

do that, because of your acknowledged ignorance, be still. We know God, and we will set Him forth to the people." If they turn upon the Christian teachers and say, "That is your self-conceit; we are humble; we proclaim that if there be a God, He is unknowable." Is that their humility? It is the arrogant assertion that they comprehend the whole circle of the possible-to-be-known, and declare that God is not anywhere. It is the very modest assertion that what they do not know cannot be known by any other; that what the deaf cannot hear is not sound, and what the blind cannot see is not color. To the child learning the third column of the multiplication table the calculus is unknowable; but we know that there are those to whom it is not unknowable. The Athenians had not the obstinate self-conceit of some moderns, and simply said, "There is a God: to us He is unknown." What Paul said in the circle of Athenian philosophers, a Christian teacher may say to the pantheists, materialists, agnostics, and the unlettered masses: "What ye worship in your ignorance, this set I forth unto you."

Taking the admission of the pantheists and the agnostics, accepting the implication of what the Athenian Herbert Spencer had graven on stone altars, assuming what is quite plain, that one cannot be agnostic and atheistic at the same time, because to assert that a being is unknowable is to imply its existence, since it *must be* to be unknowable, the apostle confronts the errors of his hearers by proclaiming the truths of the Gospel. This is a most valuable example to all thinkers who are disposed to communicate their thoughts. It is unwise, if not wicked, to attempt to take from a man any faith, however defective and erroneous, until we are prepared to substitute a faith that is sound and true. A missionary must let the lowest African keep his fetich until he can give that savage a God who can be reasonably worshiped. What is the use of cutting off the top-growth of an error if its root be left to sprout? What better way to exclude

poisonous growth than pre-occupying the ground with seed and roots, and shoots of truth?

It seems difficult to see how the apostle could have presented a briefer or more compact refutation of what was wrong in their theories and practices. He cuts at once to the core of their fallacies. "God." "The God." There are not "Gods," and polytheism is based upon a falsehood. There is a God. Atheism is the vacuum which humanity abhors. THE GOD is a person. He has conscious existence, a designing intellect, a deciding will, and spontaneous activity. He is creator. He made "the all," and therefore He cannot be "the all," since it is inconceivable that anything should be the creator of itself. The theory of pantheistic stoics perishes before the conception of a *personal* creator, and the theory of the materialistic epicureans perishes before the conception of a personality existing before all matter, and the conception of the production of the material by the immaterial. God is the producer of each thing, and not the product of anything or of all things. He was before they were. He can be without them; they cannot exist one moment without Him.

With what rapidity the apostle enlarges their horizon! He does not argue. He asserts, authoritatively, as every Christian teacher must. The assertion of the personality of THE ONE God gives him ground of appeal to their reason and conscience, which are always to be addressed by a Christian teacher. Looking above him, the apostle saw the temple-crowned Acropolis. Beautiful for situation, the joy of architecture, how small a thing was that sanctuary as a house for Him who had made all the marble in all the quarries of the earth, and all the wit in all the brains of men, and all the heavens above the earth. And how small a thing that stone Athena Polias, the goddess, compared with Him who made and who fills the earth and the heavens. He pressed this upon his hearers. Looking below him, how many an altar-place must have caught his eye. Per-