

- Is. xlv.**     Scriptures reveal must be accepted as He is, even though He says,  
**6, 7.**        *I form the light and create darkness.*

**Scientific  
 Mate-  
 rialism.**

**SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM.**

If what has been said is true, then Materialism makes matter its god. There must be absolute existence: matter is eternal, self-sufficient, infinite, necessary, and the only being. Scientific Materialism, strictly so called, is based upon two principles which it sometimes postulates, though unreasonably, and sometimes seeks to prove, but unsuccessfully. One of them is negative, that there is nothing but matter in existence; and the other is positive, that matter in its combinations and modes of existence is an adequate cause of all phenomena. It may be objected that this is inverting the order of materialistic argument, which first proves that nothing but the laws of matter are needed to give a reason for all that exists, and then by the principle of the "sufficient reason" renounces all other existence. Yielding to this objection, though denying its truth, let us glance at the principles of the positive argument, and then at the negative conclusion: abstaining, however, from scientific controversy, which is generally not within our compass.

**Correla-  
 tion of  
 Physical  
 and  
 Spiritual  
 Forces.**

1. We need only mention two necessary demonstrations at which Materialism aims, in which, however, it signally fails: the correlation of physical and vital forces, and the correlation of these with mental, and what we call spiritual forces. Here are the stumbling-blocks of Materialism, over which it has hitherto fallen, and must for ever fall. Until these are established this system has no claim to be considered as based on inductive science. For simplification, we may drop the last link, that of the mental forces; and then the question becomes this: Is life one mode of the motion of that force which is supposed to be one, persistent and indestructible in the universe of material atoms? Scientific Materialism has at length, though not without diffidence and many haltings, come to the conclusion that it is so. Taking the material sun for its god—for every theory, like every man, must have a god—it finds in it the original force, potential everywhere and kinetic everywhere, of every movement in the sum of human things. Of the power

beyond that made the sun what it is—the god behind the god—it has nothing to say. Now, so long as this law is limited to physical changes, it may be accepted: it has to fight its own battle. But when it carries the law into the sphere of life, it not only denies the truth of Scripture, but ceases to have even that measure of probability which the theory of the interchangeableness of physical forces has. For a considerable time the argument from analogy was relied on. It was thought unphilosophic to stop short, after having discovered the one secret up to the limits of vital force: at any rate, the temptation was very strong to include the forces of life and thought under the one law. But the phenomena rebelled. It has been found utterly impossible to carry it into this other region. Life and thought have never submitted to measurement and quantification. Dead matter has never been changed into living. It is idle to speak of the correlation of physical and living or mental force, until the latter can be measured by the same standard as the former. The entrance of life into the sphere of matter is the annihilation of Materialism. It cannot explain that secret whereby something in the individual appropriates dead matter, suitable to its own type of existence. Materialists themselves acknowledge that this secret is hid from them; and vainly disguise their impotence by adopting such terms as “directive agency,” or “architectonic principle,” or “formative impulse.” Whence comes this principle of eternal difference between dead and living matter? Though denying it in words, Materialism touches, nevertheless, in reality the interaction of another set of forces besides those which reign in physics. This it will be driven finally to acknowledge. Materialists have done service by fixing attention upon the deep truth that there is a correlation between these forces; a most mysterious and wonderful interaction between the phenomena of physical and spiritual life. Well for them if they would learn, on their side, to distinguish things that differ.

2. Meanwhile, the system is chargeable with the utmost possible outrage upon the rational convictions of mankind. It is essentially atheistic in its tendency, if all who espouse these principles are not Atheists. There is a large number of those who bind up with matter and molecular action all kinds of life and thought

**Atheistic  
Tendency**

while they admit the possibility of an inscrutable force behind or above all this ; but they either deny the possibility of knowing anything about this unknown power, or they absolutely limit it to a force which has no operation save through matter. It may be safely affirmed that those who adopt the leading principles of Materialism either are or soon become Atheists. And, renouncing God, everything that confers dignity on man or worthiness on life is gone. The system denies the existence of anything beyond matter : it takes away from man his spirit, his immortality, his all. It ought to deny him the consciousness of personal identity ; its principles lead that way ; for if man is only material, and the particles of his physical self are every moment changing, and undergo a total change in the course of a few years, what can be the substratum of his identity ? It dares not take that away ; but it takes away all that makes it important. Materialism is the most irrational error that ever misled the human mind ; and to the holder of it, if to any, applies the Apostle's apostrophe, *ἄφρον !* Yet we have now to see this made into a philosophy.

1 Cor. xv.  
36.

### Positivism

### POSITIVISM.

Positivism has been dignified by the name of a philosophy. Its founder, Auguste Comte, was a legacy of the eighteenth century to the nineteenth, and of French Encyclopædism and St. Simonianism to modern science. The result of his labours is a philosophy of the physical sciences which is almost entirely limited to induction, renouncing all thought of the causes of things, tracing simply the sequences of nature, and so ascertaining its laws, with a professed rejection of everything that is merely speculative or probable, and stern limitation of knowledge to what can be demonstrated beyond doubt, and is therefore Positive. To construct such a philosophy certain fundamental principles were adopted, which, however, are far from being positively determined : such as that nothing exists of which our senses do not assure us ; that there is nothing existent but matter ; that all phenomena are subject to invariable laws which it is the business of science to register, and only to register ; that these laws are simply relations of succession and resemblance ; that in the cerebral phenomena of