermittelungs-theologen," so attractive in other ways, have in Schleiermacher's track sought salvation in their ethical, theosophical, and apocalyptic diversification—in that unhappy *Vermittelung* by which in advance the opponent gained the day. We do not say this because we do not appreciate their labors, so brilliant in many respects, or because we do not understand the goodness of their intention, and much less from a desire to offend any of them personally, but because their position was simply untenable. They were *pot de terre*, and proposed a walk with *pot de fer*; and they did not win the spirit of the times for Christ, but the spirit of the times estranged them more and more from confessing Christianity.

Schleiermacher was pantheist and subjectivist. He brought religious pantheism with him from the circles of the Moravians and found philosophic pantheism in Germany's universities of his day. This was at once manifested in his proposition that God is not thinkable without the world, which proposition was defended among us, as Professor Bavinck correctly showed, by the late Professor De la Saussaye, of Groningen; and every invention by the Martensens, the Rothes, the Keerls, and the Hoffmans, in Germany, to remove the ancient landmarks from the domain of the Christian religion, has been echoed from our pulpits ever since and reprinted by our press. By the conversion of truth into ethics the boundary fell which separates moral life from the life of thought, and presently dogmatics had to surrender its birth-right to the "description of moral life." A "Union Church" without confessional discipline became the ideal also among us. To be equally stern with the Calvinist and sympathetic with the rationalist became indicative of a higher life; and by degrees there stole in all manner of strange doctrine. Christ would have come in the world even had sin never entered, for Christ was the natural ideal toward which the progress of the human race was directed. In Christ the Son of God was not incarnate, but human nature had reached in him a higher, divine-human character. As a human being Jesus could not have been mere man, and in this way was renewed the legend of the Androgyne. Soul and body were no longer two, but lost in the mingling of the *Geistleibliche*. The mystery of the Trinity was applauded, but recast as by charm in the sense of the newer philosophy. The atonement consisted not in the dying of the Lamb of God for our sin, but in the appearance upon the tree of our race of its ideal branch. The Holy Scriptures are no longer the product of a positive revelation, but the fruit of Israel's organic development, under higher influences, in connection, therefore, with whatever was imparted to other nations. Justification by faith became lost nearly altogether in the nursing process of a heavenly holiness. Even the absolute boundary between this and the coming life was taken away. Conversion may occur after death; and there have been theologians among these who preached the continuance, on the other side of the grave, of a sacramental Church,

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

destined yonder to complete the holiness process which here remains unfinished.

That which stares us in the face in all these parts is the effect of what Schleiermacher spun, and of what Schelling, more dangerously, embroidered with the glittering thread of gold. It is the recasting of forms, the wiping out of lines, and fitting out the Christian essence in a modern philosophic garb. And by doing this truth was lost, not merely that objective truth which stands graven in the tables of our confession, but that inward truth by which this confession meets with the response of "Amen" from our heart. It all became a confusion of tongues, one chaos of floating mists. And then Schelling completed in these men what Kant had begun with his "*statutarische Religion*," by inspiring them, as Scholtin expressed it, with the art of proclaiming "new and strange ideas in ecclesiastical terms as the decisions of ancient orthodoxy." And let us grant that they jumped after the drowning man in the philosophic stream to save him; but the tragic fate overtook them of being dragged down to the deep by him whom they tried to save.

We do not idealize Ritschl, but after all the chaotic would-be theology there is relief in the clearness of his thought. Of him it is known, at least, that he has broken with the old metaphysics. But with Ritschl we wander still further off. No single boundary in religion is left unweakened or unwarped to mark the ancient track. Piety is still demanded, but it must be altogether gratuitous, spontaneous, such as in the end is also thought to be found in animals. Some scholars claim to have discovered in our house-dogs real traces of religion, as first beginnings of "piety," which idea is so grotesque that involuntarily it raises the question whether it is likewise agreed to class them with polytheists or monotheists. For an answer to which (since, with Islam excepted, monogamy prefers to be classed with monotheism) some clown may point us to the analogy of their lower love; for the evolution from polygamy to monogamy has not been attained by our poodles and our dogs.

ART. VII. — PANTHEISM'S DESTRUCTION OF BOUNDARIES. — PART II.

As far as the scope of this article allows us we think we have shown conclusively that the pantheistic tendency of our age and the evolution doctrine, which is its legitimate daughter, have in large measure effaced the boundaries and are bent upon their entire destruction. Facing now the question, What dangers threaten us by this destruction of boundaries? we consider first the lesson which history teaches. For under like influences a state of society has been developed upon a broad scale for centuries together on the banks of the Ganges, and in part, also, in the Celestial Kingdom; and afterward both gnosticism and mysticism have inspired smaller circles with the same spirit. This is to us a beacon at sea, for a wreck is a fair image of what these states and circles show. In India's beautiful domain lives one of the most richly endowed races, profound in spirit, mighty in numbers, in the midst of tropical wealth—a people which in everything competes with our Western nations and may even exceed us. And yet that people is asleep, has long ceased to make history; and, almost without effort, Islam first, then the Mongols, and lastly England have conquered this royal people. However energetically a Keshub Chunder Sen lately organized his propaganda in a most masterly way to arouse his people from their deathly slumbers, he utterly failed. And the human ideal of the *Yogi* Hindoo still consists of a benighted hermit immovably staring into the sun, his loins girded with a serpent's skin, his naked breast covered by coarse hair, wild shrubs growing up about him, and a songless bird building its somber nest upon his holy shoulders.

And what has become of Lao-Tse's beautiful fancies in China? Mr. Balfour, who learned to know Taoism by personal observation, complains in his South Place Institute lecture that Taoism has lapsed into "a low and despicable superstition, into a religion in its worst and lowest sense, a hoens-poen and an imposition." And when in the province of Kiang-si he called on the *Chang-F'ien Shih*, or high priest of this sect, his holiness showed him in his beautiful palace to a room filled with earthen jars, carefully corked and sealed, in which by his magic power

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries

he had confined hundreds of evil spirits. The self-degradation and cruel immorality of the Valentiniens and Ophites among the Gnostics needs no new demonstration. The moral destruction which this self-same mystical pantheism wrought among the Beghards and their consorts, and in our country among the Antinomians, is well known from history. It all ended in the "rehabilitation" of the flesh, as Hundeshagen calls it. The common system is, "*quod Deus formaliter est, omne id quod est.*" Thus the boundary between good and evil falls away. "The will of God determines our disposition, and should a man commit even a thousand deadly sins by the force of such predisposition he need not even wish that he had not committed them." The lesson of history is sufficiently alarming. Feuerbach once wrote: "The eternal, supersensual death is God;" and, indeed, everything seems here to pass away in national and moral death. Of course this needs delineation, in broad outline, at least, which we will do in the order of our personal, ecclesiastical, and political life.

A thoughtful student who had suffered himself to drift with the tempting current of this stream prefaces his translation of one of Herbart's works with these significant words: "I allowed myself to drift with it because it promised my soul peace and rest. And what has it brought me? A feeling of powerlessness and of heaviness. Then I turned to Herbart and regained that buoyancy of spirit which was fast failing me." We understand this well; for when the boundary between God and the world falls away, and in the Holy Trinity we can no longer worship, the fullness of the richest personal life, the mainspring of our own personal existence, is broken. He who deals with God as his holy Friend deepens the traits of his own nature; and Herbart expresses it beautifully: "No longer to feel the need of this Friend were devotion to such loneliness as only egoism creates in the midst of society, making the dwelling of man a wilderness." No strong character can be formed when the etcher, who should deeply mark the lines in the metal, has his graver taken from him by the dreamer, who dissolves every line. Character demands strength of conviction coupled with firmness of will, a deep sense of a calling in life, bound up with faith of success in this calling; and these factors of our personality refuse to do service when the stability of lines in our con-

ception of life vanishes away and when there is no more faith in any known truth, nor in law, which governs the will, nor in God, who calls us to a lifework and who makes everything subservient to its accomplishment. Underneath your feet the fountains rise higher, and from above the rain pours down to soak the roadbed, which was once well graveled and firm, and turn it into mud, where walking becomes stumbling and sliding. Hence the complaint, which was never more general than in our days, about the dearth of character, of impressive personality, and of men of iron will. In sooth, we need be no "admirers of the past" to stand aggrieved at the dullness of the faces about us, at their weakness of expression and want of manly power, in comparison with those portrayed on Rembrandt's canvases.

No, we do not look down with self-conceit upon agnosticism; and when we hear Tyndall reverently say, "Standing before this power which from the universe forces itself upon me, I dare not do other than speak poetically of a Him, a Spirit, or even a Cause; its mystery overshadows me, but it remains a mystery," then this agnostic reverence touches us more deeply than the Kantian refrain of God, virtue, and immortality. But forget not that the clearness of our human consciousness is here at stake; the clearness of our thinking becomes dimmed. In England science is defined as the statistics of what is measured, weighed, and numbered. "*Bene docet qui distinguit*" ("He teaches well who distinguishes well") is the rule of discipline from which our thinking, if it is to be sound, may not escape; but here the rule is made to read, "*Bene docet qui omnia bene permiscet*" ("He teaches well who mixes all things well"). And, as mentioned above, Hegel had to invent a new logic for this amalgamating process of thought. Before this cloudy manner of thinking the strength of conviction recedes. Everything clothes itself with the garb of modesty, which in reality is naught but hesitation and uncertainty, until in the end the thirst for knowledge turns its "love glance" upon the not-knowing, and Du Bois Reymond proclaims his "*ignorabimus*," which is followed by the agnostic axiom of Spencer. In this way it is not merely philosophy that languishes and the horizon of science itself which becomes narrow, but in practical life skepticism takes possession again of the human heart and draws the clouds ever thicker across the clearness of our vision, until

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

in the end that spark of holy enthusiasm is extinguished which can glow only in higher latitudes beneath the azure sky.

Sport is excellent, and we felt flattered when recently our batters and bowlers returned from England laden with honors; but it would cause us greater joy if we discovered among our youth enthusiasm for the honor of our history, for patriotism, and for a holy conviction in things lovely, pure, and beautiful. But alas! here, too, the erasure of boundaries stands offensively in our way, especially in the spheres of morality. The word "sin" became too pungent; "holy" was replaced by "brave," "brave" by "decent," and "decent" by "neat," a word descriptive of dress, not of personality. And how can it be otherwise, when the noblest thinkers of our age have reduced good and evil to a difference of degree; when the law for moral life is allowed to be fixed autonomously by the subject himself, by which every moral idea is robbed of its absolute character; when the æsthetic is exalted at the cost of the ethic, and the doctrine is proclaimed from our housetops that the sensual life also must demand satisfaction for its claims? Is the boundary between truth and falsehood still fixed? Is it still known what honor is? What is right if it be not the right of the stronger? Who distinguishes between theft and property? Where, above all, is the boundary which distinguishes guilt from fate, imputability from irresistible inclination? Has not Buckle statistically shown how each year there must take place so many divorce suits, so many accidents, so many murders with the dagger, so many others with the pistol, and so many, again, by strangulation? It is all the one process, which, restlessly turning the wheel of life, hurries it on from that which is real to the ideal. Why, then, be surprised that excise duties of a less honorable sort are ever enlarged; that the dissolute woman presses her claims with ever-increasing shamelessness; and that our sturdy Dutch integrity, which was once proverbial in the market of the world, buries itself in its legends?

Israel once sang, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications." Our age raves with altruism, because its heart is too faint for real egoism. And when the *noumena* withdraw themselves in the far distance and, at a still greater distance, disappear behind the ever-changing phenomena, and a *pontifex* is no longer near to bridge this

Methodist Review.

distance, nor a Curtius to fill this abyss with himself, then a poetry is still spoken of which with its thousand forms will brood upon this infinite void. But they forget that all poetry, to find its symbols, must start from the antithesis which exists between the spiritual and the natural. And therefore look at those who now occupy the seats upon Parnassus, where Vondel once shone, and Bilderdijk won his laurels, and where Da Costa lost himself in worship. Against this mystic poetry Herbart wrote: "The concept of God as the Father of men should be retained in its strength. A purely theoretical concept is worthless; an idea is bare of comfort." However, we do not satirize our age; God has infinitely enriched it, and in many respects it far exceeds the age that went before it. There are many worthy people now, many lovable people, who do not wear the purple, but who constantly remind us of it; but we miss the powerful figures, the great men, the stars of first magnitude. How have the stars, like those in Leyden, been extinguished one after another! Who is Caprivi compared with Von Bismarck? When Gladstone dies who will succeed him? Alas! the dynamic weakening can no longer be denied. *Epigonoi* have taken the places of heroes, and at their feet crowd the multitudes weary of life, whose satiety betrays itself in the dullness of their eyes. See how listlessness stares us in the face; how suicide attracts; how the number of our insane is ever on the increase. And when we think how this century began with placing man on a pedestal, higher than ever before, and how in closing it leaves him behind so weary of life, then does not this century seem like the soap bubble which glittered in the light as the boy blew it out on the air, but which, as he blew too hard, condensed into one unrightly drop?

Europe has twice known such periods of spiritual atrophy, once under Roman rule, and again at the close of the Middle Ages; and both times the Church of Christ caught the paralytic by the hand and lifted him up so that he walked and life once more coursed freely through his veins. Hence the question arises, Will the Church of Christ be able to do this again? And is there no cause for increasing anxiety when, by this blurring and eventual destruction of boundaries, we see the Church of Christ inwardly ebbing away her life and outwardly reduced to an ever-narrower ecclesiasticism? If there is one

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

who protests against the idea of evolution it is He who came down from the Father of lights in order to reveal himself as God in the flesh. Christ is *the* miracle. It is Bethlehem that opens a branch in the line of human genealogy. "Immanuel's resurrection" breaks through the order of nature. And when the Church of Christ starts out upon her mission in the world her deeply marked characteristic is not to be of the world. Hence the Church of Christ stands *ipso facto* opposed to the unity dream of the pantheistic process, and denies that salvation can ever come by evolution to a world lost in sin. This is her character and her nature. Abandonment of this antithesis is the sacrifice of her character. She must hold up this dualism in the face of the unregenerated world. And as soon as the boundary is blurred which separates her from the natural life she ceases to be the Church of Christ. This, of course, is the very thing opposed by the pantheistic tendency of our age, and no less sharply by the principle of evolution. Pantheism cannot triumph unless the stumbling block of the cross be taken out of the way; the evolution theory cannot exist if that notion of Golgotha be not removed. Hence the assertion by a German philosopher, that "where culture breaks through there can be no more Church." Hence Hegel's statement that the State, as "the divine will in the present," must make the Church subservient to its end, until finally she be dissolved in the State. Hence Rothe, who was himself a theologian, threw away his honor and committed treason to the Church, by prophesying her rapid declension and disappearance in the State; and from this, no less, comes the cool determination of the leading jurists in Germany to forge the shackles by which to chain the Church. By a circle of almost thirty professors of law, among whom Ihering was one, the doctrine has been published that the Protestant Church "is a purely worldly organization," and, stronger still, "that, rightly considered in the sense of modern ecclesiastical law, the Church is only a part of the world." This shows whither this erasure of boundaries leads us; and we are no longer surprised at the boldness of Professor Lorn in writing that the Church of Christ is nothing more than a *Religions-Verein*, and that the present relation between State and Church "rests on the principle of the sovereignty of the State, to which even the Church

is subjected." This would not signify anything if the watchers at the boundaries were found at their post, or, at least, in the camp of the Church. But it is well known that the opposite is true. They who rise up for its defense are put outside the boundary line. Every boundary of confession is wiped out by the public proclamation of liberty of doctrine. The Church must be as like a worldly society as one drop of water is like another. Even though Christ be denied by all the people it must still be named the people's Church. He who believes in no Father in heaven may proclaim unto the people his philosophy as Gospel. And, when hope is fostered that "believing" theologians will rebel against such repulsive contradictions, the *Ver-mittelungs-theologen* of every predilection may be seen willfully wiping out the confessional boundary and adding ever more freely their philosophic wine to the pure juice of life, as if bent upon the entire destruction of that deeply marked boundary line of our Christian mysteries which separates God's holy revelation from our darkened reason.

No resistance, therefore, can be looked for from this quarter against what Hermann calls "the spiritual disturbance" of our age. As long as a spiritual *tohu va bohu* remains the lauded ideal among these leaders no invincible principles of morality; no deeply inculcated convictions of soul, nor any fixed, general ideas can come to our people from their ecclesiastical guides. But the restoration of a fixed point of departure, of a religious and moral "place where to stand," in view also of the social storms foretold by our political meteorologists, is the only saving means by which a footing may be regained by our generation. Recover the faith in a last judgment, and as long as we hold this faith we may calmly witness the constant violation of right in the earth, which is practiced not merely by public offenders, but by legislative bodies and by judges. For our sense of right is secure in that of God, which he himself shall one day avenge. Proceed, however, upon the half-truth of the pantheist, that "the world's history is the world's judgment," and we must secularize our sense of right; that is, we may recognize no longer any law except that which amid constant changes the authorities create and maintain. And by this fluctuating notion of right (since the *jus constitutum* is never at rest) we destroy the majesty of law in the minds of those who live under it.

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

This has been accomplished. Von Stahl confines absolute right within the boundaries of our human economy, and does not see how it has its primordial rise in religion, and how all ethical right is rooted in this religious right of God over his creature. All this is the result of Kant's partially correct endeavor to interpret right as the shield of liberty, or of Fichte's effort to assign its rise to the struggle between the double ego. With Hegel, therefore, it is put down as a morality of a lower order. According to Ihering it is born from an "end-impulse of society." In Darwin fashion it is reconstructed by others as the mechanical product of historic and external factors; while the later Herbartians perceive it as the cruse of oil which the seaman pours upon the seething waves for the salvation of ship and crew. But, endless as these representations of the origin of right may be, the idea is common to them all that it is only by the State, as the instrument of society, that absolute right receives its sanction. It is too bad that, with the exception of Von Stahl, none of these men hold to the immutability of State authority. The scepter of authority is swayed now by one party and again by another—Napoleon is superseded by Bourbon, Bourbon overcome by Orleans; and in this wise is formed the series of those who make themselves master in turn of authority in the State, because for a while they are the stronger. He therefore rules the State who actually gets the power in hand; and in this stronger one who establishes right and law, the right of the stronger triumphs, not merely *de facto*, but likewise in theory. And by this the boundary falls away which separates the authorities, as the powers ordained of God, from the people, who, by the same God, are appointed to be subject unto them. Both are dissolved in the one all-sufficient State. The State takes the place of God. The State becomes the highest power, and the fountain head also of right. The higher powers exist no longer for the sake of sin; but a State is the highest ideal of human society—a State, before whose apotheosis every knee must bow, by whose grace alone we live, and to whose word all must be subject. And when in this wise the boundaries are destroyed between the authorities and the people, between the authorities and Him whose servant they are, and consequently between right as a divine ordinance and right as a magisterial command, nothing remains but the one single State, making

Methodist Review.

provision for everything, in which all human energy seeks its ideal development.

A great danger lurks in this; for, however eloquently the boundary has been reasoned away between the authorities who rule and the people who must obey, that duality does exist, a duality from which of necessity is born a twofold strife, the strife of the State evermore to increase its power over the people, and the strife on the part of the people to make themselves masters over the State. Absolutism from one side and anarchy from the other stare us in the face; and the question has already been raised whether constitutional public law has not served its time, and whether the parliamentary system has not outlived its usefulness. The next step is to found upon the ruins of our civil liberty the government of Schleiermacher's *virtuosos*, that is, of those who are learned and genial—a repetition of our old regent's-misery, clothed this time in the scientific garb.

But against this, of course, the people rebel. The boundaries have been destroyed; why then longer render homage to him who is high and declare those who are low politically under age? Are not rich and poor an antithesis, which, since all boundaries have been effaced, offensively disturbs your much-lauded harmony? Why render obedience, when authority finds no more support in the conscience and right is no longer founded upon eternal principles? Power has its rise in the State, and we are the people; we, the millions, constitute the State; hence ours is the power, the power also to recreate the right, and we will enact that right in such a form as shall satisfy all our senses. And what can you do, ye mighty ones of earth, ye that extol in song the State-apotheosis, how oppose this wild cry of nihilism? By the conscience? But that you have disjointed. By the moral senses? But these you have set afloat. By the fear of the final judgment? At this you scoff yourselves. By the majesty of law? This you have violated. By the influence of the Church? This you have destroyed. No, nothing, nothing remains to you but your power. Upon actual, positive power your entire building has been raised. And with your power you may still offer resistance for a long time, for your forces are stronger than ever (and fearful havoc they may create); but woe unto you when in the end this poison begins to work among your armies and as a cancer feeds upon their vitals. For

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

then you are undone. Then these people, armed by you, before the sun has set upon that day of vengeance shall with a single stroke dispel your enchanting power, and, while crushing you to the earth, proclaim it loud and far that boundaries are no more, that all has become evolution, and that they but inaugurate a movement which could not fail in your pantheistic process!

Max Müller once sketched the *nirvana* of the *yoga* in the picture of a lamp which was being extinguished. Toward such a social *nirvana* we shall see the nations of Europe move, unless something be done to stop the weakening of boundaries. When, in the human body, the boundary is disturbed between the tissue of the veins and the flesh of the muscles, then, with an *ἀνάγκη* (necessity) which is irresistible, there follows the decomposition of the corpse.

France was not saved twenty years ago by the injudicious supply of arms to the mob, nor by Gambetta's wild hue and cry that not an inch of ground nor a stone of the stronghold should be surrendered. No escape was possible through the iron network with which Von Moltke had invested France, and in the old imperial town of Frankfort the Gaul capitulated. But this did not finish France; for when, at length, it wisely took copy from Prussia's example after the battle at Jena, and forcibly restrained its chauvinism and exerted its utmost efforts in home discipline and recovery of strength, it soon appeared possessed of so much energy of national life that Germany's emperor already feels uneasy and has called out ninety thousand more men per annum for the better protection of his frontiers. Is there no lesson in this for us, when, having shown the erasure of boundaries and the dangers which it threatens, we face the final question, What resistance may we offer?

In sooth, the present condition of believing Christianity is very like that of France after Sedan and Gravelotte. The assault made upon us has not been successfully beaten off in any single point. Stronghold after stronghold has been abandoned. Treason has been committed, time after time, within our own ranks. Intoxicated with transports of joy, the enemy prophesies the near dawn of the day of our entire defeat. And he is quite correct. With shame we must acknowledge the cowardliness and lamentable want of tact which have characterized our Christian conduct during these last hundred years in

this strife against unbelief. And if any one thing is able to strengthen our faith that One greater than we has battled for our people it is the surprising fact that, in spite of such ill-directed resistance, our strength has not waned, but has grown intensely stronger.

We have nothing to say of the doctrinaire. God be praised ! the last echoes have died away of the hollow phrases whereby stupid self-sufficiency deemed itself able to vanquish a Strauss, to disarm a Darwin, and to drive a Kuenen out of the fight. These were the scoffing bulletins of the princeling who gathered bullets at Wissembourg, the boastful call of men utterly ignorant of the enemy, both in his earnestness and in the strength of his weapons. And, as it always happens with the boastful pride of cowards, of the ten who protested then so loudly perhaps eight now appear among the leaders in infidelity. No, when we consider what resistance has been offered we refer not to that ineffectual skirmishing, but rather to the earnest three-fold effort put forth to save the threatened position, whereby men gathered under the banner of the apologist, the compromiser, or the amphibian.

Apologetics have first been tried. As often as the outworks were attacked the defenders of Christian truth hastened to the breach to answer each shot from the enemy with a ball from their own cannon. Wherever the enemy showed himself they crept after him in trenches. Though often repulsed with bleeding heads they still held firm, and, with a sturdy patience which compels respect, lance crossed lance, dagger sharpened dagger, and blow followed blow. But, in spite of this defense, they gained nothing ; for on the heels of one host of objections, which were upheld for a moment at the most, another army of still heavier critical grievances loomed up at once. Meanwhile they permitted the enemy to prescribe the plan of campaign, fell in consequence into hopeless confusion, and in the end were cut off from their own basis of operation. The lamentable course of that apologetic resistance is well known. A rustic militia measured itself against a Prussian guard. And hence the endless series of concessions, till at length the bravest hero lost the fire of his eye and all courage from his weary heart in the grief of disappointment.

No wonder, therefore, that, in view of this sad spectacle, our

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

Vermittelungs-theologen felt themselves more attracted by the role of the *Mittelsmann*, as our German neighbors say. All too trustfully our apologists had entered the unequal strife; these with deeper vision, gentler feeling, and riper philosophy correctly saw how unproductive such clumsy striving must be, and, therefore, peace-loving as they were by nature, they rather employed a spiritual polity. So they entered the field preceded by the white flag of truce, and, as the enemy drew near, ordered the trumpeter to blow a *pax vobiscum*, and readily assured the men of modern views of their warm sympathy with their modernity and of their deep dislike for the old school; yes, that they would like nothing better than the honor of marching with these moderns, if only the name of Christ could be embroidered on the banner and the cross ornament the top of their standard. And the success of their polity was naturally brilliant. "Modern-orthodox," a genuine pantheistic compound, was the adopted name of the new auxiliary. And we behold the heroes who were to rescue our faith do service as sappers, charged with the clearing away of "orthodox obstacles."

However (whether under the influence of De Genestet who shall say?), the compromise method soon ceased to enchant; and then, at length, we beheld how men gathered under the shield of the amphibian. Jacobi had been a heretic in his intellect, but a believer at heart. If, then, this dualism in feeling of Jacobi were supported by the philosophic monism of Herbart and by the *Erkenntnisstheorie* of Lotze, how safe the position would be, how easy would be their movements, and how freely would they hunt with criticism to their very hearts' content, and still engage in prayer with the pious wife! That was it. Head and heart, the intellect and the will, must be divorced; *Werth-urtheil* was the magic motto which would save from every dilemma. And thus arose that generation of spiritual amphibians who plunged so playfully into the depths of the modern waters, and again would nimbly scale the river-bank to graze in the sweet clover of the hallowed Christian pasture. But there was no defense in this. A dualism of principles gives no system. And, moreover, our Christianity is a revealed, historic religion, which at every point of the way inexorably faces us with ideas which demand analysis and with facts which must find room in our cosmos.

Methodist Review.

However highly, therefore, we appreciate the intention of these three classes of defenders, and however much we owe to their study of detail, we cannot be incorporate with them—not with the apologetes, because no plea can avail when reason is both defendant and judge; not with the *Mittelsmänner*, because they exhaust their strength in a monstrous marriage, and “hybrids do not propagate;” and not with our spiritual dualists, because logic and ethics have but one consciousness at their command, and all such spiritual divorcees must end in hypertrophy of the head coupled with atrophy of the heart.

An altogether different and much safer method was employed wherever resistance proved effectual. God calls Abraham out of Ur, separates Israel from the nations, and thus, in real life, casts up a dam against the flood of paganism. Christ comes and forms in Israel a following of his own, which, by separation from the world, is being trained to vanquish the spirit of the world. In the sixteenth century similar resistance was offered by men who withdrew their forces within self-created bounds to regain strength, in order, by life's reality and deeds, and not by theories and phrases, to strengthen themselves for the strife which awaited them. In the self-same manner Von Stein rallied Prussia after Jena and France has restored her strength. And, as regards our struggle, they who adhere to the Christian faith and appreciate the danger of the destruction of boundaries must begin by drawing a circle about themselves within which to develop a life of their own, of which life, thus constituted, they must give account, and so to increase strength for the strife which is upon us.

This is the only method which, as often as correctly applied, has stood the test of fire, which Rome never abandoned, and which is the only rational one again to pursue. How have pantheism and evolution risen to be so powerful? Certainly not because of Kant or Hegel, Darwin or Haeckel, for no single man can transform the spirit of his time if he be not himself a child of his time. No, the general mood of mind, the temper of soul, the inclination of heart, all of life down to its deepest impulses, had risen up in rebellion at the close of the last century against the boundaries appointed by God; pantheism was in the air; and Hegel and Darwin, as children of their age, only hastened the birth of the monstrosity, which our age had long carried

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

under its heart. There is no need, therefore, to exhaust our strength in a conflict of words. So powerful a movement of life can be faced with hope of success only by the movement of an antithetic life. In opposition to those who efface the boundaries both in life and consciousness a life must be developed with deeply marked character lines; the floating fogs of pantheism must be confronted with the clear and positive utterances of a truly embraced confession; and in like manner the exaltation of the world's *dictum* must be opposed by the absolute authority of the Scriptures. Thus an independent basis of operation will be regained and a reality will originate which already as such exercises an influence upon our inspiration. Thus only will a fortified line present itself at the front which will render it possible to postpone a giving of battle until quietly and definitely the forces are developed, the weapons sharpened, and the ranks well exercised. Thus also is revived that holy comradeship, that confidence in one's own cause, and that enthusiasm for the colors of the banner which double the strength of every army.

That this system demands great sacrifice is not denied. It compels an entire break with much that is attractive. It cuts off all intercourse with the nobler heathen, however fascinating that may be. A great price must be paid for it; and, worse yet, it will cause the resolute man all manner of family inconvenience, and will render it difficult to find a position in life for the support of oneself and family. But with the Scriptures in hand we declare that this sacrifice must be laid on the altar. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Christ came not to bring peace in a pantheistic sense, but to make discord among men, that is, to establish a boundary which none can remove between those who touch the hem of his garment and those who reject him. And therefore this system must not be accused of exclusivism. Of this they are guilty who on their own responsibility establish a false boundary that separates things which belong together. But this reproach will never touch the system we commend, for at the very point where the boundary is drawn by our deepest conviction of life the pigeonhole system lies condemned, and broken down is every false wall of separation. This system has as little in common with the recluse who shuns the light of the outside world.

Methodist Review.

Living in a house of one's own by no means forbids a going abroad in every pathway of life. And, as we said above, behind our line we desire to arm ourselves more completely that we may be the better ready for the strife.

Of one claim, we grant, we can make no surrender; it must be born within us—that we believe. Even as we are stabbed by those who announce themselves as the enlightened and the civilized and label us as the “nonthinking part of the nation,” so they must suffer us to wound them as often as we distinguish ourselves as “believers” from the “nonbelieving part of the nation.” But this is the very thing in question. It is the protection of that boundary for which we stake our very life. They deny the fall by sin; for us it stands firm and fixed. And therefore they cannot recognize a boundary which is established by the entrance of grace, while for us this transition is one from death unto life.

We are taught by the word of God that sin not merely spoiled the will and corrupted our nature, but that it also darkened the understanding. On the contrary, the palingenesis not merely renews the will and transforms our nature, but also sheds a light of its own into our inner consciousness. He who believes receives not merely another impression of life, but is also differently affected in the world of thought, which difference cannot be better interpreted than by Augustine's celebrated *interrogatorium*. Augustine had himself been a pantheist at first, and had not been able to conceive God otherwise than as hiding in the *ἕλη*. But when, led by the Spirit of God, he turned away from the *Jesus patibilis* of the Manichæans and fixed his gaze upon the Man of sorrows, then, with the self-same ears with which he had heard the sound of the particles of light in leaf and stem, he now heard this entirely different speech of the creation. Then, as he writes in his *Confessions*,

I asked the earth, and it answered, “I am not He;” and whatsoever are therein made the same confession. I asked the sea and the deeps and the creeping things that lived, and they replied, “We are not thy God; seek higher than we.” I asked the breezy air, and the universal air with its inhabitants answered, “Anaximenes was deceived; we are not thy God.” I asked the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars; “Neither,” said they, “are we the God whom thou seekest.” And I answered unto all things which stand about the door of my flesh, “Ye have told me concerning my God

Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries.

that ye are not he; tell me something about him." And with a loud voice they exclaimed, "It is He who hath made us!"

In the grandeur of the faith Augustine was now another man, and therefore he heard differently and thought differently. Then also he heard the voice of God addressing him in the Scriptures; and our circle holds this in common with Monica's great son. We also bow ourselves before that Word; and therefore that Word also draws the boundary line between us who camp behind our line and those who live beyond it. We are often told that we cannot hold this opinion in sincerity; the pious housewife may, but not the man of science. And he who throws away his respect exclaims, "Ye are deceivers!" Of course, they who are not stupid must agree with such wisdom or else have their integrity suspected. We are familiar with such ways. But this much must be granted: faith in the Scriptures can never be the result of criticism, for then no one could ever have believed, as criticism is not yet a finished science. Moreover, how could the Scriptures ever excite faith among the humble laity who understand nothing of criticism? If then it is very true that in the Scriptures there arise many difficulties and objections which have by no means been straightened out, this does not delay us, this does not trouble us, since we stand on other ground. In 1794 it was Kant himself who denounced "*die Keckheit der Kraftgenies*," which deemed itself to have outgrown this norm of faith, and added these weighty words:

If ever the Scriptures which we now have should lose their authority, a similar authority could never more arise, for a miracle like that of the Scripture authority cannot repeat itself, simply because the loss of the faith in the Scriptures which was maintained for so many centuries would render faith impossible in any new authority.

And the deep significance of these words was felt by us years ago when first we read them. In the Scriptures we have a cedar of spiritual authority which for eighteen centuries has been putting forth its roots in the life-soil of our human consciousness; and beneath its shadow the religious and moral life of humanity have increased inconceivably in worth and merit. Now hew this cedar down, and for a little while green leaves will still appear upon its downcast trunk; but who will give another cedar for the children of our people? who guar-

antee a shade like unto this? This is why we have bowed before these Scriptures with the unaffected simplicity of the little child, in simple faith, and not as a result of learning; for this we have zealously defended these Scriptures, and now rejoice in our soul as we render thanks unto God for seeing a new increase of faith in these Holy Scriptures. You know we are not conservative, but this is our conservatism: we seek to save the foliage of this cedar for our people, lest shortly they should be without a covering in a barren, scorching desert. As our Saviour believed in Moses and the prophets, so we desire to believe in the Scriptures. For he who in this matter of the Scriptures accuses Christ of error attacks thereby the mystery itself upon which is founded the whole Church of Christ, denying that he should be our Lord and also our God.

"Isolation is your strength." This is the golden motto Groen van Prinsteren bequeathed to the *issus de Culcin*. What we have said is plea for this significant device. And is anyone afraid lest, under this motto and by this system, poetry be sacrificed to pantheism and the unity of the cosmos to evolution? Then listen how from the tents of the saints throughout the earth there arises one voice, which gathers everything that lives, and breathes, and thinks, and does not think into an entirely different unity, namely, the unity of praise; as the ancient player on the harp sings of a God who "has established an order for his creatures which they cannot transgress," so that, with the sound of cymbals, all, all may sing in unison:

Praise Him, ye heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens;
Praise the Lord, ye earth, ye dragons and all deeps.
Praise him, ye mountains and all hills, ye beasts and all cattle,
Ye fruitful trees and all cedars, ye kings of the earth and all people,
Both young men and maidens, ye old men and children;
Let all praise the name of the Lord.
For he hath exalted the horn of his people,
The praise of all his saints, a people near unto him.

A. Kuyper

