

tively to refuse that a God may be—but he insists that He has not discovered Himself, whether by the utterance of His voice in audible revelation or by the impress of His hand upon visible nature. His verdict on the doctrine of a God is only that it is not proven. It is not that it is disproven. He is but an Atheist. He is not an Antitheist.

6. Now there is one consideration, which affords the inquirer a singularly clear and commanding position, at the outset of this great question. It is this. We cannot, without a glaring contravention to all the principles of the experimental philosophy, recede to a further distance from the doctrine of a God, than to the position of simple atheism. We do not need to take our departure from any point further back than this, in the region of antitheism; for that region cannot possibly be entered by us but by an act of tremendous presumption, which it were premature to denounce as impious, but which we have the authority of all modern science for denouncing as unphilosophical. We can figure a rigidly Baconian mind, of a cast so slow and cautious and hesitating, as to demand more of proof ere it gave its conviction to the doctrine that there was absolutely and certainly a God. But, in virtue of these very attributes, would it, if a sincere and consistent mind, be at least equally slow in giving its conviction to the doctrine that there was absolutely and certainly not a God. Such a mind would be in a state neither for assertion nor for denial upon this subject. It would settle in ignorance or unbelief which is quite another thing from disbelief. The