HEGELIANISM AND PERSONALITY

Balfour Philosophical Lectures,
University of Edinburgh.

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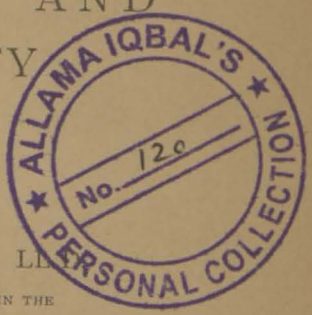

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SECOND SERIES OF BALFOUR LECTURES

SECOND EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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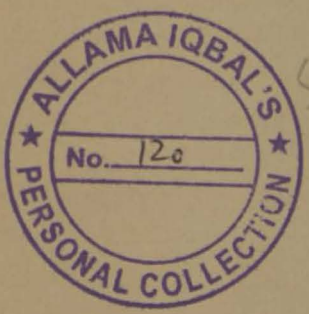

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

I HAVE taken the opportunity afforded by the call for a second edition to read through the Lectures carefully, making such modifications as seemed required in view of the criticism to which they have been subjected. The changes are slight and mainly verbal, but here and there I have cut out an unguarded phrase; and a few notes have been added at points where criticism has been specially active. If I have not satisfied my critics, I may, at least, have made my meaning plainer to those whose philosophic creed is not yet fixed. The sale of the Lectures encourages me to hope that the volume has proved helpful to many in this position, and the criticism it has en-

countered must be regarded as a wholesome stirring of the philosophic waters.

Two points of a more general nature may be briefly referred to. My insistence on Reality has been taken in some quarters as an attempt to rehabilitate the unknowable thing-in-itself. This I cannot help feeling somewhat hard measure after the pains taken in the Lectures on "Scottish Philosophy," and elsewhere, to demolish that philosophic superstition. My contention in the present volume is simply that knowledge is, in the nature of the case, a symbol or representation of reality, and that, however inseparably related, knowing and being can never be identified. Knowledge would not be knowledge but for the reference to reality which it contains.

The other point is the charge which has been brought against the book of being misleading, because "while condemning what is bad" in Hegel it does not "separate out and defend what is good." There is, no doubt, a certain amount of truth in this; but it is the fate of most criticism to emphasise the points of

difference, and to take for granted the ground occupied in common. These Lectures were ostensibly a criticism of Hegelianism as an absolute system, and as I had on several previous occasions assumed the rôle of sympathetic expositor, there seemed the less reason for covering the old ground again. I do not think, however, that any one reading even the present volume attentively can fail to find in it the most ample acknowledgment of Hegel's philosophic services, and a high appreciation of the aim and spirit of his philosophy. The criticism may even be said to be directed in great measure not against Hegel, but against the logical tendencies or implications of his thought.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1892.

PREFATORY NOTE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE following Lectures, forming the second series of Balfour Philosophical Lectures, were delivered in the University of Edinburgh at the close of last winter session. They take up the questions which were suggested by the concluding lecture of the previous course on Scottish Philosophy; but they will be found to depend for intelligibility on nothing beyond themselves. In preparing for publication, I have adhered to the lecture form; but in what now stands as the third and fourth lectures, I have found it desirable to alter the arrangement of topics which was adopted in delivery. I have also endeavoured, by occasional changes and additions, and by the help of Appendices

and fuller references, to bring into relief the chief points on which my criticism turns, and at the same time, by more careful definition, to avoid the possibility of misconception.

St Andrews, *October* 1887.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

KANT AND NEO-KANTIANISM.

LECTURE II.

FICHTE.

LECTURE III.

THE RELATION OF HEGEL'S LOGIC TO EXPERIENCE.

LECTURE IV.

LOGIC AS METAPHYSIC : THOUGHT AND REALITY.

LECTURE V.

HEGEL'S DOCTRINE OF GOD AND MAN.

LECTURE VI.

HEGELIANISM AS AN ABSOLUTE SYSTEM.

CONCLUSION.

HEGELIANISM AND PERSONALITY.

LECTURE I.

KANT AND NEO-KANTIANISM.

IN beginning a second course of these Lectures, I may be permitted to refer very shortly to the argument of the former course, with the view of indicating a certain continuity of thought between the two. The first course was devoted to a comparison and contrast of Scottish and German philosophy; and, amid much unlikeness, there still seemed to be justification for pointing to certain broad lines of similarity. These lines of similarity were determined by the opposition of both to a common foe—namely, to Empiricism, as that appeared historically in the sensational atomism of Hume,

which still remains, and must continue to remain, the classical form of that theory. Certain contentions of Reid were instanced which, if construed liberally, might fairly be compared with positions taken up by Kant against the Humian Empiricism. After the exhibition of these points of unanimity, certain other aspects of the Kantian theory were examined, which have made it, in my opinion, as fruitful of harm in one direction as it has been of good in another. I mean Kant's view of the subjectivity of the categories and forms of thought, and his doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, based as that is upon the notion of the thing-in-itself. In the last lecture, there was little opportunity for more than general considerations as to the possibility of philosophy as a completed system of the universe; but in the last paragraph I pointed out several important questions to which the answer of Hegelianism (which was taken as the type of such a system) seems, on the surface at all events, vague, if not unsatisfactory. These questions centred in the question of the nature of the individual, and it is here that we have to resume the subject.

There will be nothing further said in these

lectures of Scottish Philosophy. The object of this second course will be critically to test the Idealism reared upon Kant's foundations by his successors in Germany, and now represented in this country by a number of writers often classed together as Neo-Kantians or English Hegelians. Neither of these terms, perhaps, is unobjectionable, for the English followers of Hegel do not profess to bind themselves to any of the details, or even to many of the characteristic doctrines, of the master; while, if we use the former term, we must bear in mind that the doctrine of the English Neo-Kantians is to the full as different from Kant as that of the Neo-Platonists from Plato. But it is useless to quarrel over a name whose denotation, at all events, is sufficiently understood. It is enough for our present purpose if we know who are the thinkers referred to, and what are their characteristic doctrines. I need only name, therefore, the late Professor Green of Oxford as the most eminent of the writers referred to, and one to whose utterances, more especially since his lamented death, a certain authority has been accorded, as to those of a leader and accredited exponent of this mode of thought.

Now the most superficial acquaintance with Green's writings is enough to tell us that his whole system centres in the assertion of a Self or Spiritual Principle as necessary to the existence alike of knowledge and morality. The presence of this principle of connection and unity to the particulars of sense alone renders possible a cosmos or intelligible world, and is likewise the sole explanation of ethics as a system of precepts. The impressive assertion of this one position constitutes Green's continually repeated criticism upon Locke and Hume, and upon current English Empiricism. It may almost be said to constitute his entire system. As regards the critical part of Green's work, there has been of late, I think, a growing admission of its victorious and, indeed, conclusive character. But as regards the nature of the Self or Spiritual Principle which is, in his hands, the instrument of victory, the candid reader of Green is forced to admit that almost everything is left vague. It was only in the Prolegomena to Ethics,' in fact, that any definite indication was given that the principle was to be interpreted as a universal or divine Self, somehow present and active in each individual. And even there this conception is

little more than hinted at, and the possibility of such a relation between the divine and the human, as well as the evidence for the identification of the two selves, is nowhere explained. What is meant in such a relation by the divine Self, and what by the human self? Here Green seems to fail us. The Self which he uses with such effect as a weapon of critical warfare is nowhere precisely defined by him, so as to be capable of employment constructively as a metaphysical reality.

The ambiguity which thus clings to Green's central conception is incident, I propose to show, to the source from which he derived it. That source, as is well known, was the Kantian philosophy read in the light of the Hegelian system. Green's view of the Self — which means his view of the universe — cannot be properly understood or fairly judged without some insight into the genesis and growth of this conception in the thought of Kant and his successors. Instead, therefore, of confining myself to a criticism of Green's statements, I propose to trace the development of his central doctrine. The manner in which what we may call broadly the Hegelian conception was reached, will be itself, to a certain extent,

the best criticism of the system which we are asked to accept. For, while leaving much of Hegel on one side, Green and the English Hegelians reproduce his fundamental position in their own doctrine of the Self. Consequently, should examination detect any radical flaw in the doctrine of German idealism in reference to the self and God, the same criticism will be found to apply to the English idealism of to-day in the same reference. It may also be said in favour of this method of procedure, that the constructive efforts of English idealism consist as yet more of hints and references to the German writers than of independently elaborated statements. In carrying out this programme, however, it will be desirable, as far as possible, to avoid entangling ourselves in the historical paraphernalia of successive systems. I will rather endeavour to disengage leading principles, dwelling with this view chiefly upon the final form of German idealism in Hegel's system, and treating of Kant and Fichte only so far as they either lead up to Hegel's positions, or illustrate them effectively by contrast.

The remainder of this first lecture will accordingly deal with those features of the Kantian

theory which have an immediate bearing on the later Idealism, and will criticise the position taken up by Green, so far as that directly depends upon a manipulation of Kantian doctrines. The second will be devoted to Fichte, because the step taken by Fichte in transforming Kant's theory of knowledge into a metaphysic of the universe is all-important in the present connection; and, moreover, the progress of Fichte's thought through its different stages appears to me to throw an instructive light upon some positions afterwards taken up by Hegel. The three following lectures will criticise somewhat closely the leading determinations of the Hegelian system. This criticism will be found to turn mainly on Hegel's treatment of existent reality, or, what turns out to be the same thing, of the individual. The question is as wide as existence, and concerns the individual being wherever found; as such it will be first discussed. But it will not be amiss to examine still more in detail the implications of this Idealism in regard to the divine existence, the human person, and the questions which are of most intimate concern to us as men. If these implications are unsatisfactory or inadmissible, it will then be

comparatively easy to determine how far the English version of the theory is open to the same objections, and how far these invalidate its claim to be an intelligible and consistent metaphysical system.

The Kantian theory supplies, at the very least, a conclusive refutation of the sensational atomism into which Empiricism had at last resolved itself in Hume. Or, as it was formerly put,[1] Hume's own system is the self-refutation of the fallacy of the abstract particular. If we start with such isolated particulars, all synthesis or connection must of necessity be illusory. Even the illusion of connection is, however, demonstrably impossible, unless through the suppressed presence of certain principles of real synthesis. As a matter of fact, we nowhere do start with the mere particular, the isolated atom of sense; on the contrary, such perception is altogether impossible to the mind. We cannot look at anything "in itself"; everything is indissolubly connected with other things, and its very existence involves this reference—or rather multitudinous references—beyond itself. In place of amplifying this point here, I may

[1] Scottish Philosophy, p. 66.

be allowed to refer to what was said in the second lecture of the previous course on "The Philosophical Scepticism of David Hume."

Kant's system, then, contains the demonstration that from sense as sense knowledge can never by any possibility arise. And this demonstration is not merely negative; it has also its positive side, inasmuch as Kant exhibits to us some of the chief principles of synthesis or rational connectedness which are essentially involved in knowledge. All events, Hume had said, are "entirely loose and separate," and knowledge, he had contended, is resolvable into such events. But this is so far from being true, that an event, if it be known, is knowable at all only by reference to the background of the past against which it stands out, as it were, in relief. Impressions or sensations must, at least, be known as successive; or, in other words, time is a universal form of synthesis, weaving them together in spite of their qualitative differences, and thus rendering an isolated particularity impossible. The notion of substance — that is to say, of permanence and change — and the closely allied notion of causality, are involved in the perception of succession from the first, for they are simply

transcripts of the essential nature of an existence in time.

But existence merely in time, Kant goes on to argue, is impossible to realise. Time implies as its correlate Space. The very notions or categories which have just been described as transcripts of the essential nature of time carry with them this reference to space. Consciousness of time can arise only through the perception of change, and change implies the perception of a permanent which is changed —a background, as it was expressed above, against which the fleeting moments of time, as filled out by subjective feeling, may be apprehended as appearing and vanishing. Space, or rather space with its filling of matter—existence in space—furnishes the perception which serves as this necessary background. Change is perceivable and dates are possible, just because the world exists as a permanent object in space.

Now whether or not the absolute necessity of space to time be accepted as thus expressed, the correlation and mutual reference of the two in our experience is not open to doubt. Space is a basal element of our knowledge as ineradicable as time, and as incapable of deriva-

tion from units of sense as such. Kant's categories of quantity, relation, and modality may be regarded simply as an analysis of the nature of space and time. They are the principles of connection and coherence in a world laid out in these two elements; they constitute, in short, the abstract or intellectual expression of what is perceptively present in space and time.[1] Kant's proof may be accepted, then, so far as it asserts that these forms, and with them these categories or principles of mutual relation and explanation, are necessarily involved in our experience of the known world, and that without them no knowledge would be possible at all. Accordingly, a sensationalism which begins by denying the presence of these principles must be impotent to evolve them, though the appearance of success may sometimes be obtained by the covert assumption of the very principles in question.

Going further, however, or rather retracing our footsteps and bringing to light the fundamental but hitherto unobserved assumption,

[1] The categories of quality refer to what has been called the material element in experience—to the actuality or reality of existence, without reference to the nature of that existence as temporal or spatial.

we reach the central position of Kantian and subsequent idealism—the necessity of a permanent subject of knowledge. A knowledge of sequent states is only possible when each is accompanied by the "I think" of an identical apperception. Or, as it has been otherwise expressed, there is all the difference in the world between succession and consciousness of succession, between change and consciousness of change. Mere change or mere succession, if such a thing were possible, would be, as Kant points out, first A, then B, then C, each filling out existence for the time being and constituting its sum, then vanishing tracelessly to give place to its successor—to a successor which yet would not be a successor, seeing that no record of its predecessor would remain. The change, the succession, the series can only be known to a consciousness or subject which is not identical with any one member of the series, but is present equally to every member, and identical with itself throughout. Connection or relatedness of any sort—even Hume's association—is possible only through the presence of such a unity to each term of the relation. Hence, while it is quite true, as Hume said, that when we enter into what we call ourselves, we cannot

point to any particular perception of Self, as we can point to particular perceptions of heat or cold, love or hatred, it is as undoubted that the very condition of all these particular perceptions, given along with each of them and essential to the connecting of one with another, is precisely the Self or Subject which Hume could not find—which he could not find because he looked for it not in its proper character, as the subject or correlate of all perceptions or objects, but as itself, in some fashion, a perception or object added to the other contents of consciousness.

All knowledge or experience, then, presupposes a Self. The Self thus unearthed Kant terms "the highest principle of all exercise of the understanding," and he names it, somewhat cumbrously, the synthetic unity of apperception or the transcendental unity of self-consciousness. The adjectives indicate its nature and function. The unity is synthetic, because it binds together, as related members of one whole, what would otherwise fall apart as unrelated particulars; and moreover, it is only through this synthesis that the unity of the Self or Ego exists. It is the unity *of* the synthesis, and apart from its synthetic activity would no more be real than

the particulars of sense would be real without its action. A unity is impossible without a manifold of which it is the unity; or, in other words, the Self can be conscious of its own identity, that is, can be conscious of itself—can be a Self—only through the elements which it unites. You cannot have thoughts without a thinker, but it is equally true that you cannot have a thinker without thoughts. Any attempt to separate the two sides is a departure from reality, and the substantiation of an abstraction. In short, the ultimate fact of knowledge is neither pure subject nor pure object, neither a mere sensation nor a mere Ego, but an Ego or Subject conscious of sensations. It is not a mere unity, but a unity in duality. This duality belongs to the very essence of self-consciousness, and cannot be banished by any philosophy which is faithful to facts.

The term transcendental, applied to the unity of apperception, has a similar implication. It does not mean, as is sometimes supposed, that the Ego is an entity beyond experience; it means, on the contrary, that the "identical self" is deduced or proved solely with reference to experience, as a necessary condition of knowledge. Out of that reference it has no meaning, and

consequently no assertions can be made about it. The term also serves to keep before us the contrast repeatedly emphasised by Kant between the Self in question and the empirical Ego. The empirical self is the matter of the internal sense in its form of time; in other words, it is the succession of mental states—the thoughts, feelings, and actions—upon which a man may look back as constituting the record of his experience, his life. The empirical self is thus an object among other objects; it is part of the process of experience. As Kant says, it is the object treated by empirical psychology, which he describes as a kind of physiology of the internal sense. It is with reference to the empirical ego that man is said to have the power of making himself his own object. When we do so—when we turn our attention inwards, as the saying is—it is this empirical consciousness which lies spread out before us, not, of course, the whole history, but the mingling feelings and desires, the thoughts, intentions, and resolves which fill out our present consciousness, and which are themselves in their dominant moods and directions the outcome of the mental actions and circumstances that went before them. This consciousness of certain

present experiences upon a background of dominant modes of thought and courses of action constitutes the present existence of the empirical self. In the language of recent psychology, the empirical self is a complex presentation to consciousness; it is "continuously, but at no one moment completely, presented."[1] From such a presentation or object, the transcendental self or the unity of apperception is carefully distinguished by Kant. Without going back upon ground already traversed, it is sufficient to remember that the empirical self is serial; and a series, if it is to be known as such, implies a consciousness present to each of its members, and self-identical throughout their change. To the transcendental Ego alone belong such predicates as "static," "permanent," "unchangeable," "identical."[2]

The term transcendental is also applied by Kant in a wider but precisely similar sense to characterise his whole method of philosophic proof. The transcendental proof, as he is never weary of telling us, is the proof by reference to

[1] Ward, article "Psychology" in the ninth edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.'

[2] Stehend, bleibend, unwandelbar, identisch.

the possibility of experience. It is the analysis of experience or, as we may say here, of knowledge, with a view to discover its indispensable constitutive elements. Taking the fact of knowledge as it finds it, it does not inquire how that fact was realised or came into being; but, *moving always within the fact*, it asks what are the conditions of its being what it is, what, in other words, are its essential elements. As Mr Shadworth Hodgson says, it is an analysis of the *nature* of knowledge, not of its *genesis*. The transcendental method is a proof, consequently, which can never overstep experience, which can never be justified in detaching the conditions of knowledge from the synthesis in which it finds them. Neither the particulars of sense, on the one hand, nor the universal of the Ego, on the other, can be so detached. If the isolation of the former gave rise to the fallacy which was traced to its culmination in Hume — the fallacy of the abstract particular—the isolation of the latter involves the no less dangerous fallacy of the abstract or empty universal. Particulars exist only as a manifold referred through the categorised forms of time and space to the unity of the subject; and the subject exists only as

the unity of the manifold whose central principle of connection it is. In a word, the procedure of a transcendental philosophy which would be consistent with itself must be immanent throughout.

But if this is so, then it is evident that many of Kant's own statements will require revision. It is manifestly inadmissible, for example, to speak of the categories and the forms of space and time as belonging especially to the subject, and as imposed by it upon an alien matter. As soon as we so speak, we have deserted the immanent point of view; we have hypostatised the Ego apart from the synthesis in which alone it exists, and by way of concealing the nakedness of our abstraction have clothed it with certain forms of thought. So conceived, these forms are no better than innate ideas of the crudest type, lodged somehow in the individual mind. Kant's whole distinction between matter and form, which treats the former as the contribution of the object and the latter as specially due to the subject, is quite untenable, it has been pointed out, on transcendental principles. What, indeed, could offend more flagrantly against these principles than such an attempt to transcend the bounds of possible experience

and to treat subject and object as two causally related entities, outside of knowledge, which by their interaction give rise to knowledge? This subject-in-itself and object-in-itself, each contributing its share to the composite whole of knowledge, are the very chimeras which Criticism and the transcendental method went out to slay. There is certainly interaction between the human organism and its environment; and the human subject, when his organism is affected, is able to refer that affection to an external object. But this whole process takes place *within* the world of knowledge, or in Kantian language within the realm of phenomena. It is a phenomenal object—the organism —which is affected, and it is another phenomenal object — say, the sun — to which the affection is referred. There is no reference whatever, it is argued, to a noumenal background, in which the causes of knowledge existed before knowledge was; and the metaphor of impression, while intelligible in the physiological sphere indicated, is entirely out of place, and, in truth, unmeaning, when applied to the subject of knowledge. Subject and object are terms, in short, that have a meaning only within the world of knowledge; they are

not to be taken as two transcendent things-in-themselves. And as soon as we cease to regard them as such, and cease to treat experience as the result of their interaction, all ground for Kant's view of the subjectivity and relativity of our knowledge disappears. Knowledge is like a seamless garment which cannot be divided and have its parts assigned in this fashion. There is one intelligible world, all the elements of which are mutually complementary and equally necessary. We cannot have form without matter, or matter without form; but the two are not *brought* together. The form is the form *of* the matter, and the matter is, as it were, simply the exhibition of the form. This necessity of correlation may be treated without injustice as the fundamental feature of the transcendental method. And if now we ask what is to be said of the self, we may most correctly reply that "so far is it from being a figure of speech that the self exists only through the world and the world through the self, that we might say with equal truth the self *is* the world and the world is the self. The self and the world are only two sides of the same reality; they are the same intelligible world looked at from two opposite points

of view."[1] It is, of course, only from the point of view of the self or subject that this identity can be grasped, but this does not confer upon the self a separate existence. The transcen-

[1] Essays in Philosophical Criticism, p. 38. The first essay of this volume, on "Philosophy as Criticism of Categories," is in the main an attempt to expound the view here indicated, though, as I now think, without sufficient recognition of its necessary limitations. These limitations arise from the fact, emphasised in what follows, that the analysis deals with the constituent elements of knowledge as knowledge, not with the metaphysical elements of the real world which it is the function of knowledge to know. The foregoing account of transcendentalism made consistent is not intended, therefore, as a statement of my own position, any more than it professes to be a rendering of the Kantian theory as conceived by Kant himself. It is obvious that while Kant investigates the *logical* presuppositions of knowledge or experience (finding them in the transcendental unity, the categories and the forms of space and time as applied to a sensuous matter), this knowledge is always for him the knowledge by a real being of a world of real beings; and therefore it has its *real* presuppositions in the existence of the noumenal self and of what he calls things-in-themselves. I agree with Kant (and apparently differ from many Neo-Hegelians) in holding that these real presuppositions are necessary, but I do not follow Kant in holding them to be unknowable. It must be admitted, however, (1) that the subject cannot be presented in experience as an object, and (2) that the being of a real thing, even if fully known by me, must remain distinct from my knowledge of it. I may know its essence, but I cannot experience its existence; its life can be lived by itself alone. These were in all probability the chief considerations which led Kant to his unfortunate doctrine of the unknowable thing-in-itself.

dental self, as the implicate of all experience, is, for a theory of knowledge, simply the necessary point of view from which the universe can be unified, that is, from which it becomes a universe. For the rest, the mind and the world, subject and object, are convertible terms; we may talk indifferently of the one or of the other: the content of our notion remains the same in both cases.

Such, it seems to me, is the legitimate outcome of the transcendental method, when it is consistently applied, and when the results are stated in their most exact and unadorned form. If I am not mistaken, Mr Shadworth Hodgson's Philosophy of Reflection is, as regards the author's main contention, the most clear-sighted and thoroughgoing application of the Kantian method; and the doctrine of subjective and objective "aspects" there developed seems to coincide with the result reached above. Mr Hodgson maintains most jealously the immanent nature of the inquiry, and consequently refuses (rightly as it seems to me) to attribute causal activity to the Subject which the inquiry yields. To do so would be, in his language, to relapse into the Dogmatic or causal-entity view from which it is the special function

of the Critical theory of knowledge to set us free. He recognises at the same time the limitations of the inquiry, and does not put forward the theory of knowledge as a ready-made ontology; he does not claim, on the strength of it, to possess an absolute theory of the universe. In this he differs markedly from Neo-Kantians like Green. Green also claims to follow out the transcendental method to its legitimate issue, and to make Kant consistent with himself; but in so doing he avowedly transforms Kant's theory of knowledge into a metaphysic of existence, an absolute philosophy.

This transformation forms the core of the Neo-Kantian position, and it raises afresh the question of the nature of the transcendental self—a question not sufficiently answered even by all that has been already said. What is the transcendental self which plays so great a part in this analysis? Kant calls it on occasion the "pure" or "primitive" Ego, and speaks of it as "the highest principle of the exercise of the understanding." It lies at the basis of the categories, he tells us, and forms "the ground of their possibility"; it is "the vehicle of all conceptions whatever."[1] "The

[1] Werke, iii. 274 (ed. Hartenstein, 1868), Meiklejohn, 237.

static and permanent Ego," he says in one place, "constitutes the correlate of all my ideas";[1] "all objects which can occupy me are determinations of my identical self,"[2] and hence the transcendental Ego may be spoken of, with strict propriety, as "the correlate of all existence."[3] Expressions such as these, coupled with the sharp distinction drawn between the transcendental and the empirical self, perhaps first suggested to Kant's successors their metaphysical transformation of his conception. This self which seems to have no predicates of mortality about it — which seems to be the presupposition of all else, while itself presuppositionless—has been taken by later thinkers, and markedly by the English Neo-Kantians, as a universal or absolute self-consciousness, or in plainer terms as the one eternal divine Subject to which the universe is relative. This identification, though it may not be found in Kant himself, is dictated, they contend, by the consistent tenor of the whole system. In so far, therefore,

[1] Werke, iii. 581 (from the version of the Deduction of the Categories in the first edition).

[2] Ibid., iii. 585.

[3] Ibid., iii. 617 (from the Paralogism of Pure Reason in the first edition).

as they present this doctrine as the direct outcome of the Kantian System, the soundness of their philosophical conclusion may fitly be considered here, without unduly anticipating the argument of the following lectures.

Green, then, explicitly identifies the self which the theory of knowledge reveals—the "single active self-conscious principle, by whatever name it may be called,"[1] — with the universal or divine self-consciousness. He calls it himself most frequently a "spiritual principle." It is "the eternally complete consciousness" which, according to his view, makes the animal organism of man a vehicle for the reproduction of itself. Numberless references to this eternal self might be quoted from the 'Prolegomena to Ethics,' with only verbal variations in statement. It is the *punctum stans*, to which all order in time is relative. Its constant presence to the relations which constitute the content of the universe communicates to these relations their permanence and objectivity. It is their "medium and sustainer";[2] the objectivity of the universe just means its existence for such a consciousness. It will be observed, further,

[1] Prolegomena to Ethics, 40. [2] Ibid., 68.

that Green habitually attributes to this eternal Self a constitutive activity which is tantamount to creation. It is said to "make nature"; nature is said to "result from the activity of the spiritual principle." But if we consider the character of the method by which the result was reached, such predicates will appear more than questionable, for the Self is nothing apart from the world. If it is necessary as the sustainer of relations, it is nothing apart from the relations which it sustains. They exist together, or not at all; they exist, as was said above, as two aspects of the same fact. Accordingly, as Mr Balfour pointed out in a criticism of Green's metaphysics, published in 'Mind' a few years ago, if we speak of activity at all, "we must allow that it is as correct to say that nature makes mind as that mind makes nature; that the World created God as that God created the World."[1] This is so far from being a travesty of the Neo-Kantian position that it seems the only possible way of stating it when we aim at perfect frankness and scientific explicitness of expression. And, indeed, in discussing the applicability of the term "cause" to describe the relation between

[1] Mind, ix. 80.

God and the world, Green himself warns us that "there is no separate particularity in the agent, on the one side, and the determined world as a whole, on the other, such as characterises any agent or patient, any cause and effect, within the phenomenal world." "That the unifying principle should distinguish itself from the manifold which it unifies is indeed a condition of the unification, but it must not be supposed that the manifold has a nature of its own apart from the unifying principle, or this principle another nature of its own apart from what it does in relation to the manifold world."[1] Indeed, "the concrete whole," he says in another place, "may be described indifferently as an eternal intelligence realised in the related facts of the world, or as a system of related facts rendered possible by such an intelligence."[2] Apart from the metaphysical bearing given to it, this is almost in so many words the result which we reached a little ago by the aid of the transcendental method.

The self or unifying principle has then, according to Green, no nature of its own apart from what it does in relation to the manifold

[1] Prolegomena to Ethics, 80, 81. [2] Ibid., 38.

world. But what the unifying principle does in relation to the manifold world is simply to unify it. Green himself tells us in one place that we know the spiritual principle only as "a principle of unity in relation."[1] That, certainly, is all that the transcendental analysis of knowledge tells us about it. The eternal Self which we reach along this path is no more than a *focus imaginarius* into which the multiplex relations which constitute the intelligible world return. Such a focus or principle of unity enables us to round off our theory with an appearance of personality, but it does not satisfy in any real sense the requirements of Theism. Adapting a phrase used by Hegel in another connection, we may say that this Self is like a constitutional monarch who reigns but does not govern—whose signature is the necessary completion of every document, but is affixed impartially to each as it is laid before him. Such a monarch, says Hegel, may aptly be compared to the dot on the i; he represents the unity of the State, and gives the formal *imprimatur* of his "I will" to its actions. In like manner, the transcendental Ego, as revealed by the theory of knowledge, represents

[1] Prolegomena to Ethics, 72.

merely the formal unity of the universe as known;[1] and unless we have other data, and approach the question along a different road, we are still far from anything like spirituality or freedom in the ordinary sense of these words. Green's use of the term "spiritual principle" is almost inevitably open to misinterpretation, and by its associations leads even himself to make assertions which are not warranted by his own proof—which are indeed inconsistent with it.

In this respect, Kant saw his way more clearly than many of those who make bold to teach him consistency. It was not merely his en-

[1] Professor Dewey complains (Mind, xv. 60) that the account of the Self given in this paragraph is inconsistent with what was said of it above on pp. 14 and 18. "There the Self was not formal; the form was an abstraction apart from matter. . . . Instead of being merely logical, the Self was the unified universe. . . . The subject which 'exists only as the unity of the manifold whose central principle of connection it is,' becomes transformed in ten short pages into a '*focus imaginarius* into which the multiple relations which constitute the intelligible world return,'—a 'principle of unity.'" But the whole point of my argument is that *if* we try to use the transcendental Ego as a metaphysical reality, and speak of it as a spiritual principle which makes nature, then we are substantiating it apart from the manifold. And if, as stated on p. 18, it exists only as the unity of the manifold, then it must be true, as stated here, that when so separated it represents merely the formal unity of knowledge.

tanglement in "psychological" prejudices that held him back from such conclusions. He understood the nature of his own inquiry, and knew what it could yield him and what it could not. In this connection Kant has received perhaps less than justice at the hands of his critics. It may be that he mingles psychology with his theory of knowledge; but the consequences may be quite as fatal, if we confound the boundaries of epistemology and metaphysics. In point of fact, however he may nod at times, Kant is in general sufficiently awake to the distinction between his transcendental investigation and an investigation into psychological matter of fact. He enforces in various passages the perfectly general character of his inquiry. He is dealing, he says, not with any individual mind or consciousness, but with consciousness in general, with "the conditions of possible experience,"[1] "the unity of possible consciousness,"[2] or, as he calls it in another place, with "the logical form of all cognition,"[3] with the ultimate nature, as we might say, of

[1] Werke, iii. 575. [2] Ibid., iii. 585.

[3] Ibid., iii. 578. The recurrent use of the term "possible" is characteristic of Kant—possible experience, possible consciousness, possible cognition; so also the phrase *überhaupt*—thought in general, experience in general, &c.

knowledge as knowledge. The transcendental logic, in a word, is a study of knowledge *in abstracto*. But just because of this perfectly general or abstract character which belongs to the investigation, the results of the investigation must also be perfectly general or abstract. They will be abstract conditions, not concrete facts or metaphysical realities. The analysis reveals to us, according to its own claims, certain conditions which must be fulfilled in every instance of actual knowledge — certain categories or fundamental modes of connection, and, as a supreme condition, the unity of the pure Ego—but it deals itself with no actual knower, whether human or divine. It deals, in a word, with possible consciousness, or consciousness in general, which, so long as it remains a "general," is of course a pure abstraction.

But if this is so, it must be in the highest degree improper to convert *consciousness in general* without more ado into *a universal consciousness*. Surely it does not follow that, because we are professedly abstracting from any particular self of experience, we are therefore analysing the absolute or divine self-consciousness. The transcendental theory of knowledge

because it is an abstract inquiry, necessarily speaks of a single Self or logical subject; but this singularity is the singularity which belongs to every abstract notion, and decides nothing as to the singularity or plurality of existing intelligencies. We can have absolutely no right to transform this logical identity of type into a numerical identity of existence. The theory of knowledge, at least, can give us no such right. Yet this seems to be precisely the step which Neo-Kantianism takes. It takes the notion of knowledge as equivalent to a real Knower; and the form of knowledge being one, it leaps to the conclusion that what we have before us is the One Subject who sustains the world, and is the real Knower in all finite intelligences. It seems a hard thing to say, but to do this is neither more nor less than to hypostatise an abstraction. It is of a piece with the Scholastic Realism which hypostatised *humanitas* or *homo* as a universal substance, of which individual men were, in a manner, the accidents. Similarly here, the notion of knowledge in general — the pure Ego — which is reached by abstraction from the individual human knower, is erected into a self-existent reality—"an eternally complete self-conscious-

ness"—of which the individual is an imperfect reproduction or mode. There no doubt may be an eternally complete self-consciousness which holds a creative relation to our own, and much of Green's theory of the universe may be substantially true; but if so, its truth must be established upon other lines. It is resting on a fallacy to believe that the eternally complete self-consciousness is proved in this fashion by the theory of knowledge.

Ferrier's argument in his 'Institutes of Metaphysic,' in many respects so similar, appears to me to be much more cautious than Green's, and more consonant with the conditions of the theory of knowledge. A short reference to it may elucidate the point at issue. Ferrier proves in his Epistemology and Agnoiology the impossibility of matter *per se* or mind *per se*, and thus lays down certain fundamental conditions to which all cognition must conform. That is to say, he too analyses the notion of knowledge; but he does not proceed to hypostatise it, as we have seen Neo-Kantianism do. The concluding propositions of the Ontology simply apply the notion to the elimination from existence of what has been proved to be contradictory and inconceivable. "The only true

and real and independent existences are minds-together-with-that which they apprehend." So runs the second last proposition, and the last says: "All absolute existences are contingent except *one;* in other words, there is one but only one absolute existence which is strictly *necessary*, and that existence is a supreme and infinite and everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things." Even this is more than is strictly warranted by the theory of knowledge alone; it depends rather on general metaphysical considerations. But at least neither here nor in the working out of the propositions is there any identification of the necessary existence and the contingent existences. There is no statement whatever as to the relation between them, for the theory of knowledge affords no data for determining that relation. The real service of the theory of knowledge in this connection is, that it eliminates the thing-in-itself and the Ego-in-itself—the mere object and the mere subject—and therefore legitimates the assertion that all existence to which we can attach a meaning must be existence-for-a-self, or, as it may perhaps be otherwise expressed, the only real existences are selves — *i.e.*, beings who possess either in higher or lower fashion an

analogue of what we call self-consciousness in ourselves. But whether there be one Self or many selves, and, if there be both, what is the relation between the One and the many—these are questions of metaphysics or ontology, not to be settled out of hand by the perfectly general result to which the theory of knowledge leads us.

Unquestionably the results of the epistemological investigation must have an important bearing upon the metaphysical problem; but the office of the theory of knowledge must, in the main, be negative or indirect, ruling out certain solutions as inadmissible rather than itself supplying us with a ready-made solution. In a word, the theory of knowledge, even in its amended form, must maintain the critical attitude at first assigned to it by Kant. Though we may disagree with many of the arguments by which he supports his position, it cannot, I think, be doubted that Kant was methodically correct in the view he took of his own inquiry. There is nothing in it, as I conceive, to preclude us from the attempt to construct a metaphysical system; but it cannot stand itself as a dogmatic theory.

Kant himself, it is almost superfluous to point

out, would never have acquiesced in the deductions which his Neo-Kantian followers have drawn from his premisses. Nothing, of course was further from his thoughts than an identification of the transcendental Ego with the divine self-consciousness, as is sufficiently proved by his constant references to the latter as a perceptive, that is, a non-discursive understanding, the very possibility of which we are unable to comprehend.[1] But Kant further refuses to recognise the transcendental Ego as constituting the real self even of the individual human knower. This is, in fact, the text of his

[1] As if anticipating that the attempt would be made to represent the difference between the human consciousness and the divine as essentially one of degree, Kant expressly declared himself on this point in an important letter to Marcus Herz in 1789. It will be found, he says, "that we cannot assume the human understanding to be specifically the same as the divine, and only distinguished from it by limitation—*i.e.*, in degree. The human understanding is not, like the divine, a faculty of immediate perception, but one of thought, which, if it is to produce knowledge, requires alongside of it—or rather requires as its material—a second quite different faculty, a faculty or receptivity of perception."—Werke, viii. 719. As further emphasising the complete distinction existing in Kant's mind between the consciousness of the individual and the divine self-consciousness, reference need only be made to the thoroughly transcendent conception of God with which the Kantian ethics end—a being apart, whose function it is to mete out happiness in accordance with desert.

whole contention in the well-known argument headed "The Paralogism of Pure Reason." Kant is there attacking the old metaphysical psychology for reasoning, not indeed to the same conclusion, but on precisely similar lines to those on which the Neo-Kantian proof of the universal Self has been seen to run. The metaphysical psychologists also started with the abstract Ego, which forms the presupposition of knowledge; and as this unity of consciousness is one, eternal (or out of time), and indivisible, they proceeded to prove by its means the necessary immortality of the human soul. This is the Paralogism which Kant attacks, and in the course of his attack we get a collection of predicates applied to the pure Ego which serve as a wholesome corrective to some of the proud names heaped upon it before. The Ego, he says, is "a merely logical qualitative unity of self-consciousness in thought generally;" it is in itself a perfectly empty or contentless idea—a perfectly empty expression which I can apply to every thinking subject—nay, it is actually "the poorest of all our ideas." No doubt the argument here is overlaid in parts by extraneous considerations, and infected by Kant's relativistic prejudice; but in pointing

out the merely logical character of the self reached by the analysis of knowledge, he is not only guided by a sounder instinct, but shows also a keener insight than his speculative followers. "The logical exposition of thought in general is mistaken," he says, "for a metaphysical determination of the object." The words are spoken of the metaphysical psychologists, but it would be impossible to characterise more aptly the fallacy which underlies the Neo-Kantian deification of the abstract unity of thought.

APPENDIX TO LECTURE I.

Though it is hardly, perhaps, an integral part of the present argument, it seems natural to connect Kant's refusal to substitute for the real self a purely logical or formal unity with his refusal to identify the reality of the external world with mere relations. Kant's doctrine of things-in-themselves, as ordinarily understood, I cannot but hold to be fundamentally false, and a fruitful source of error;[1] but it does not therefore follow that the whole external world is nothing more than a complex of thought-relations. There seems no reason why, if we resolve the rest of the external world in this way, we should not reduce our fellow-men also to mere complexes of relations, which have no existence on their own account. For our fellow-men are given to us, in the first instance, as part of the external world; and it would seem as if the same reasons which make us assign to them an existence on their own account, and not as mere objects either of our own or of a supposed universal consciousness, should lead us to attribute an (at least analogously) independent existence to the external world, or at any rate to certain existences in it. Kant himself, after the promulgation of his Critical system, was resolutely averse to speculation beyond certain limits; but there are indications in his writings that, if indulged, his speculations would have led him in a Leibnitian direction, as was indeed natural in the case of one who had been reared and

[1] The fifth lecture of the previous course was chiefly devoted to combating the doctrine of the unknowable thing *per se*, as it appears in Kant and Hamilton.

had passed a great part of his life within that school. If this be taken as the idea underlying his assertion of things-in-themselves, it may be readily admitted that much of the objectionableness of that doctrine would disappear.

Kant's position in regard to the real existence of the self, and his doctrine of an independent existence of things as more than relations, do in fact form part of a tolerably coherent realistic metaphysic, which was overshadowed but never displaced in Kant's mind by his Critical idealism. This realistic groundwork has been more and more lost sight of in certain circles, as the idealistic deductions from the Kantian theory have come more and more into prominence. But when this is the case, Kant's own position is inevitably misunderstood. It is not without interest to note that the isolated passages in which Kant suggests a Leibnitian interpretation of things-in-themselves are precisely those which have been seized upon by later writers as anticipations of the Fichtian theory. This has been conclusively proved by Ueberweg,[1] in regard to one of these "asides" of Kant, which occurs at the end of the section on the Paralogism of Pure Reason, and is therefore connected with the present subject. Kant is speaking of the supposed difficulty of explaining an interaction between mind and matter, between the non-spatial and the spatial. They appear to be separated, as Hamilton was fond of saying, by the whole diameter of being. But, in point of fact, Kant argues, the "transcendental object which underlies external phenomena, as well as that which underlies internal perception, is in itself neither

[1] History of Philosophy, ii. 175.

matter nor a thinking being, but a to-us-unknown ground of phenomena. . . . I can very well suppose that the substance which in respect of our external sense possesses extension is in itself the subject of thought which can be consciously represented by its own inner sense. Thus that which in one aspect is called material would at the same time, in another aspect, be a thinking being—a being whose thoughts, it is true, we cannot perceive, but the signs of whose thoughts in phenomena we can perceive."[1]

[1] In first edition. Werke, iii. 694.

LECTURE II.

FICHTE.

In the philosophical development with which we are here concerned, Fichte is an important figure. As was mentioned in the previous lecture, he was the first to transform Kant's theory of knowledge into an absolute metaphysic, and in so doing he laid the corner-stone of the whole fabric of German idealism. Fichte is interesting and instructive alike in his general mode of procedure, in the difficulties he encounters, and in the admissions to which these difficulties drive him. Moreover, being immediately based upon Kant, his constructions have in some ways a closer resemblance in form to those of Neo-Kantians like Green than is the case with the later and less accessible system of Hegel.

But though building immediately upon Kant, Fichte represents a totally different type of mind. Kant is patient and analytic, Fichte is boldly synthetic; his system is essentially, as it has just been termed, a construction. It is a construction to explain the duality of sense and reason—of receptivity and spontaneity—which Kant either left standing as an ultimate fact, or simply referred to the accepted psychological opposition of mind and things. Fichte claims to present us with a metaphysical explanation of this psychological appearance. He begins by scornfully dismissing things-in-themselves as in no sense a *philosophical* explanation. To explain sensation or "the given" by referring to the action of a thing-in-itself of which we know nothing, is to darken counsel by words without knowledge. Fichte stoutly refused to believe that Kant could ever have intended the thing-in-itself to be so interpreted. "Should he make such a declaration," said the impetuous philosopher, "I shall consider the 'Critique of Pure Reason' to be the offspring of the strangest chance rather than the work of a mind." When Kant soon afterwards published the declaration in question, his disappointed disciple was

driven to reflect that the Holy Spirit in Kant had thought more in accordance with truth than Kant in his individual capacity had done. To Fichte himself it was an axiom that philosophy, if it is to be philosophy at all, must be *in one piece.* Its explanation must be a deduction of the apparently disparate elements of existence from a single principle; to rest in an unexplained dualism means to despair of philosophy.

But if every genuine philosophy is thus a Monism of some sort, there are, Fichte proceeds, only two possible systems or types of philosophy between which we have to choose. The one of these he calls Dogmatism, a mode of thought which, when consistent with itself, most commonly takes the form of Materialism, though Spinozism is also cited as being, on a higher plane, the typical example of a rigorous Dogmatism. The system or type of thought opposed to Dogmatism Fichte calls sometimes Criticism, sometimes Idealism. The opposition of the two systems consists in this, that Dogmatism starts with the absolute or independent existence of "things," and is therefore inevitably led, in the last resort, to explain the conscious intelligence as their

product; while Idealism, on the other hand, refuses to start otherwise than with the Ego, and ends by explaining "things" as forms of the Ego's productive activity. By Dogmatism the Ego is treated as a thing among things, from whose combinations it results by the ordinary process of causation; in Fichte's own phrase, the Ego becomes in such systems "an accident of the world." And if such an attitude be once adopted, it is of comparatively little importance whether the substance of which it is an accident be the divine essence, as with Spinoza, or cosmic atoms, as with the Materialists. In either case our philosophy becomes transcendent, because we go (or rather try to go) behind the Ego, and make it an accident or appendage of something else. Criticism, on the other hand, says Fichte, characterising his own philosophy, is throughout immanent in its procedure. The Ego takes the place, as it were, of the universal substance of Dogmatism; and instead of the Ego's being an outcome of "things," all "things" have their existence within the circle of the Ego. The Ego is the one primary and indubitable fact; or rather, in Fichte's language, it is the eternal *act* or energising

through which we live, and within which all existence is contained.

Moreover, Idealism alone furnishes a real solution of the problem. The explanation which Dogmatism offers of the genesis of self-consciousness or the Ego is completely illusory. It leaves unexplained the essential feature of self-consciousness — the duality or doubleness, if it may be so expressed, which lies in knowledge and reflection. The Ego is not a mere fact, which exists as the Dogmatist conceives a "thing" to exist; it is existence and knowledge of existence in one. Intelligence not only is; it looks on at its own existence. It is *for itself*, whereas the very notion of a thing is that it does not exist for itself, but only for another—that is, for some intelligence. "In intelligence, accordingly," says Fichte, "there is, if I may express myself metaphorically, a double series of being and looking on, of the real and the ideal. The thing, on the other hand, represents only a single or simple series, that of the real—mere position or objective existence. . . . The two lie, therefore, in two worlds between which there is no bridge."[1] Things

[1] Werke, i. 436.

produce things in a chain of mechanically determined causality, but this causal action is all within the real series; there is no bridge from a thing to the idea of a thing, no passage from a world of mere things to a consciousness which knows the things. Every attempt to bridge this chasm turns out, says Fichte, to be "a few empty words, which may, indeed, be learned by heart and repeated, but which have never conveyed a thought to any man, and never will."[1] Unless, therefore, we accept the Ego with its duality as an ultimate fact, or rather the ultimate world-constituting fact, we can never reach it along the lines of Dogmatism. Accordingly, as the existence of the self-conscious Ego is not a more or less probable hypothesis, but an ever-present fact of our own experience, we are shut up to the rival system of Idealism. It is, in fact, of the very essence of the Ego that it cannot be produced by anything external to itself; it is self-centred, self-creative, and its life is the perpetual re-affirmation of itself. In Fichte's language, it is the Absolute Thesis, self-position or self-affirmation.

This forcible statement will probably be

[1] Werke, i. 438.

accepted as a sufficient refutation of the standpoint against which it is directed. It is fundamentally impossible to explain the existence of a self as a result of action *ab extra;* it exists only through its own activity. As Fichte says, "I am altogether my own creation. Through no law of nature, or any consequence of nature's laws, but through absolute freedom, not by a transition but by a leap, do we raise ourselves to rationality."[1] The contradiction which any one may detect in such a statement is involved in every account of the origin of a self-conscious life; for surely it lies in the very nature of the case that our own existence forms our necessary presupposition. We abut here upon an impenetrable mystery, for to conceive our own origin would mean to transcend altogether the conditions of our being. If the conception were possible, we should be loosed at once from our individual moorings. It may be that we should then be as God; but the human reason totters on the verge of such a problem.

Apart, however, from any attempt to solve a problem which they do but suggest, Fichte's words appeal to us as a true rendering of the

[1] Werke, i. 298.

characteristic feature of the concrete Ego—its self-centred activity, which excludes the idea of mechanical causality, and forbids us to treat the self as a retainer of any thing or system of things. But Fichte goes further than this, and we are but entering upon the most characteristic portions of his system. Great part of his philosophy is, indeed, little more than an attempt to overcome or rationalise the contradiction contained in his own words quoted above. The attempt is made by means of a distinction within the concrete self between the pure or Absolute Ego and the self of the individual as such. It is not, we are told, to the concrete personality of the individual as such that this absolute position or self-creation in strictness refers, but to "the Ego as absolute subject," to "pure consciousness." This pure Ego is not a fact that we can discover or verify within our empirical consciousness, Fichte tells us; it is rather an act which "lies at the basis of all consciousness and alone makes consciousness possible."[1] The burden of the contradiction seems somehow lighter, if we can divide the *rôles* in this fashion, assigning creative function to the pure Ego and the part of creature

[1] Werke, i. 91.

to the empirical self. Nor is the device a new one in the annals of philosophy; for we find a very similar division of labour in Aristotle between the *νοῦς ποιητικὸς* and the *νοῦς παθητικὸς*, the Active and the Passive Reason. But in Fichte's case the distinction is drawn directly from the Kantian scheme. The absolute Ego is simply Kant's transcendental unity of apperception; but the identification of that unity with the central creative thought of the universe has now been made. Instead of being, as with Kant, the function of human thought, which generates the form, and the form only, of a phenomenal world, the pure Ego has become for Fichte the absolute creator of an absolute world.

The working out of this distinction between the absolute and the empirical Ego is found to include, in Fichte's hands, an explanation of the apparently "given" element in knowledge, which was referred to at the outset as the underlying motive of his philosophy. For Fichte does not deny, any more than Kant did, that the ordinary consciousness seems to itself to be filled from an alien source. He acknowledges that the objective world is to the individual, in the first instance, simply a

given material, in relation to which he is receptive; the individual may be said, in the strictest sense, to find it presented to him. Fichte calls this objective aspect of consciousness the Non-Ego, and is thus far from denying the fact which Kant formulated in his assertion of a given element in knowledge. But, as already remarked, he seeks a speculative explanation of this fact or appearance — an explanation which Kant can hardly be said to have attempted.[1]

Fichte's explanation is not found, however, in the theoretical sphere, that is, in the domain of knowledge as knowledge. Kant, it is well known, considered that only in dealing with the practical or moral reason had he penetrated to the noumenal reality of the Self; and it was here that the intense ethical fervour of Fichte's nature attached itself most closely to the Kantian philosophy. In practical reason or will, we find, according to him, the reality of the world-process, the reality of which knowledge gives only a picture, a representation, a rendering. In the idea of duty or moral destiny is to be found the ultimate explanation or meaning of existence. From this point of view, then, we

[1] See Appendix, p. 79.

first come to perceive the necessity of the object as Non-Ego—that is, as something seemingly foreign and alien. Only through the Non-Ego, as an obstacle of this sort, can the practical activity of the Ego be realised. The creation or "positing" of the Non-Ego is thus the device of the Absolute Ego itself, in order to attain self-realisation. "The Absolute Ego," he says, "is absolutely identical with itself; everything in it is one and the same Ego, and belongs (if so inapt an expression may be allowed) to one and the same Ego; there is nothing here to distinguish, no multiplicity. The Ego is everything and is nothing, because it is nothing for itself. . . . In virtue of its essence it strives (though even this is not strictly true except with reference to the future) to maintain itself in this condition. There arises in it a difference, consequently something alien or foreign."[1] By the finite or practical Ego which results, the difference whose emergence is thus enigmatically expressed must be simply accepted as a fact; and the Non-Ego which impedes its activity keeps therefore a character of foreignness. Nevertheless, as the thing-in-itself may be taken as an exploded fiction, and the Non-Ego exists

[1] Werke, i. 264.

only *for* the Ego, the appearance of opposition must be held, from the speculative point of view, to be due to the nature and action of the Ego itself. It is, as we may say, its own activity taking a roundabout way.

This is, in effect, Fichte's celebrated theory of the *Anstoss* or shock of opposition in which consciousness arises. In working out the idea, Fichte is dangerously lavish in his use of mechanical metaphors. The fundamental conception, however, is that the Absolute Ego may be compared to an infinite outgoing activity, which, so conceived, is formless and characterless. It requires to break itself against some obstacle, and thus, as it were, be reflected back upon itself, in order that it may come to self-consciousness—in order that we may be able to distinguish anything in it, or to apply any predicate intelligently to it. For Fichte says, quite unequivocally, that it is only the limited Ego, whose striving is met by a counter-striving, that is conscious. "Only by means of such a Non-Ego is the Ego intelligence."[1] Where this is not the case, where the Ego is all in all, "it is for that very reason nothing at all."[2]

Taken in any literal or mechanical sense, the

[1] Werke, i. 248. [2] Ibid., i. 261.

objections to such a construction are tolerably obvious. The whole excursion into the void preceding consciousness is an attempt to transcend self-consciousness and construct it out of antecedent existences, and that after emphatically denouncing the futility of such experiments. The *Anstoss* is entirely a metaphor taken from the struggles of the embodied Ego against material obstacles, and as such is quite inapplicable to the action of intelligence and its relation to its objects. Moreover, the Absolute Ego cannot receive the *Anstoss*, because it is either subject and object at once and therefore all-containing, with nothing beyond it on which it could impinge, or, as devoid of self-consciousness, it is, as we found Fichte himself saying, "nothing at all." And above all, it may be asked, What do we mean by speaking of an *Ego*, when what we have is admittedly no more than a formless and aimless activity?

But perhaps it is hardly fair to Fichte to say that he consciously intended to give a mechanical explanation of the kind just indicated. At all events, the objections made to his theory, and the manifold misunderstandings to which it gave rise, drew from him an indignant dis-

claimer that he had ever dreamt of giving an actual construction of consciousness before all consciousness.[1] He brands such an interpretation as a gross misunderstanding of his meaning—as if he had set about to write the biography of a man before his birth. "Consciousness exists," he declares, "with all its determinations at a stroke, just as the universe is an organic whole, no part of which can exist without all the rest — something, therefore, which cannot have come gradually into being, but must necessarily have been there in its completeness at any period when it existed at all." In other words, he would tell us that he is not narrating what ever took place, but is analysing an eternal fact or process—analysing consciousness, in short, into its different moments, though these are inseparable, though they are, indeed, mere abstractions, if supposed to exist separately. We cannot refuse to accept a declaration so explicit. It would actually seem to be the case that, at this stage of his philosophy, Fichte did not contemplate any self-consciousness as existent except the self-consciousness of finite individuals. Being, existence, and suchlike terms, always had a

[1] Cf. Werke, ii. 379 and 399.

flavour of grossness about them for Fichte. He would have readily allowed, therefore, that the empirical individuals were the only existences or real beings in the world, though contending at the same time that their existence derived its meaning from a moral order of the universe. Fichte did not, therefore, at this stage, attribute to the Absolute Ego any existence on its own account; it was to him simply one aspect of the self-consciousness of the empirical individual. Hence he could not but vehemently repudiate an interpretation of his theory which turned it, in his own contemptuous phrase, into a story or tale.

We get accordingly, at this period of Fichte's life, what is perhaps the most characteristic form of his idealism — an idealism which he loved to describe as not dogmatic but practical. It looks not behind to a source from which things proceed, but forward to their goal or destiny, determining not what is, but what is to be.[1] It is worth our while to look somewhat closely at the appearance which the universe presents on this theory, in order to see how far the theory is tenable, and at the same

[1] Cf. Werke, i. 156.

time how far Fichte consistently maintains the position which he claims to occupy in regard to the Absolute Ego.

He disclaims, as has been said, anything like a primitive reality or source of things. The finite, striving Egos constitute the sum of actual existence, the external world being simply the material or sphere of their moral action. The striving of the finite Egos is due, certainly, to the ideal of a moral destiny present to each. This ideal is the motive-power of the whole struggle with its eternal or never-ending advance. We are drawn forward by "the idea of our absolute existence," or, as it is sometimes called, "the Idea of the Ego,"—that is to say, by the idea of an absolute or unimpeded activity. Just as in the case of Aristotle's τέλος or End, this idea of the Ego and the eternal *Sollen*, or Ought-to-be, involved in it, contains the explanation of the whole evolution. But the Idea of the Ego is not, so far as can be gathered from Fichte, an eternal *prius*, and in this respect it differs from the Aristotelian τέλος. It is *merely* an idea, and will never be actual. It cannot be realised, for the very sufficient reason that the extinction of oppo-

sition would signify the cessation of the strife on which consciousness depends.

It was doubtless the intensity of Fichte's moral earnestness, and his somewhat exclusive attention to that side of experience, which led to such a formulation of his philosophy. But even as a metaphysic of ethics, such a theory is insufficient. Morality becomes illusory, if it is represented as the pursuit of a goal whose winning would be suicidal to morality itself, and to all conscious life. This consummation is unequivocally expressed by Schelling in his youthful work, 'On the Ego'—a work which was commended by Fichte himself as an unexceptionable presentation of the doctrine of the 'Wissenschaftslehre.' "The ultimate goal of the finite Ego," says Schelling, "is enlargement of its sphere till the attainment of identity with the infinite Ego. But the infinite Ego knows no object, and possesses, therefore, no consciousness or unity of consciousness, such as we mean by personality. Consequently the ultimate goal of all endeavour may also be represented as enlargement of the personality to infinity—that is to say, as its annihilation. The ultimate goal of the finite Ego, and not only of it but also of the Non-Ego—the final goal,

therefore, of the world—is its annihilation as a world."[1] We may well, then, withdraw our eyes from the goal, if we are not to lose heart for the race. Fichte's account, in short, leaves no permanent reality in the universe whatever. The world is hung, as it were, between two vacuities—between the pure or Absolute Ego, on the one hand, which is completely empty apart from the finite individuals whom it constitutes, and "the Idea of the Ego," on the other, which is admittedly unattainable, and, if attainable, would be a total blank, the collapse of all conscious life.

But it was impossible that such an exclusively practical point of view could be maintained for any length of time as a metaphysic of the universe. The manifold empirical Egos could neither be taken as metaphysically self-explaining, nor could they be explained by reference to a τέλος or End, which is a mere idea. There is evidence that Fichte himself—though at one time, as has been said, he might, if challenged, have acquiesced in the statement that the reality of the universe consisted simply of striving finite Egos—was at no time completely satisfied with this conclusion. And, in spite of dis-

[1] Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie, § 14.

claimers in regard to any existence of the Absolute Ego prior to and apart from its finite realisations, it is hardly possible to explain satisfactorily the extreme elaboration bestowed upon this theory of the Absolute Ego and the *Anstoss*, without believing that Fichte was at least half-consciously impelled by the need of some *prius*, which should not be merely logical —some metaphysical *prius* or ultimate Reality from which the origin of finite Egos might be explained.

This conviction is confirmed when we turn to the later forms of his theory. He first denied, as we have seen, that he meant to speak of a real *prius* at all; but almost immediately he seems to have begun to feel the impossibility of doing without an ultimate reality of some sort. At the same time he was quick to recognise the inapplicability of the term Ego, with its implication of self-consciousness, to such a *prius* as the theory led to. Accordingly, we find the two processes going on side by side; he gradually disuses the term Ego, and at the same time embraces more distinctly the idea of a metaphysical ground or source. Thus, in 1800, in the 'Destiny of Man,' speaking of the Absolute Ego as identity of subject and object,

he defines it as "that which is neither subject nor object, but the ground of both, and that out of which both come into being," and refers immediately afterwards to "the incomprehensible One" which "separates itself into these two."[1] And as early as 1801, we find him dropping the term Absolute Ego, and adopting the more general designation of the Absolute. The same course was taken by Fichte's youthful disciple Schelling. When Schelling proceeds to define the Absolute as the indifference-point of subject and object—"pure identity in which nothing is distinguishable"—it cannot any longer be doubted that we are being offered a metaphysical ground or source of the actual world, but neither can it be pretended that these terms indicate an Ego, an intelligent or spiritual principle. Fichte described his own system as an inverted Spinozism, in which the Absolute Ego stands in place of Substance, thus conserving the rights of the self-conscious life, and justifying the name Idealism. But here it is proved by the self-development of the system that, when thought out, it falls back into Spinozism pure and simple. The Absolute Ego passes into the Absolute, and turns out to

[1] Werke, ii. 225.

be no better than an absolute Substance from which all determinations are absent. It is on the same footing with negations like the Unconscious, or the Unknown and Unknowable.

This result, however, is not accidental to the theory; it is the natural and inevitable result of the mode of reasoning pursued. In considering the Kantian philosophy in the first lecture, we dwelt at considerable length on the impossibility of separating the transcendental unity from the empirical consciousness which it unifies. To suppose it existing on its own account is as if we supposed that one end of a stick could exist without the other. Kant was under no temptation to separate the transcendental and the empirical self, because the former was for him simply the logical unity of thought in general, and he had never thought of identifying it with a divine or creative Self. But in Fichte (and this constitutes his interest and importance) this step — the step which is repeated in Green, and which forms the central tenet of Neo-Kantianism—has been definitely taken. And as soon as this identification is made—as soon as we begin to speak of the Absolute Ego, or the universal consciousness—the temptation to separate becomes irresistible.

We can hardly avoid substantiating this "eternal Self," and ascribing to it a creative function in respect of the manifold human individualities, which look so little self-dependent and self-explaining. Green, as we saw, repeatedly ascribes such creative action to his spiritual principle. It is, indeed, I believe, the need of some permanent principle on which these manifold individual selves might be seen to depend, combined with the perception that no self can be explained materialistically, or quasi-materialistically, by action from without, that prompts the identification in question. Unless the two selves can be so far separated as to supply the metaphysical explanation required, the charm of the identification is lost.

Probably no one who has really lived in this phase of thought can fail to remember the thrill with which the meaning of the new principle first flashed upon him, and the light which it seemed to throw upon old difficulties. It had become impossible, with due regard to the unity of things, to conceive God as an *object*, as something quite external to ourselves ; and, on the other hand, there seemed nothing but a relapse into ordinary Pantheism, with its submergence of self-consciousness, and all that

hangs thereby, in a general life, which reason and conscience alike declare to be inferior to our own. But, in this dilemma, the universal consciousness seemed to rise upon us as a creative power which was not without us, but within, —which did not create a world of objects and leave it in dead independence, but perpetually unrolled, as it were, in each of us the universal spectacle of the world. The world was thus perpetually created anew in each finite spirit, revelation to intelligence being the only admissible meaning of that much-abused term creation. We had here a new and better Berkeleianism, for God in this system (so it seemed), was not an unknown Spirit, hidden, as it were, behind the screen of phenomena; God was not far from any one of us, nay, He was within us, He was in a sense our very Self. Here, too, we had a principle which seemed to satisfy as well as Pantheism the imperative need of unity, but did so without sacrificing the claims of self-consciousness. For Self, as the eternal sustaining Subject of the universe, formed the beginning, middle, and end of the system.

I do not think I can be wrong in attributing to considerations like these the remarkable

hold which this conception has exercised over many minds. It flashes upon them like a wholly new point of view, and seems to deliver them from a host of difficulties. The deliverance may be in part illusory, but it is not therefore a mark of speculative weakness to have embraced the conception. On the contrary, it is a conception which only a speculative mind could have originated, and for whose intelligent apprehension a genuine speculative effort is demanded. None the less, however, is the supposed solution wrapped in fatal ambiguity. When the rush of feeling subsides which first bore conviction in upon our minds, we are reluctantly forced to admit that, whatever adumbrations of the truth such a conception may contain, it is, as it stands, a play of abstractions which is essentially impossible and unmeaning, but which, if taken seriously as a metaphysic, would deprive both God and man of real existence. For surely, if we do not mean to pay ourselves with words, it is essential to the coherence of the above account that this divine, creative Self should really exist as something more than the individuals whom it constitutes, and in whom it creatively works. If the account is to have any meaning

as a satisfaction of our metaphysical and religious needs, the Absolute Ego must really be an Ego. If it is to fill the metaphysical place assigned to it by the system, and to justify, for example, the appellation of spiritual principle, it must exist for itself, with a self-consciousness of its own. Indeed it would be easy to show that many of those who have espoused this theory have explicitly attributed such a self-consciousness to the Absolute Ego; while many more, without making the matter clear to themselves, are habitually swayed by the same associations. It cannot, however, in the interests of clear thinking, be too plainly pointed out that, whatever other warrant there may be for such a conception of the divine Self and its creative relation to the human consciousness, there is absolutely none in the theory under consideration. The theory not only does not show the Absolute Ego to be self-conscious and creative, but it becomes unmeaning to make such assertions about it, if it is in a strict sense "nothing at all" when separated from the individual consciousness whose unity it is.

The process of hypostatisation by which this divine Self is reached is somehow thus.

It is as if we took the concrete personality of the individual — which may be described in certain of its aspects as an instance of unity in multiplicity or permanence in change—and separated the unity from the multiplicity, assigning the unity to a universal or divine Self, and treating the multiplicity, or the changing "states of consciousness," as the empirical self or the individual *quâ* individual. Thinkers like Fichte or Green fully admit, when questioned, that a real self-conscious being, in the ordinary sense of the word, comes to pass only when these two sides are united. Nevertheless it is made to appear as if this real self-consciousness were the result of activity on the part of the universal Self, as if the latter supplied itself somehow with matter in the shape of empirical states of consciousness, which it then proceeds to unify. But this is to seek to produce a reality from the union of two abstractions. Distinguishing two inseparable aspects of any concrete self, we substantiate one of them, and make it do duty for God; the other—what is left of us—we do not exactly substantiate, but we think of it as an effect of our first abstraction. But the true result of this course is, as I have said, to

deprive both God and man of real existence. This is manifest in the case of God, but it is not less true of the individual. The empirical self is not the real self, it is not the whole man; for half the man has been taken away to be made into a god. The empirical self is merely, so to speak, the objective side of the man's consciousness. He is left without a self of his own to which his "states of consciousness" could be object, and the divine Self—a Self identical in all men—is brought in to perform that function for him. The individual seems thus to become no more than an object of the divine Self, a series of phenomena threaded together and reviewed by it—an office which it performs in precisely the same fashion for any number of such so-called individuals. Such a representation, in truth, wipes out the selfhood and independence of the individual with a completeness which few systems of Pantheism can rival. But when the issue is thus made plain, it must be apparent that the representation cannot be a true one. The real self is one and indivisible, and is unique in each individual. This is the unequivocal testimony of consciousness. The argument which seeks to undermine it is

converting an identity of type into a numerical unity of existence, and then treating the real individuals as accidental forms of this hypostatised abstraction. But the fact that we all speak of ourselves in the first person, using the same term "I," surely does not imply that this logical subject exhausts the reality of that which it symbolises; still less does the identity of the symbol imply that all these different selves are numerically one and the same Self. On the contrary, whatever resemblance there may be, and whatever be the mode of their comprehension within the all-containing bounds of the divine life, it is certain that, as selves, it is of their very essence to be relatively independent and mutually exclusive centres of existence.

When the first step has been taken, the progress of thought in regard to this hypostatised abstraction is as we have just traced it in Fichte, so far as we have followed him, and in Schelling. It is discovered that the so-called Absolute Ego is not an Ego at all; the term Ego is dropped, therefore, and there remains the Absolute without further designation, as the womb out of which all things

proceed. This is a solution which settles everything in an easy fashion, but which seems to give up everything for which "Idealism" was supposed to strive. The Absolute, so conceived, is simply a predicateless ground of existence in general; or, in Hegel's well-known phrase, it is the night in which all cows are black. This is a consummation, therefore, which need not detain us further. Fichte's own later developments are more interesting, because they soon abandon this path, and show an endeavour to cope more conscientiously with the difficulties of the question.[1]

It has already been pointed out how he began to disuse the term Absolute Ego, embracing at the same time more definitely the idea of a causal *prius* of individual intelligences. The term which he afterwards used most frequently to designate this *prius*—the term

[1] In referring to these developments, I have restricted myself to his more academic utterances where regard is had to scientific accuracy of expression, and have not entered upon his more popular and semi-religious lectures. The manifold (often unfinished) forms in which Fichte presents his views, and the varying terminology in which he clothes them, make it a very difficult task to disentangle his later positions. It is permissible to doubt whether, on certain points, they had taken definite shape in his own mind. The quotations that follow are all taken from the "Thatsachen des Bewusstseins."

which he used, for example, in his Berlin lectures, and in the important work called 'Facts of Consciousness,' which was carefully prepared by him for publication — is Life (*Leben*), or "the universal Life." And it presently appears that what he is speaking of is not the abstraction of the transcendental unity, but Nature, the elemental and unconscious existence out of which, as a matter of historical fact, the human individual seems to arise. The world, as we perceive it apart from the free action of conscious beings, is, he says, "a mere objective being, a mere streaming out (*Ausströmen*), pure externality without any inner core.[1] If free activity is to be realised" — and this is, of course, for Fichte the only worthy end of existence—"the One Life must first of all gather itself together out of that universality and dispersedness into a single point. . . . In such a contraction, the power which contracts itself is evidently the One Life, for except it nothing exists. The individual only comes into existence there-

[1] Werke, ii. 639. This Life, he says a few pages further on, is itself neither in space nor time; it is a mere force, pure force without substrate, which is not itself a phenomenon at all, and which cannot therefore be perceived, but which lies at the basis of all possible phenomenal or perceived existence.

by, the self-contraction of the One being the original *actus individuationis.*" He is evidently anxious to be as explicit as possible, for he goes on to repeat—"What is it, then, that makes and produces the individual? Evidently the One Life, through the contraction of itself. . . . It is unconditionally necessary that Life assume individual form, if it is to act. There can be no action except in individual form, seeing that only thereby does Life concentrate itself into the point of unity from which all action must start. Only in the individual is Life a practical principle."[1] "Would it be strictly correct," he reiterates, "to say that the individual becomes conscious of himself? By no means, for the individual does not as yet *exist* at all; how, then, could he become anything? On the contrary, we ought to say Life (*das Leben*) becomes conscious of itself in individual form and as individual."[2] Moreover, we may go further and say, "The universal Life creates the individual anew at every moment, though it is permissible, when we are not speaking strictly, to use the static form of Life in the individual in question as a logical subject, and to say

[1] Werke, ii. 640, 641. [2] Ibid., 647.

the individual creates himself afresh with absolute freedom at every moment."[1] The individual, however, it must always be remembered, is not an existence by himself, "but only a contingent form" of the One Life.[2] "The One does not lose itself in the various and opposite forms of itself, but remains permanent in all their change, and is therefore in strictness that which exists for or by itself in Life" (*das eigentlich für sich Seyende am Leben.*) It is not, as will be seen, the Absolute, taken as equivalent to God, but it is, he says, "the Absolute in life (*das Absolute am und im Leben*) as contrasted with its mere appearances."[3]

This is ample evidence that the *prius* from which the individual emerges is not an Ego in the ordinary sense of that term. It is Nature, which is treated by Fichte as the visible appearance of the universal Life or Force[4] of which he speaks. But, it may be rejoined, the terms he now uses all seem to imply that very origin of consciousness from the unconscious, of the ideal from the real, which Fichte before declared to be inconceivable. This, however,

[1] Werke, ii. 649. [2] Ibid., 640. [3] Ibid., 642.
[4] He sometimes varies "Leben" by "Kraft."

was an inconsequence too gross for Fichte to be guilty of; and on looking more closely we find him speaking of "Life" as "the life of Knowledge,"[1] and at other times expressly identifying Knowledge and Life.[2] Sometimes, instead of Knowledge, he uses the phrase "universal and absolute Thought." "Universal and absolute Thought," he says, "thinks the other Egos, and me myself among them—that is, it produces them by its thought."[3] "In the first unreflective act of perception, for example, it is not I who think; we must rather say thought itself, as an independent life, thinks of its own prompting and through its own powers." This is plainly the exact parallel of what was said above of the relation of "the universal Life" to the individual thinker; and similarly he speaks in this connection of individuals as simply the points in which knowledge comes to self-perception. And again, condemning the popular prejudice or misrepresentation that according to his system the world is made a product of the individual's thought, he says, with a slight variation of phraseology, "Not the individual but the one immediate spiritual

[1] Werke, ii. 555. [2] Cf. Werke, ii. 685, &c.
[3] Ibid., 603.

Life itself is the creator of all phenomena, and therefore of the phenomenal individuals themselves. Hence it is that the 'Wissenschaftslehre' insists so strongly on thinking this One Life pure and without substrate. Reason, universal thought, knowledge as such, is higher and more than the individual. To be able to conceive no reason save such an one as the individual possesses as an accident of himself, is tantamount to being unable to conceive reason at all."[1] The contempt which is here just indicated finds full expression towards the end of the book. Fichte there asserts roundly that "Knowledge has a truly independent existence. It exists by itself as a free and independent Life, and we require no bearer of knowledge." The inability to do without such a bearer, he brands as "the absolute annihilation of philosophy." "Man does not possess knowledge, but knowledge, so God will, is to possess man."[2]

Those who are conversant with the Hegelian system and its developments will not fail to note how closely this result of Fichte's later speculation resembles the impersonal system of thought which is put forward by some Hegel-

[1] Werke, ii. 607, 608. [2] Ibid., 688.

ians as the ultimate reality of the universe, and the only God for which the system can find room. Fichte, however, as already hinted, does not identify this independent self-existing Knowledge with God. His statement on this subject comes almost at the end of the treatise we have been considering. Knowledge, he seems to say, must have an object; if it were simply knowledge of knowledge, it would collapse into nonentity. The object of knowledge is God, and knowledge is accordingly described as the image or perception of God. More strictly, however, it may be said that God is never known purely as He is, and Knowledge or Life (which are perfectly identical terms) might therefore be better described as "the infinite striving to become in reality the image of God." God Himself is "the absolute, the self-subsistent, that which does not enter into process, and has never come into being: of which one can say absolutely nothing else than just—it is."[1]

This doctrine of God is peculiar to Fichte's later thought, and is so obscurely enunciated (besides being so entirely biographical in its interest) that it would be out of place to dwell

[1] Cf. Werke, ii. 680-87.

upon it longer here. But it is at least apparent that he now ascribes to God an existence out of and beyond the process of evolution which formerly constituted his entire universe. He had felt, it would seem, the necessity of bringing permanence and metaphysical reality into his system by the assertion of this Absolute Being as the last term of explanation and the object of all knowledge. Fichte has thus at least the merit of having faced the question of the mode of existence we are to attribute to the Divine Being and the relation in which he stands to the process of world-evolution. This is a question which we shall find it by no means easy to determine in the Hegelian system. Meanwhile, Fichte's conclusion on the subject—his assertion of an Absolute Being who does not enter into process — is worth noting as the outcome of the prolonged criticisms and modifications to which he subjected his earlier system.

The second point in this new version of his theory which demands a passing word (also in connection with Hegel) is the transformation of the Absolute Ego into the notion of "absolute knowledge" or "universal thought" as self-supporting, depending upon God, it is

true, for its object, but requiring no subject or bearer, itself giving rise to individual subjects by a process of self-concentration. The final disappearance of the empty Ego is hardly a cause for wonder or regret; but, in spite of Fichte's imperious tone, and his warning that we are merely setting the seal to our own philosophic incompetency, we must summon up all our hardihood and openly confess that to speak of thought as self-existent, without any conscious being whose the thought is, conveys no meaning to our minds. Thought *exists* only as the thought of a thinker; it must be centred somewhere. To thought *per se* we can attribute neither existence nor causal activity; and this being so, it can have no place in metaphysics as a theory of Being.

This is a point which will receive abundant exemplification in the system of Hegel, which we now pass to consider.

APPENDIX TO LECTURE II.

It is worth noting that in dealing with the material or given element in knowledge (cf. p. 51, *supra*), Fichte is more conscientiously thoroughgoing than Green. In fact, though the Neo-Kantians dismiss Kant's explanation of sensation as unphilosophical and irrelevant, they seldom volunteer an explanation of their own; and it is evident that, to Green at least, the facts of sense — the sense-qualities of things — constitute a serious embarrassment. He constantly assumes a stream of sensations as the material upon which the pause-giving and rationally constitutive activity of thought is exercised. These fleeting sensations form, as it were, the straw out of which his bricks are made, and it is difficult to see how he could commence operations without them. It is the equivocation between feeling and felt thing (between mere sensation and sensation transformed by the presence of the permanent Ego and qualified by manifold rational relations) that furnishes him with his recurring criticism upon Empirical thinkers. The whole aim of idealism, he says, "is to articulate coherently the conviction of there being a world of abiding realities other than, and determining the endless flow of, our feelings" ('Prolegomena,' 39). But though Green is successful in showing that the thinkers he criticises have imported into sensation or feeling much more than they are willing to acknowledge, his very mode of stating the question seems to involve the existence of mere feeling in some fashion as that which thought transforms into a system of

stable facts. He sees this himself, and endeavours ('Prolegomena,' 46 *et seq.*) to treat it as an illusion necessarily incident to our point of view. "There is a point at which the individual's retrospective analysis of the knowledge which he finds himself to possess necessarily stops. Antecedently to any of the formative intellectual processes which he can trace, it would seem that something must have been given for those processes to begin upon. This something is taken to be feeling pure and simple. When all accretions of form due to the intellectual establishment of relations have been stripped off, there seem to remain the mere sensations, without which the intellectual activity would have had nothing to deal with or operate upon. These then must be in an absolute sense the matter — the matter excluding all form — of experience." The statement is warrantable, if at all, he says, "only as a statement in regard to the mental history of the individual," and of course it is easy to show that sensation, as a πρώτη ὕλη of this sort, is something of which no assertions can be made, inasmuch as it lies outside "the cosmos of possible experience." "Mere sensation is in truth a phrase that represents no reality. . . . Thought is the necessary condition of the existence of sensible facts, and *mere* sensation, in the sense supposed, is not a possible constituent of the realm of facts" (pp. 48, 49). But this appears, after all, rather to overstate the case; for "this does not mean," Green goes on to say, "that no being can feel which does not also think. We are not called upon here to inquire whether there are really animals which feel but have not the capacity

of thinking. All that the present argument would lead us to maintain would be that, so far as they feel without thinking, their feelings are not facts for them,—for their consciousness. Their feelings *are* facts; but they are facts only so far as determined by relations, which exist only for a thinking consciousness and otherwise could not exist. And in like manner, that large part of our own sensitive life which goes on without being affected by conceptions, is a series of facts with the determination of which, indeed, thought, as ours or in us, has nothing to do, but which not the less depends for its existence as a series of facts on the action of the same subject which, in another mode of its action, enables us to know them." "Just so far as we feel without thinking, no world of phenomena exists for us. The suspension of thought in us means also the suspension of fact or reality for us. We do not cease to be facts, but facts cease to exist for our consciousness." The feelings exist as facts, it is implied, for the universal consciousness—"the consciousness which constitutes reality and makes the world one." But, according to Green's own showing, the real world present to such a consciousness would consist of the objective conditions of the successive feelings; it would be the totality of the conditions of sensation *minus* the sensative experience itself. But surely in the case of feeling it is the latter—the existence of the feeling for the feeling consciousness—which is the real fact to be explained. Without absolutely denying this aspect of feeling, Green's explanation seems arbitrarily to rule such experience out of the category of reality or fact, and to identify feeling with its

physiological conditions in a way which dangerously resembles the cruder dicta of Materialism. In his posthumous 'Lectures on Logic' he deals with the same question, and suggests that "the notion that an event in the way of sensation is something over and above its conditions," may be "a mistake of ours arising from the fact that we feel before we know what the reality of the feeling is" (Works, ii. 190). "For the only sort of consciousness for which there is reality," he says roundly, "the conceived conditions are the reality" (191). "For a subject perfectly intelligent, reality would be the fact that a sensation shall occur or has occurred just as much as that it is now occurring, because such a subject would not be a subject of the sensation" (185). To this I can only reply, that such a statement seems to me to wipe out the whole subjective experience of sensitive creatures, and to substitute for this moving world of actual events in time a static or timeless knowledge-picture of the conditions of such events or happenings.

This is borne out by what he says elsewhere of this hypothetical case of a subject perfectly intelligent but not itself the subject of sensation. "Admitting an eternally thinking subject as the *correlatum* of nature," Green asks in another place, "what is nature for such a subject?" (Works, ii. 74). "Nature is really," he answers, "or for the eternal thinking subject, for God, what it is for our reason." But "when we come to say what it is for our reason, we cannot get beyond the mere formal conditions of there being a nature at all." "For reason, nature is a system of becoming which rests on unchangeable conditions." In other words, we get the general

conception of orderly change — the schematised categories of substance and cause—and no account whatever is given of the content or "matter" of nature. And even so much, it afterwards appears, is possible only for a sensitive consciousness, for such a scheme involves the experience of existence *in time*. "Sensibility," Green says, "is the condition of existence in time, of there being events related to each other as past, present, and future;" and he therefore postulates "an eternal sensibility" as "the eternal condition of time" (Works, ii. 79, 80). This illustrates at least the impossibility of getting to work without feeling, but the interpretation to be put upon it in conformity with Green's general line of statement is hard to fix. And when he elsewhere traces the whole difficulty to "a process of abstraction," and assures us that "feeling and thought are inseparable and mutually dependent, in the consciousness for which the world of experience exists," that "each in its full reality includes the other" ('Prolegomena to Ethics,' 51), one cannot help feeling that this is heroically to cut the knot instead of untying it. It is a seductive but unsatisfactory method of surmounting actual difficulties to refer us for their solution to a possible divine experience which we cannot even conceive. As Hume said, our line is too short to fathom such immense abysses. Green's *imbroglio* in regard to sensation and time is, at all events, significant as an index of the difficulties which attend the post-Kantian idealism in its attempt to account on its own principles for Kant's "natura materialiter spectata."

LECTURE III.

THE RELATION OF HEGEL'S LOGIC TO EXPERIENCE.

As we should expect, the form of Hegel's system was conditioned by the form which philosophy had taken in the theories of his immediate predecessors. Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel stand upon the common basis of the Idealism which they developed out of the Kantian system. But Schelling, as we have seen, in developing Fichte's earlier views, had drifted into a position hardly distinguishable from Spinozism. A philosophy whose Absolute is described as "total indifference" or "pure identity in which nothing is distinguishable," has its face turned the wrong way. Schelling, like Spinoza, cannot avoid speaking as if the developed system of differences which consti-

tutes the intelligible world were unreal in comparison with this pure identity, and existed only in the "imagination" of the individual. It is against this submergence of difference, and consequent extinction of the life of the universe, that some of Hegel's sharpest sayings are directed in the famous Preface to the 'Phænomenology of Spirit.' According to the *mot* already quoted, such an Absolute is no better than the night in which all cows are black. The "truth," or ultimate reality, of the universe cannot be a pure, "original," or "immediate" identity; it must be an identity that mediates or restores itself—in other words, an identity which is realised through difference. The type of such an identity is found in the self-conscious life, and "everything in philosophy depends on the insight that the Absolute is to be apprehended not as Substance but as Subject." So Hegel sums up his contention, making a return, as it were, to Fichte's position to re-emphasise the central principal of Idealism, which Schelling had been in danger of forgetting.

But the principle reappears in a form considerably changed. This is largely traceable to the strong hold which the notion of devel-

opment had on Hegel. In the same Preface, Hegel blames Fichte for taking the Subject as a motionless ready-made form into which, as it were, we stuff all the facts of the universe, and imagine that everything is then comfortably explained. It is true that Fichte described the Ego as not so much a fact but an act—a continual energising or self-realisation, and might, therefore, have readily adopted Hegel's account of the Subject as essentially the process of its own becoming (*Sichselbstwerden*); but he did not connect the process with the facts of nature and history. It remained, for the most part, an abstract construction *in vacuo*, as we saw in examining the account of the *Anstoss*. Hegel refuses to take Self-consciousness, Subject, or Spirit, either as a ready-made fact or as an abstract construction, and insists on connecting it with the process of cosmic development, which is thus viewed as the process of the development or "becoming" of Spirit. Only then, he says, is Spirit the True, the Whole, or the Absolute. And if our demonstration is to be complete, we must be able to draw all the facts of nature and history within this process, and exhibit them as stages or elements in the self-devel-

opment of Spirit. If we separate the Absolute from this process our idea becomes a mere abstraction; the Absolute, according to his expression, is essentially result, or rather it is "the result together with its becoming." It is only putting the position slightly otherwise to say that this process of evolution, as crowned and consummated in Spirit, is itself the ultimately real. The beginning is the same as the end, for both are united in the notion of End, Purpose, or Final Cause (*Zweck*). In a development so conceived the End is in the beginning, or the real beginning is the End; the first stage is implicitly the last.

By this conception of development, Hegel not only transforms the abstract Ego of Fichte, but also makes a distinct advance upon Schelling, though Schelling uses the idea of development freely enough. This advance has often been compared to that made by Aristotle upon Plato. The dominating conception of the Aristotelian philosophy is the notion of End or Final Cause; and Aristotle's advance upon Plato lay chiefly in the clearness with which he grasped the truth that the ultimate metaphysical explanation of existence must be sought not so much in a *prius* out of which things

emerge as in the goal towards which they move. Not that the notion of End does not appear in Plato; it may be traced very plainly in the account of the Idea of the Good, and in the quest of Perfect Beauty as set forth in the 'Symposium.' But it is a frequent characteristic of Plato's thought to look back to the beginning rather than forward to the End, and to lose itself, accordingly, in cosmological constructions. And in this Schelling resembled or followed Plato, forgetting that, as soon as the beginning is separated from the End, it becomes something perfectly formless and indefinable—a source or womb to which things are referred, but which contributes nothing to their explanation. It cannot be doubted that Hegel owes to his profound study of Aristotle much of the advantage which he has over his predecessors —his firmer grasp of reality and the less arbitrary character of his constructions. And in particular, so far as he consistently maintains the Aristotelian doctrine of the *ἐνέργεια* as philosophically prior to the *δύναμις* or potentiality out of which it appears to be evolved—the doctrine of the *τέλος* or End as the explanatory cause of the whole development—so far it may be cordially allowed that Hegel represents what

is profoundest and best in modern philosophy. This thought was, I believe, the inspiration and motive-power of his philosophy. It is more doubtful whether the system which he elaborated is ultimately consistent with it.

Hegel's relation to Kant is even more important for the proper understanding of the specific features of his system than those relations to Fichte and Schelling which have just been adverted to. Fichte's system has its centre in Ethics, Schelling's in the Philosophy of Nature; Logic is the centre of the Hegelian system. In this peculiarity we may trace the more immediate influence of Kant and of the Transcendental Logic which formed the core of Kant's first great 'Critique.' Hegel's Logic is neither more nor less than an expansion, a completion and rectification of Kant's table of the categories. In other words, it is a systematic grammar of thought—an analysis of the nature of our general conceptions and of their relations to one another. The special result of the analysis is, indeed, just to make explicit the mutual relations of these conceptions, and to assign, therefore, to each its proper sphere of explanation, its proper place and function in the organism of knowledge. The points of view from which

Kant and Hegel respectively undertake the analysis of our general notions are different. Hegel often blames his predecessor for undertaking his criticism of knowledge solely with reference to the question whether the conceptions examined are subjective or objective, *a priori* or *a posteriori*, in their origin. He maintains (rightly, as it appears to me) that in trying to determine such a question we are essaying an impossible task. Thought cannot ultimately criticise its own validity. To do so would require a second species of thought to sit in judgment upon our first or actual thought, and a third thought to test the validity of the verdict thus obtained, and so on *ad infinitum*—a species of never-ending appeal as wearisome as fruitless. The trustworthiness or objective validity of our thought is, and must be, an assumption. Such an assumption may, if it is desired, be styled the trust or faith of reason in itself; such faith, at all events, is the only reasonable attitude, and from the nature of the case no arguments can be advanced in support of a distrust which is tantamount to absolute scepticism. Hegel justly, therefore, sets aside the subjective prejudice which infects Kant's investigation, and insists upon the necessity of

a perfectly disinterested investigation of our conceptions. His Logic is to be an analysis of the nature of thought undertaken without any preconceptions — an examination of our conceptions or categories on their own account, with a view to define them precisely and fix their mutual relations.

The result is, as I have tried to show on another occasion,[1] that instead of an impossible criticism *ab extra* of thought as such, we get an immanent criticism of one conception by another. The whole theory of knowledge resolves itself, indeed, into this immanent criticism of categories. That is to say, a systematic survey of our conceptions enables us to estimate the significance of each single conception aright, and prevents us from putting it to work for which it is inadequate or unfit. It enables us to see which are the poorer, less determinate, or more abstract conceptions, and which are, in comparison, richer, more determinate, more concrete. With this insight, we perceive that the latter are, in Hegel's phrase, the "truer" categories—that is to say, they give a more adequate account of the ultimate reality of

[1] Essays in Philosophical Criticism, Essay I. Philosophy as Criticism of Categories.

things. We cease, therefore, to put forward the more elementary determinations of thought, as if they were pre-eminently adapted to express the nature of that reality. We do not define God as Being, with the Eleatics, nor, with Spinoza, as Infinite Substance, nor even as the Great First Cause. Such determinations, though in a sense true so far as they go, are recognised by a systematic criticism of thought to be wholly inadequate as expressions of the divine nature. They are inadequate, not merely as all human conceptions must be inadequate to such an object, by reason of our ignorance; they are inadequate even with reference to what we know. We know them to be inadequate by reference to other conceptions which we possess—by reference, in brief, to a conception like self-consciousness, which we may draw from our own experience. In general, such a review enables us to do justice to our conceptions all round—to allow to each its relative justification, and, on the other hand, to repel the extravagant claims put forward on behalf of some to embody the only objective or scientifically accurate account of the universe. Some men of science are fond of advancing this claim on

behalf of the categories of mechanism. The ideas of matter and motion are so clear and simple, that it seems as if all explanation must consist in reducing phenomena to terms of matter in motion; so at least it is often contended from the scientific side. But such explanation is often a practical *suppressio veri;* it is a suppression of part of the fact to be explained. Nothing is more essential than to be on our guard against the seductive simplification of facts which consists in their reduction to simpler categories. It is, of course, possible to treat any fact more or less abstractly —that is, to take account only of certain of its aspects, not of the full concrete fact. The explanation by reduction to simpler categories is such an abstract account—an account true so far as it goes, but not the whole truth, and consequently false if put forward as such.

Hegel's analysis and systematisation of the categories is therefore of the highest importance both for science and for a sound philosophy. By its means, according to his own expression, we become master of our conceptions instead of being mastered by them. And by bringing to light the different threads of meaning which sometimes mingle in a single term, he has

frequently laid bare the motives of many an old dispute, and settled it thereby in the only way in which settlement was possible. Moreover, coming to the work, as we have seen, without any of Kant's preconceptions, Hegel was in a position not only immensely to amplify and improve the Kantian scheme, but also to avoid the arbitrary distinction which Kant had drawn between certain categories as objectively valid and others as merely regulative ideas. Hegel passes from Mechanism to Chemism, and from Chemism to Teleology, and the notion of the organism, recognising in all alike an objective validity. So far from being a mere subjective gloss upon the lower, the higher categories are a more accurate and adequate rendering of the nature of things. Pre-eminently is this the case with the category or notion to which all the rest lead up, the notion of self-consciousness, or, as Hegel calls it when it attains the form of speculative insight, the Absolute Idea. Instead of being dealt with as an unexplained excrescence upon the universe, the self-conscious knower is treated by Hegel as the ultimate fact, to which all other facts—if we may even speak of them provisionally as independent facts—

are relative, and in which they find their explanation. Instead of shrinking from what is called Anthropomorphism, he accepts this ultimate category of thought as the only one we can use in seeking to give an adequate account of the great Fact of existence. And here it seems to me that Hegel is unquestionably correct. Nothing can be more certain than that all philosophical explanation must be explanation of the lower by the higher, and not *vice versâ;* and if self-consciousness is the highest fact we know, then we are justified in using the conception of self-consciousness as our best key to the ultimate nature of existence as a whole.

Hegel, however, has the air of saying a good deal more than this, and hence it becomes necessary to consider somewhat carefully the relation of Hegel's Logic to experience, and the nature of the proof which he professes to give of the "development" of conceptions there expounded, and of the supreme conception in which, as he would say, the whole development returns to itself. Hegel apparently wishes us to believe that his procedure is entirely presuppositionless, and that it is guided by an unerring dialectic wholly free from subjective

admixture, and representing, as he says, the march of the object itself (*der Gang der Sache selbst*). And as the Logic advances from its beginning in the most abstract datum of thought to its consummation in the notion of self-consciousness or speculative knowledge, this latter notion is represented as proved by the same passionless and unerring dialectic to be the ultimately True. But if we aim at soberness, we may correct a number of seemingly extravagant statements by other utterances of Hegel himself. Here as elsewhere, in the exposition of his system, Hegel has suppressed the reference to experience. He presents everything synthetically, though it must first have been got analytically by an ordinary process of reflection upon the facts which are the common property of every thinker. Thus the notions with which the Logic deals admittedly form part and parcel of the apparatus of everyday thought, and the development which Hegel gives of them is simply their systematic placing. The very abstraction of "Being," with which the Method starts, *is* the starting-point merely because it is the baldest abstraction that we can make from the complex fulness of actuality; it is the barest statement that can be made about the

actual. And once got by this process of abstraction, it is not to be supposed that Being gives birth, as it were, out of itself to the more concrete conceptions which follow. It may be fairly granted, I think, to critics of the Method like Trendelenburg and Von Hartmann, that every step of the advance is empirically conditioned. The celebrated dialectical opposition which is the nerve of the process is not the contradictory opposition of the logician. Mere contradiction yields nothing new, — nothing, therefore, which, by synthesis or fusion with the original datum, could yield a third product different from either. The opposition which Hegel makes his fulcrum is contrary or real opposition; the second is not simply the negative of the first, but both are real determinations of things. But if this is so, then the first does not of itself strike round into its opposite. The opposite arises only for a subjective reflection which has had the advantage of acquaintance with the real world. Such a reflection, playing upon the empty abstraction, perceives its need of supplement by reference to the fuller reality from which it is an abstraction. Only in this way is the path to be traversed determined. The forward movement is in reality a progress

backwards : it is a retracing of our steps to the world as we know it in the fulness of its real determinations.

This view of the Method is well expressed by Trendelenburg, perhaps the acutest of Hegel's logical critics, in a passage which I cannot do better than quote. "The dialectic," says Trendelenburg, "begins according to its own declaration with abstraction ; for if 'pure being' is represented as equivalent to 'nothing,' thought has reduced the fulness of the world to the merest emptiness. But it is the essence of abstraction that the elements of thought which in their original form are intimately united are violently held apart. What is thus isolated by abstraction, however, cannot but strive to escape from this forced position. Inasmuch as it is a part torn from a whole, it cannot but bear upon it the traces that it is only a part ; it must crave to be completed. When this completion takes place, there will arise a conception which contains the former in itself. But inasmuch as only one step of the original abstraction has been retraced, the new conception will repeat the process ; and this will go on until the full reality of perception has been restored. . . . Plainly a whole world may de-

velop itself in this fashion, and, if we look more narrowly, we have discovered here the secret of the dialectic method. That method is simply the act by which we undo or retrace our original abstraction. The first ideas, because they are the products of abstraction, are recognised on their first appearance as mere parts or elements of a higher conception, and the merit of the dialectic really lies in the comprehensive survey of these parts from every side, and the thereby increased certainty we gain of their necessary connection with one another."[1]

Totally damaging as this may appear, at first

[1] Logische Untersuchungen, i. 94, 95. As an example of the general criticisms made in the text, it is sufficient to take the very first triplet, 'Being, Non-being or Nothing, and Becoming,' and here we may again conveniently follow Trendelenburg. "If Becoming is clear to us through perception, there may easily be distinguished in it the moments of Being and Non-being. Thus, while day is dawning, we may say 'it is already day,' and also 'it is not yet day.' We separate or distinguish these moments in Becoming as actually observed, *but without in the least understanding logically the characteristic of real existence in virtue of which they are present together.* . . . Pure Being, identical with self, is rest; Nothing, likewise identical with itself, is also rest. How does the movement of Becoming arise out of the union of these two motionless ideas? . . . It could not do so unless the idea of Becoming were presupposed. From pure Being, an admitted abstraction, and Nothing, again an admitted abstraction, it is impossible that there should suddenly arise Becoming, this concrete per-

sight, to the claims of the Method, it is not difficult to see that it is a perfectly true account of Hegel's method of going to work. What is more, Hegel himself, though he might "hold it not honesty to have it thus set down," will be found fully admitting that the dialectical

ception which presides over life and death."—(Logische Untersuchungen, i. 38.)

The constant presence of such concrete phantasmata—in other words, the essential dependence of the Logic on temporal and spatial metaphors—is evidently fatal, it may be added, to its claim to be, in any special sense, *pure* thought. Trendelenburg proves conclusively how the images of physical motion and physical processes cling to, and really dominate, the account of transitions which are supposed to take place in the ether of pure thought. Trendelenburg is followed here by Haym (Hegel und seine Zeit, p. 318). As the Method will not engage our attention further, this may be the most convenient place for remarking that a detailed criticism of the Logic would only reveal how great is the part played by subjective reflection in its construction; almost at any point Hegel might have engineered his path otherwise than he did. Nor are examples wanting of purely arbitrary and illusory transitions, as, for example, that in the Psychology signalised by Trendelenburg, where we are supposed to pass by the necessity of the notion from the ages of man to the difference of the sexes, and thence to sleeping and waking! In general, it may be said that the Method is more or less of an artifice to introduce system; and when reduced to a mechanism, it leads to forced constructions. What is valuable in the Logic is its matter, not its form; and the profound philosophical criticisms embedded in it would retain their value in any setting. Cf. Dr Stirling's remarks in the last note to Schwegler (p. 475), where he seems to approximate to this view.

advance really depends upon the fuller knowledge which the subject brings with him from his experience. "As a matter of fact," he says, "we bring the Notion and the whole nature of thought with us; and so we may very well say that every beginning must be made with the Absolute, and that all advance is only its exposition."[1] And again, "It must be allowed that there is an important truth in the representation that the movement forwards is a movement backwards to the *ground* of the whole, to the original and the true, on which that with which we made a beginning depends."[2] In fact, we come here upon a standing characteristic of Hegel's thought, namely, that the order of exposition always reverses the real order of thought by which the results were arrived at. Consequently, we have to look for the real fact from which he started, the real explanation of the whole process, in the result which he apparently reaches by means of it. He really lets down the ladder only in order to mount again by it to his original starting-point. The result is, therefore, not proved, in the ordinary sense, by the dialectical evolution which we go through to reach it; it was the under-

[1] Werke, v. 334. [2] Ibid., iii. 64.

lying assumption of the whole. Thus (to take an example) it is, in a manner, true to point out that the different conceptions, as they pass in review, are so many imperfect modes of expressing the Idea, which impel us onwards, therefore, to the perfect form. Hegel habitually speaks in this way. "Being," he tells us, "is the first definition of the Absolute, but it is also the most abstract and sterile." "Being-for-self," or the One, the last stage of Quality in the Logic, also "finds its readiest instance in the Ego." Similarly with Essence, the Thing and its properties, Substance and its accidents. "Though an essential stage in the evolution of the Idea, Substance is not the same with the Absolute Idea. It is the Idea under the still limited form of necessity; it is not the final Idea." Hence, on reaching the end, he is able to say, "Each of the stages hitherto reviewed is an image or adumbration of the Absolute, but at first in a limited mode; and thus it is forced onwards to the Whole, the evolution of which we have termed Method."[1] But the true explanation of this onward impulse in the lower conceptions lies, as has been said, in their apparent goal. They are all anticipations of that

[1] Wallace's Logic of Hegel, 325 (Werke, vi. 410).

goal, because we are anthropomorphic, and necessarily so, to the inmost fibre of our thinking. Every category, that is, every description of existence or relation, is necessarily a transcript from our own nature and our own experience. Into some of our conceptions we put more, into others less, of ourselves; but all modes of existence and forms of action are necessarily construed by us in terms of our own life. Everything, down to the atom, is constructed upon the scheme of the conscious self, with its multiplicity of states and its central interpenetrating unity. We cannot rid our thought of its inevitable presupposition. Nor, it may be remarked, is there any reason why we should look upon this necessity as an irksome bondage and a source of illusion. This is what we usually associate with the term anthropomorphism; and undoubtedly there is a rude and uncritical anthropomorphism, applied both to nature and God, which amply deserves all the reprobation it has received. We must not, like the savage, transfer the fulness of our personal life to the forces of nature, nor, as we are too apt to do, must we make God altogether in our own image. Our anthropomorphism must be critical. But to seek to escape

from it altogether is as futile and, it may be added, as gratuitous as the attempt already mentioned to criticise the validity of thought as such.

It must not be supposed, therefore, that I am finding fault with Hegel's acceptance of self-consciousness as the ultimate category of thought—that through which we think everything else, and through which alone the universe is intelligible to us. On this point I am quite at one with him. I merely wish to make it plain that this notion is not really reached by any "high *priori* road," but is simply derived by Hegel from the fact of his own self-conscious experience. We need not be misled in this respect by the grandiose title of the Absolute Idea. The Absolute Idea, speculative knowledge, pure knowledge, the pure Ego, as it is variously termed, is simply the notion of knowledge as such, the relation described by Aristotle, when he said that in a sense the thinker and his thoughts are one. In its essence, the relation of knower and known is, as it were, a transparent relation, in which the difference of subject and object may be said to be overcome. Of the human consciousness this cannot, in strictness, be asserted, seeing that both in knowledge and practice we seem to be de-

pendent upon what is not ourselves. If, however, we suppose cognition and volition, as finite activities, to have done their work, then the matter, which at first has the appearance of being extraneously received, will have been thoroughly intelligised and reduced to law; while, on the other hand, through volition, it will have become, in all its parts, the vehicle or expression of rational ends. In that case, it may be argued, the self-conscious knower would recognise in the object nothing foreign, but only, as it were, the realisation of his own personality. This is Hegel's idea of perfected knowledge, or rather of an eternally complete self-consciousness, as reached at the end of the Logic. There is a passage in which Fichte describes what he calls "the Idea of the Ego" in almost identical terms. But Fichte, as we saw, treated this Idea as an ideal incapable of realisation, and Hegel is constantly taunting the Fichtian Idealism with its mere Ought-to-be. In one sense Hegel is plainly right, for it is an impossible speculative position to found upon an ideal which is nowhere real. But if Fichte merely meant to say that this speculative ideal is not, and never will be, realised in the progress of human experience, then Hegel

is as plainly in the wrong if he intended to call this position in question. It may be granted to Hegel, as against Fichte, that the idea must be realised in the divine self-consciousness—that, so far, it is not a mere Ought-to-be. But to us such realisation remains a belief or faith, not something which is attained in actual knowledge, even in the reflective knowledge of the absolute philosopher. It is one thing to assert the metaphysical necessity of an Absolute Self-consciousness, another to assert the present realisation of absolute knowledge in a philosophical system. But it will be seen in the sequel that it is a characteristic of the Hegelian system to bind up these two essentially different positions in such a way that it becomes impossible to say which is intended. At this stage it is enough to repeat that, however the Logic may seem in its conclusion to overleap the human consciousness altogether and transport us directly to the specular outlook of Deity, it comes no nearer converting faith into sight than any other system has done. The Absolute Idea is no more than an ideal drawn by Hegel from his sole datum, the human self-consciousness, and does not of itself lift us beyond our starting-point.

LECTURE IV.

LOGIC AS METAPHYSIC: THOUGHT AND REALITY.

HAVING thus indicated the relation in which the Hegelian Logic stands to experience, we must next consider the place it holds in the system. Although, as I have said, the centre of Hegel's philosophising, it forms only the first part of the fully articulated theory. What, then, is its relation to the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit which follow it?

This is a point of no little importance to realise clearly, first in understanding, and secondly in passing judgment upon the Hegelian system. For, at first sight, it is difficult to see any difference between the Absolute Idea in which the 'Logic' culminates and the Absolute Spirit with which Hegel closes the record of Phil-

osophy in general. The Absolute Idea is defined as "the unity of the Notion and its reality," "the unity of the subjective and the objective Idea," "the Idea which thinks itself," "the Idea which is object to itself," "the eternal perception of itself in the other, the Notion which has achieved itself in its objectivity." It is "both in itself and for itself; it is the *νόησις νοήσεως* which Aristotle long ago termed the supreme form of the Idea." These designations—all in Hegel's own words—seem essentially identical with what is afterwards said of Mind, Self-consciousness, or Absolute Spirit, on its return out of Nature, when it gains "clear prospect o'er its being's whole." And the relation between the two is not made quite plain by Hegel's manner of treatment. A key will be found, however, if we remember that throughout the Logic (in spite of the experiential basis which we have claimed for it) Hegel has been nowhere in direct contact with facts or factual existences. The Logic moves, as he tells us himself, in a realm of shades—that is, in less metaphorical language, it deals from beginning to end with abstractions, with general notions, or, to use a technical term, with abstract universals. In place of

Kant's summary table, it professes to be an exhaustive system, of the categories. But this is literally all. In following the advance of thought it deals with the notion or conception of Being and the notion or conception of Becoming, but with no actual beings or processes. It considers the categories of substance and cause, but apart from any actual instance of substantial existence or causal agency. And finally, to come to the decisive point, it considers the notion of knowledge and the relative opposition of subject and object which it involves; but as yet there is, and can be, no question of any real knower who might serve as a concrete example of the notion or type. Here, then, we touch the difference between the Absolute Idea and the Absolute Spirit. As the 'Logic' deals only with categories or logical abstractions, the Absolute Idea is merely the scheme or form of self-consciousness. In the other case—in the Philosophy of Spirit—we are dealing, or are supposed to be dealing, with realities, facts of existence. Hence the Absolute Spirit is, in the Hegelian system, the one ultimately real existence of which the supreme category of the Logic was a description or definition.

The Logic, in short, is ostensibly a logic and nothing more; but in the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit we are offered a metaphysic or ontology — a theory of the ultimate nature of existence. It must, one would think, be of fundamental importance to clear thinking to keep these two inquiries distinct, and that no matter how intimate their mutual relations may be. But so far is Hegel from doing this that, as I propose to show, he systematically and in the most subtle fashion confounds these two points of view, and ends by offering us *a logic as a metaphysic.* Nor is this merely an implication of his views; for the identification of Logic with Metaphysics is often presented by Hegelians as the gist and outcome of the system. The Hegelian logic, it is said, is not a logic of subjective thought; it is an absolute logic, and constitutes, therefore, at the same time the only possible metaphysic. We have first, then, to consider the path by which Hegel would lead us to a position, on the surface at all events, so extraordinary. After making the nature of the position clear to ourselves in this way, we shall have the materials for forming a judgment as to its philosophical tenability.

With this view, let us turn back to the end of the 'Logic' and examine the step which follows. The transition from Logic to Nature has long been celebrated as the *mauvais pas* of the Hegelian system. It is, indeed, so remarkable, and so essentially incomprehensible to our habits of thought, that it will be best to keep close to Hegel's own language in formulating it. The Absolute Idea, he says in the larger 'Logic,' is "still logical, still confined to the element of pure thoughts. . . . But inasmuch as the pure idea of knowledge is thus, so far, shut up in a species of subjectivity, it is impelled to remove this limitation; and thus the pure truth, the last result of the Logic, becomes also the beginning of another sphere and science." The Idea, he recalls to us, has been defined as "the absolute unity of the pure notion and its reality"—"the pure notion which is related only to itself;" but if this is so, the two sides of this relation are one, and they collapse, as it were, "into the immediacy of Being." "The Idea as the totality in this form is *Nature*. This determining of itself, however, is not a process of becoming or a transition" such as we have from stage to stage in the Logic. "The passing over is

rather to be understood thus—that the Idea freely lets itself go, being absolutely sure of itself and at rest in itself. On account of this freedom, the form of its determination is likewise absolutely free—namely, the externality of space and time existing absolutely for itself without subjectivity." A few lines lower he speaks of the "resolve (*Entschluss*) of the pure Idea to determine itself as external Idea."[1] Turning to the 'Encyclopædia' we find, at the end of the smaller Logic, a more concise but substantially similar statement. "The Idea which exists for itself, looked at from the point of view of this unity with itself, is Perception; and the Idea as it exists for perception is nature. . . . The absolute *freedom* of the Idea consists in this, that in the absolute truth of itself [*i.e.*, according to Hegel's usage, when it has attained the full perfection of the form which belongs to it], it *resolves* to let the element of its particularity—the immediate Idea as its own reflection—go forth freely from itself as Nature."[2] And in the lecture-note which follows we read, as in the larger Logic

[1] Werke, v. 352, 353.

[2] Ibid., vi. 413, 414; Wallace, 328. The italics are Hegel's own throughout.

—"We have now returned to the notion of the Idea with which we began. This return to the beginning is also an advance. That with which we began was Being, abstract Being, and now we have the *Idea* as Being; but this existent Idea is Nature." In the beginning of the Philosophy of Nature—the "new sphere and science" which he referred to as thus inaugurated—no further light is vouchsafed; it is simply stated that Nature has shown itself to be the Idea in the form of otherness.[1]

What are we to say of the deliberate attempt made in these passages to *deduce* Nature from the logical idea? Simply, I think, that there is no real deduction in the case. The phrases used are metaphors which, in the circumstances, convey no meaning whatever. As Schelling afterwards said, they merely indicate a resolute leap on Hegel's part across "the ugly broad ditch" which dialectic is powerless to bridge. On this point, few English thinkers are likely to have much difficulty in making up their mind. But if our condemnation is so prompt

[1] A third account in some detail is given in the Philosophy of Religion (Werke, xii. 206-208), and forms in some respects a useful gloss upon the more authoritative and would-be scientific statements quoted in the text. This account is referred to in Lecture V., p. 172 *et seq.*

and decisive—if we condemn the attempt not so much because it has failed as because it was ever made—how are we to account for the form of rigorous deduction which Hegel adopts? Is there no sympathetic explanation to be given of his procedure? To some extent I think there is, if it be remembered that Hegel's true meaning is reached, as I remarked before, by reading him backward rather than forward. He would certainly have protested against the idea that he was here describing any real process—anything that ever took place; just as he would have protested against the idea that he ever meant to assert a factual existence of the logical Idea by itself, antecedently to the existence of Nature and Spirit. Nature itself, we can hear him saying, is an abstraction that cannot *exist*, if by existence is meant independent factual existence on its own account; it exists only relatively to, or within, the life of Spirit, which is therefore in strictness the only existence or fact. But if this is true of Nature, it is still more manifestly true of Logic or the system of thought-determinations which sums itself in the Absolute Idea; such a system is admittedly an abstraction, and was never affirmed to exist *in*

rerum naturâ. Here again, then, as throughout the 'Logic,' it might be said we are merely undoing the work of abstraction and retracing our steps towards concrete fact. This, as we have seen, implies the admission that it is our experiential knowledge of actual fact which is the real motive-force impelling us onward—impelling us here from the abstract determinations of the 'Logic' to the quasi-reality of Nature, and thence to the full reality of Spirit. It is because we ourselves are spirits, that we cannot stop short of that consummation. In this sense, we can understand the feeling of "limitation" or incompleteness of which Hegel speaks at the end of the 'Logic.' The pure form craves, as it were, for its concrete realisation. But it need hardly be added that the craving or feeling of incompleteness exists in our subjective thought alone, and belongs in no sense to the chain of thought-determinations itself.

Such, it seems to me, is the explanation which a conciliatory and sober-minded Hegelian would give of Hegel's remarkable *tour de force*. In treating of Hegel on other occasions,[1]

[1] In The Development from Kant to Hegel, and in Mind, vi. 513 *et seq*.

I have been fain to avail myself of this interpretation, being unable otherwise to put an intelligible meaning into his statements on the subject. For those who accept this reading, Hegel's clumsy stride from Logic to Nature will appear only an objectionable mode of presentation incident to the synthetic and impersonal form in which he had, once for all, cast his system. Otherwise they will lay as little stress as possible upon the so-called deduction. Further reflection has convinced me, however, that Hegel's contention here is of more fundamental import to his system than such a representation allows. Perhaps it may even be said that, when we surrender this deduction, though we may retain much that is valuable in Hegel's thought, we surrender the system as a system. For, however readily he may admit, when pressed, that in the *ordo ad individuum* experience is the quarry from which all the materials are derived, it must not be forgotten that he professes to offer us an *absolute* philosophy. And it is the characteristic of an absolute philosophy that everything must be deduced or constructed as a necessity of thought. Hegel's system, accordingly, is so framed as to elude the necessity of resting

anywhere on mere fact. It is not enough for him to take self-conscious intelligence as an existent fact, by reflection upon whose action in his own conscious experience and in the history of the race certain categories are disclosed, which, when reduced by philosophic insight to a system of mutually connected notions, may be viewed as constituting the essence or formal structure of reason. He apparently thinks it incumbent upon him to prove that spirit exists by a necessity of thought. The concrete *existence* of the categories (in Nature and Spirit) is to be deduced from their *essence* or thought-nature; it is to be shown that they cannot *not* be. When we have mounted to the Absolute Idea, it is contended, we cannot help going further. The *nisus* of thought itself projects thought out of the sphere of thought altogether into that of actual existence. In fact, strive against the idea as we may, it seems indubitable that there is here once more repeated in Hegel the extraordinary but apparently fascinating attempt to construct the world out of abstract thought or mere universals. The whole form and structure of the system, and the express declarations of its author at points of critical

importance, combine to force this conviction upon us. The language used can only be interpreted to mean that thought out of its own abstract nature gives birth to the reality of things.

Hegel's procedure here cannot but recall to our minds the similar reasonings of Plato. There is a difference, no doubt, between categories and class-names; but, otherwise, the resemblance is striking between the abstract chain of the Logic and Plato's system of general notions or Ideas, rising from stage to stage and culminating in the Idea of the Good. The Platonic world of Ideas was not an abstract One, like the principle of the Eleatics; it was itself multiplicity in unity—a *system* of Ideas, each of which was connected with, or, according to the Platonic phrase, participated in, all the rest, the whole series being summed, as it were, in the Idea of the Good. So far we have almost an exact parallel to Hegel's Logic. But for Plato also there arose the necessity of passing beyond this world of pure Ideas. The sensible world —the world of *real* multiplicity and change— pressed itself upon his notice. The sensible world presents us, not with a single changeless

type, but with a multitude of ever-changing individuals, which may be said more or less perfectly to exemplify the abstract type, but the determinations of whose real existence are not exhausted by that formal definition. Here Plato also has recourse to a species of "passing over" on the part of the Ideas. Every one must have felt how difficult it is at this point, I do not say, to yield assent to what Plato says, but to put any intelligible meaning upon his words. "We cannot doubt," says Zeller, "that Plato meant to set forth in Ideas not merely the archetypes and essence of all true existence, but energetic powers; that he regarded them as living and active, intelligent and reasonable."[1] They are represented as of themselves creative and as the efficient causes of the manifold and transient shadows of themselves which we call real things. But even if we grant Plato the self-subsistent existence of his pure forms, and try, *per impossibile*, to follow him in the dynamic efficiency which he ascribes to them, he still fails to give any satisfactory explanation of the indefinite reduplication by the Idea of its own exemplifications, not to speak of other essential features of the sensible world.

[1] Plato and the Older Academy, 267.

He is obliged to call in a second principle, the Platonic matter, as it has been called—the unlimited element of space, he would appear to mean—as the condition of separation, division, motion, and unlimited repetition. A break-down very similar in this respect will be observed when we come to close quarters with Hegel.

But, it will be said, surely it is impossible to ascribe such crude mythological conceptions to Hegel, who lived, after all, in the nineteenth century. How can we credit him with a point of view which we have even a certain shamefacedness in attributing to Plato? This is undoubtedly an important consideration, and one which may well make us hesitate. But it is not the mythological detail which determines the fundamental similarity of two doctrines; though, to my mind, Hegel's passage from Logic to Nature is to the full as mythological as anything we find in Plato.[1] Even the

[1] Perhaps, too, we in England, and at the present day, hardly realise the extraordinary intellectual atmosphere in which the Hegelian system was produced. A time of philosophical zymosis or seething, Dr Stirling has styled the period: it was a time in which system chased system, and in which men ran riot in the most imaginative conceptions. Without leaving the ranks of the *dii majores*, who were also comparatively the saner spirits of the movement, I may quote a passage

creative agency assigned to the Ideas is rather a necessary consequence of Plato's doctrine from Schelling's 'Lectures on the Method of Academic Study,' which illustrates to some extent the intellectual tone of the time. The passage occurs at the beginning of the eleventh lecture, in a discussion of the very point adverted to in the text —the relation of Nature to the Ideas, as he calls them after Plato. "God's mode of producing or creating," he says, "is a pouring of His whole universality and essentiality into particular forms, whereby the latter, though special or particular, are yet *universa*, what the philosophers have called Monads or Ideas. . . . Now, though the Ideas in God are pure and absolutely ideal, yet they are not dead but living, the first organisms of the divine self-perception, which, on that very account, participate in all the qualities of His nature, and in spite of their particular form share in His undivided and absolute reality. In virtue of this participation they are, like God, productive, and work according to the same law and in a similar fashion. That is, they infuse their essence, as it were, into particular forms and reveal it through individual and particular things, though themselves timeless, and only from the standpoint of individual things, and for such individual things, existing in time. The Ideas are related to things as their souls; the things are their bodies."

Even if what is here asserted of the Ideas is a delegated life and activity, inasmuch as it is said to belong to the conceptions as elements in the divine life, yet there is still the same personification of abstract conceptions as with Plato, and a real activity is similarly attributed to them. If, then, we bear in mind that Schelling was Hegel's philosophical associate, or senior partner, so to speak, for several years—in fact, up to the very year (1803) in which this passage was published—and if we remember that, as regards the philosophy of Nature in particular, Hegel did little more than adapt the ideas so prodigally thrown out by Schelling, I cannot but think that such a passage forms rather a sinister gloss upon some of Hegel's own expressions.

than its distinguishing characteristic. The distinctive feature of the Platonic theory of Ideas, in which it is the type of a whole family of systems, Hegel's among the rest, I take to be its endeavour to construct existence or life out of pure form or abstract thought. Plato's whole account of sensible things is to name the general idea of which they are particular examples; Hegel's whole account of Nature is that it is a reflection or realisation of the abstract categories of the Logic. If the reality of natural things consists only in this, then creative agency must be attributed, more or less explicitly, to the thought-determinations. In them, at all events, lies the ultimate explanation of so-called existence. If this be admitted, the rest is for the most part matter of expression.

If further corroboration is wanted of the view here taken of the relation of logic and reality in the Hegelian scheme, there are many incidental remarks, besides the official passages already quoted, which present the same idea in a different connection, and in a slightly different form. Nothing, for example, can exceed the scorn which Hegel pours upon "Being"—which he rarely introduces without pausing to tell us that it is the very poorest and

most abstract of notions. "Certainly," he says, "it would be strange if the Notion, the very heart of the mind, the Ego, or in one word the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to embrace so poor a category as Being, the very poorest and most abstract of all."[1] Every reader of Hegel must be familiar with this snort of contempt, which is heard most frequently, it may be noted, when the Ontological argument and modern criticisms upon it are under consideration. But we are apt to be taken in here by Hegel's superior air, under cover of which he evades the real point at issue. He is certainly correct in saying that the category of Being is the poorest and most abstract of all; it is the very least that can be said of a thing. Consequently, if any one were to suppose that he had done with things, when he had simply affirmed their existence, he would undoubtedly be making a great mistake. Instead of being at the end of his task, he is only at the beginning. He must proceed to determine the mode of their existence in a thousand ways before he can be said, even approximately, to give a true account of their nature. In short, the progress of knowledge

[1] Wallace's Logic of Hegel, 92.

may very well be described as a continual advance towards greater determinateness. And if we apply this reasoning to the supreme object of thought—in Hegel's language here, to "the concrete totality we call God"—it is again very evident, as was pointed out in last lecture, that if we are content simply with an assertion of God's existence, we leave the whole question of the divine nature dark. Because Being is the last result of abstraction, people are apt to imagine that, when they have reached it, they have reached the grandest and most dignified title they can apply; whereas, as Hegel says, it is the most meagre assertion that can be made. Hegel deserves all praise for the persistency with which he has attacked this vicious tendency of thought, and of the scholastic logic in particular, to hark back upon its first abstractions. But when all this is thankfully admitted, the real point at issue remains untouched. When we say that a thing exists or possesses being, we may be saying very little about it; yet that is, on the other hand, the all-important assertion upon which all the rest are based. When we are assured that we are dealing with a reality, we can go on from the elementary statement of its existence to a

more elaborate description of its nature. But that elementary statement must be originally made in virtue of some immediate assurance, some immediate *datum* of experience. We must touch reality somewhere; otherwise our whole construction is in the air. Whether we rest content, as the ordinary consciousness apparently does, with the immediacy we seem to have in external perception, or restrict such immediacy to the perception of our own existence — whether we look with some schools at the senses as the type of such assurance, or include also the higher feelings and what are called the dictates of the heart—in short, whatever view we may take as to the precise *locus* and scope of such immediate certainty, no sophistry can permanently obscure our perception that the real must be *given*. Thought cannot make it; thought only describes what it finds. That there is a world at all, we know only through the immediate assurance, perception, or feeling of our own existence, and through ourselves of other persons and things. Kant may have unduly narrowed the meaning of the term experience, but there is no circumventing his classical criticism of the Ontological argument. There is no evolution possible of

a fact from a conception. The existence of God must either be an immediate certainty, or it must be involved in facts of experience which do possess that certainty.

If, in the light of what has been said, we look once more at Hegel's disparaging reference to "Being," we see at once the fallacy which it involves, if it is intended to apply to the question before us. "It would be strange," he says, "if the Notion, the very heart of the mind, the Ego, or in one word, the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to embrace so poor a category as Being." Most assuredly the Notion contains the *category* of Being; so does the Ego, that is to say, the Idea of the Ego, and the Idea of God, both of which are simply the Notion under another name. The category of Being is contained in the Ego, and may be disengaged from it, much as, in the old logic of the schools, the notion "man" could be made to yield up successively the notion "animal," "substance," and the rest, and eventually the very notion in question — Being. But when we ask for real bread, why put us off with a logical stone like this? It is not the *category* "Being," of which we are in quest, but

that reality of which all categories are only descriptions, and which itself can only be experienced, immediately known, or lived. To such reality or factual existence there is no logical bridge; and thoughts or categories have meaning only if we assume, as somehow given, a real world to which they refer.

But even if we waive objections which, I think, are insuperable, and allow Hegel to take this impossible leap from Logic to Nature, there remains the essential further question, What account does he give of the Nature thus boldly deduced? Is it an account at once credible and sufficient?

Nature, Hegel tells us, is the Idea or thought in the form of otherness, in the form of externality to itself. Or again, more metaphorically, he quotes Schelling's saying that Nature is a petrified intelligence, or as others have said, a frozen intelligence;[1] or it might be described, he says again, as the corpse of the understanding. Still more poetically he says: "Nature is spirit in alienation from itself. Hence the study of nature is the liberation of spirit in nature or the liberation of nature

[1] Werke, vi. 46; Wallace, 39.

itself; for nature is potentially reason, but only through the spirit does this inherent rationality become actual and apparent. Spirit has the certainty which Adam had when he saw Eve. This is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. For Nature is in like manner the bride to which Spirit is wedded. . . The inner heart of nature (*das Innere der Natur*) is nothing but the universal; hence, when we have thoughts, we recognise in nature's inner heart only our own reason and feel ourselves at home there."[1] But we must not be carried away by the poetry of passages which recall the rich metaphors of Bacon and Wordsworth. For when we inquire more narrowly into the Self or Spirit, which we recognise in nature under its form of estrangement, it is found to be neither more nor less than the logical categories—the Notion. This is implied, indeed, in the very passage quoted, by the introduction of the phrase "the universal"; and it is made more explicit in a passage of the 'Encyclopædia,' which conveys the same thought: — "The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and, as the phrase is,

[1] Werke, vii. 22.

to find ourselves at home in it—which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the Notion, which is our inmost self."[1] And in another passage he expressly gives this explanation of his phrases about thought as the kernel of the world, and nature as a system of unconscious thought: "Instead of using the term Thought (*Gedanken*), it would be better, in order to avoid misconception, to say category, or thought-determination (*Denkbestimmung*). For logic [which he has a few lines before identified with metaphysic] is the search for a system of thought-determinations in which the opposition between subjective and objective, in its usual sense, vanishes."[2] This system is, of course, the chain of categories unrolled in the 'Logic,' which, forming, as it were, the common basis of nature and mind, is spoken of by Hegel as "the absolute and self-existent ground of the universe."[3] Indeed, in his own words in the same connection, "the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Mind take the place, as it were, of an Applied Logic, and Logic is the soul which animates them both. *Their*

[1] Werke, vi. 367. [2] Ibid., vi. 46; Wallace, 39.
[3] Ibid., vi. 51; Wallace, 42.

problem is only to recognise the logical forms under the shapes they assume in Nature and Mind — shapes which are only a particular mode of expression for the forms of pure thought."[1]

But if men and things are merely types or exemplifications of logical notions, what constitutes the difference, we may ask, between the category, as such, in the Logic and the category, as thing, in nature?[2] If nature is "the other" of thought, thought in estrangement or alienation from itself, what is it that makes the otherness, the alienation? What is the nature of the "petrifaction" that thought experiences? Hegel is fain to speak of it in many places as materiature.[3] Similarly, Dr Stirling says that Hegel "demonstrates the presence of the notion in the most crass, refractory, extreme externality—demonstrates all to be but a *concretion* of the notion."[4] Now I maintain that the whole problem of reality as such is wrapped up in these metaphorical

[1] Wallace, 41, 42.

[2] Restricting ourselves for the present to the case of nature, though the assertion is made by Hegel equally of "the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit."

[3] Materiatur.

[4] Secret of Hegel, i. 177. The italics are mine.

phrases — otherness, petrifaction, materiature, concretion—and that by evading the question, Hegel virtually declines to take account of anything but logical abstractions. He offers us, in a word, a logic in place of a metaphysic; and it may be unhesitatingly asserted that such a proposal, if taken literally, is not only untenable, it is absurd. "Neither gods nor men," as Dr Stirling says, when speaking in his own person, "are in very truth logical categories,"[1]—and the same may be said of every natural thing. A living dog is better than a dead lion, and even an atom is more than a category. It at least exists as a reality, whereas a category is an abstract ghost, which may have a *meaning* for intelligent beings, but which, divorced from such real beings and their experience, is the very type of a *non-ens*.

I am far from denying that we may truly speak of the categories as realised in nature, just as we speak, in a wider way, of the world as the realisation or manifestation of reason. But we must recognise the quasi-metaphorical nature of the language used, which simply means that the world gives evidence of being constructed on a rational plan. To discover the

[1] Schwegler, 476.

categories in nature means no more than to understand nature by their means; from which it is a legitimate inference that nature is laid out, as we may say, according to these conceptions. Hegel apparently says, on one occasion, that his own elaborate phraseology means no more than the ancient position that νοῦς rules the world, or the modern phrase, there is Reason in the world.[1] If the system is reducible to this very general proposition, our objections would certainly fall to the ground; but Hegel's own expressions go a long way further. His language would justify us in believing that the categories actually take flesh and blood and walk into the air, and that the whole frame of nature is no more than a duplicate or reflection of the thought-determinations of the Logic. Nor is this merely a forced interpretation put upon his words. It is, as will be more fully seen in the following lecture, if not his deliberate meaning, still a real tendency of his thought. When he speaks, therefore, of the categories as the heart or kernel of nature, we require to be on our guard against the idea that logical abstractions can *thicken*, as it were,

[1] Werke, vi. 46; Wallace, 39; in the context of some of the passages already quoted.

into real existences. Categories are not the skeleton round which an indefinite "materiature" gathers to form a thing. The meanest thing that exists has a life of its own, unique and individual, which we can partly *understand* by terms borrowed from our own experience, but which is no more identical with the description we give of it, than our own inner life is identical with the description we give of it in a book of psychology. Existence is one thing, knowledge is another. But the logical bias of the Hegelian philosophy tends, as I have said, to make this essential distinction disappear, and to reduce things to mere types or "concretions" of abstract formulæ. "Hegel is so complete," says Dr Stirling in the context of the passage previously quoted, "that he leaves existential reality at the last as a mere abstraction, as nothing when opposed to the work of the notion."[1] That is just what I complain of. The result of Hegel's procedure would really be to sweep "existential reality" off the board altogether, under the persuasion, apparently, that a full statement of all the thought-relations that constitute our knowledge of the thing is equivalent to the existent

[1] Secret of Hegel, i. 177.

thing itself. On the contrary, it may be confidently asserted that there is no more identity of Knowing and Being with an infinity of such relations than there was with one.

Hegel's position, or the tendency of his thought, may again be aptly illustrated, I think, by two passages from Schelling. "In the highest perfection of natural science," he tells us in the 'Transcendental Idealism,' "the phenomenal or material element must disappear entirely, and only the laws, or the formal element, remain. . . . The more law becomes apparent in nature, the more the hull or wrapping disappears; the phenomena themselves become more spiritual, and *at last cease altogether* (zuletzt völlig aufhören). Optical phenomena are nothing more than a system of geometry whose lines are drawn by the light, and the material nature of this light itself is already doubtful. In the phenomena of magnetism all trace of matter has already vanished, and of the phenomena of gravitation nothing remains but their law, the carrying out of which on a great scale constitutes the mechanism of the heavenly movements."[1] And in another place we read: "The Philosophy of Nature

[1] Werke, I. iii. 340.

gives an account of what is immediately positive in nature, without attending to space, for example, and the rest of such nullities (*den Raum und das übrige Nichtige*). It sees in the magnet nothing but the living law of Identity, and in matter only the unfolded copula in the shape of gravitation, cohesion, &c."[1] Surely, on reading a passage like this, we instinctively feel that the reality or qualitative existence of things is being spirited away from us under a metaphor. It may be very well for a philosophy so conceived to "abstract" from what it cannot explain; but for all that, the magnet is neither the law of Identity, as Schelling sets it down, nor the Syllogism, as Hegel would have it to be.[2] In short, whatever truth such passages[3] may have as accounts of the progress of knowledge, they leave the metaphysical question of existence untouched. Whatever importance we attach, and rightly attach, in philosophy to the universal or the formal, the individual alone is the real.[4]

[1] "Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte'schen Lehre," Werke, I. vii. 64.

[2] See Wallace, p. 42.

[3] For a very similar passage in Hegel himself, see Wallace, 35, 36.

[4] This statement has been much attacked as the expression

It cannot be supposed that Hegel was blind to a plain truth like this, and accordingly passages might easily be quoted which apparently admit all that has been said. But the form which such admissions take in Hegel is characteristic. While not denying the individual character of existence, he yet adroitly contrives to insinuate that, because it is indefinable, the individual is therefore a valueless abstraction.

of unqualified Nominalism. Nevertheless, in the sense in which I have used it, it seems to me unquestionably true. The question is not here of the "mere individual" or "mere particular" with which Neo-Hegelians make so much play. I have argued myself against this abstraction in the fifth lecture of 'Scottish Philosophy,' dealing with the Relativity of Knowledge. Insistence on the mere particular may lead to the doctrine of an unknowable substance behind the qualities; but after we have banished the "metaphysical phantom of the thing-in-itself," surely a distinction remains to be made between knowledge and existence. "What is any individual thing," asks Mr Ritchie (Philosophical Review, i. 278), "except a meeting-point of universal attributes?" And again, "Spiritual substance, like material substance, is *either* simply a meeting-point of universal qualities *or* a metaphysical phantom." Surely Mr Ritchie cannot seriously mean that his own existence, for himself, is no more than a cluster of abstractions. As all knowledge consists of universals, it is obvious that, however far we may penetrate into the essence of any individual thing, our account of it will be a set of universal attributes. But the attributes do not meet, *as universals*, in the real thing; no number of abstracts flocking together will constitute a fact. In this sense, there is a complete solution of continuity between the abstractions of knowledge and the concrete texture of real existence.

Sensible existence," he says, for example, "has been characterised by the attributes of individuality and a mutual exclusion of its members. It is well to remember that these very attributes are thoughts and general terms. . . . Language is the work of thought; and hence all that is expressed in language must be universal. . . . And what cannot be uttered, feeling or sensation, far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant or untrue. If I say 'the unit,' 'this unit,' 'here,' 'now,' all these are universal terms. Everything and anything is an individual, a 'this,' or if it be sensible, is here and now. Similarly, when I say 'I,' I *mean* my single self, to the exclusion of all others; but what I *say*, viz., 'I,' is just every other 'I,' which in like manner excludes all others from itself. . . . All other men have it in common with me to be 'I.'"[1] This demonstration of the universal, or, to put it perhaps more plainly, the abstract, nature of thought, even in the case of those terms which seem to lay most immediate hold upon reality, is both true and useful in its own place. But the legitimate conclusion from it in the present connection is not Hegel's insinuated disparagement of

[1] Wallace, 32.

the individual, but rather that which Trendelenburg draws from the very same considerations, that the individual, as such, is incomensurable or unapproachable by thought.[1] Or, as Mr Bradley puts it still more roundly and trenchantly, "The real is inaccessible by way of ideas. . . . We escape from ideas, and from mere universals, by a reference to the real which appears in perception."[2]

If there is an approach to disingenuousness in Hegel's manner of turning the tables upon reality here, his treatment of the most characteristic feature of nature, and real existence in general, displays a much more unmistakable infusion of the same quality.

Nature has been defined as "the other" of reason; that is, it is in some way the duplicate or reflection of the thought-determinations of the 'Logic.' Conceptions which were there regarded in their abstract nature are now exhibited as realised in actual existences. In Hegel's own formal definition, towards the beginning of the 'Naturphilosophie,' "Nature

[1] "Das Einzelne ist an sich das dem Denken Incommensurable."—Logische Untersuchungen, ii. 230.

[2] Principles of Logic, 63, 69.

is to be regarded as a system of grades, the one of which proceeds necessarily from the other, and constitutes its proximate truth; not, however, in such a way that the one is *actually* produced out of the other, but in the inner idea which is the ground of nature."[1] In other words, the Philosophy of Nature gives us a system or ascending series of types, in which we pass from space and gravitation, at the one end of the scale, to the animal organism at the other. Speaking with some latitude, we may be said to pass, in such a progress, from the most abstract and imperfect analogue of self-conscious existence to the very brink of the appearance of consciousness in the world. The course of the exposition is swelled and distorted by the mass of empirical matter which Hegel takes from the special sciences, and forces, often violently enough, into the forms of his system; but the method followed is intended to be substantially similar to that of the 'Logic.' The whole system of types, moreover, is to be taken as an ideal development. It has nothing to do with the possible evolution of the planetary system out of a simpler state of mutually attracted vapor-

[1] Werke, vii. 32.

ous particles, with the origin of life from the non-living, or with the evolution of one animal type from another, as set forth in the Darwinian theory. With these questions of scientific evolution philosophy does not deal, according to Hegel's statement above; his own evolution is, as he would say, a timeless evolution like that of the logical categories. That is to say, he contemplates the system of types as existing eternally side by side, all being necessary to the entirety of the system. "The notion," he says, "thrusts all its particularity at once into existence. It is perfectly empty to represent the species as evolving themselves gradually in time; the time-difference has absolutely no interest for thought."[1] This embodies an important truth, as I conceive, with regard to the philosophy of evolution, but we are not concerned with that aspect of the position here. What is evident from these quotations is, that nature is, in a manner, reduced by Hegel to a static system of abstract types.

But a mere glance at nature suffices to show that its leading feature, as contrasted with the logical necessity which links the different parts of a rational system together, is its pure

[1] Werke, vii. 33.

matter-of-factness—I will not say its irrational, but its non-rational or alogical character. Things lie side by side in space, or succeed one another in time, with perfect indifference; there is no logical passage from the one to the other. Why should there be just so many planets in our system, and no more? and why should their respective sizes be just as they are? Why should one of them have been rent into fragments and not the rest? Why should the silver streak cut England off from Continental Europe? Why should any island rise in ocean precisely where it does? Why should there be an island there at all, and if an island, why not a mile to eastward or to westward? No doubt, in many cases, we may be able to assign a cause for these facts—*i.e.*, we may be able to point to a certain previous distribution of things from which they necessarily resulted. It is conceivable that if our knowledge were perfect, we should be able to account in this way for the exact position of each minutest grain of sand. But the ultimate collocation to which we traced the present arrangement would be as far removed as ever from logical or rational necessity: it would be *a mere collocation*, some-

thing wholly alogical, to be accepted as a matter of fact. The same thing might be further exemplified by appeal to another aspect of the world—an aspect which is coextensive with our whole experience of external nature. What logical connection is there between the different qualities of things—between the smell of a rose, for example, and its shape; or between the taste of an orange and its colour? These qualities are found together, as matter of fact, but no process of reasoning could possibly lead us from the one to the other. Then, to go back to Hegel's idea of a system of types, what are we to say of the indefinite multiplicity of individuals in which the type is realised? Why should there be more than one perfect example of each? Of all this there is no account in Hegel; yet it is the most characteristic feature of real existence. As Professor James says—"The parts seem to be shot out of a pistol at us. Each asserts itself as a simple brute fact, uncalled for by the rest, which, so far as we can see, might even make a better system without it. Arbitrary, foreign, jolting, discontinuous—are the adjectives by which we are tempted to describe it."[1]

[1] Mind, vii. 187.

It was not possible for Hegel altogether to ignore the aspect of existence emphasised in the last paragraph, but he seems to think that by *naming* the difficulty he has got rid of it. He calls it Contingency, and opposes it to the necessity of the Notion: "The contradiction of the Idea in its state of externality to itself as nature, is, more particularly, the contradiction between the necessity infused by the Notion into nature's formations (and their consequent rational determination as members of an organic totality), and, on the other hand, their indifferent contingency and indeterminate lawlessness. Contingency and liability to determination from without have their right within the sphere of nature."[1] But then follows the audacious stroke by which Hegel endeavours to turn the tables upon reality. It is nature's fault, not the philosopher's, he says in effect, that facts behave in this alogical way. "It is the *impotence* of nature that it maintains the determinations of the Notion only in an abstract or general fashion, and leaves their particular realisation exposed to determination from without." Again, he says: "Nature is Spirit in alienation from itself, which, as released out of

[1] Werke, vii. 36.

itself, is full of freaks, a bacchantic god, who does not rein himself in and keep himself in hand; in nature the unity of the notion is concealed."[1] He expresses the same idea more prosaically, but not less strongly, in the introduction to the 'Encyclopædia': "The Idea of nature, when it is individualised, loses itself in contingencies. Natural history, geography, medicine, &c., have to deal with determinations of existence, with species and distinctions which are determined not by reason, but by sport and external accident."[2] Finally, when the point comes up in connection with the category of Contingency in the Logic, Hegel takes occasion to make a disparaging remark upon the admiration sometimes lavished upon nature for its richness and variety: "In its vast variety of structures, organic and inorganic, nature affords us only the spectacle of a contingency that runs riot into endless detail. At any rate the checkered scene presented by the several varieties of animals and plants, conditioned as it is by outward circumstances,

[1] Werke, vii. 24. There is a play in the original upon the word "ausgelassen," which means both "released" or "let out," and full of freaks or riotous mirth.

[2] "Die von äusserlichem Zufall und vom Spiele, nicht durch Vernunft bestimmt sind."—Werke, vi. 24; Wallace, 21.

the complex changes in the figuration and grouping of clouds, and the like, ought not to be set above the equally casual fancies of the mind which surrenders itself to its own caprices."[1] "Contingency, however," he proceeds, "has, *no less than other forms of the Idea*, its due office in the world of objects. This is seen, in the first instance, in nature, on whose surface, so to speak, contingency ranges unchecked—a fact which must simply be recognised without the pretension which is sometimes, but erroneously, ascribed to philosophy of seeking to find in it something which can only be as it is, and not otherwise."[2]

These passages, more particularly the last, contain a curious combination of two points of view, one of which is wholly untenable, while the other is not open to a system like Hegel's. The first is that Contingency is itself a category, a form of the Idea, which, when the Idea is realised, must be represented and have its scope

[1] It is perhaps worth remarking that Hegel's instances, being of an especially unimportant nature, tend to disguise the fact that what he calls contingency is coextensive with the whole range of existence as such. Thus, it is not merely my "casual fancies" that display contingency, but the whole course of my thoughts looked at as a process of events in time, that is to say, my whole subjective or individual experience.

[2] Werke, vi. 288, 290; Wallace, 227, 228.

as well as the other categories. By calling a thing contingent, therefore, we seem to be making an assertion about it which brings it within the range of our rational system. But this is surely the most transparent fallacy. For, to say that a thing is contingent or accidental, is to say, in so many words, that we can give no rational account of why it is as it is, and not otherwise. It is hard to see how the saying that we have no explanation to give can be interpreted as itself the very explanation wanted. A system of rationalism which talks of what is "determined not by reason but by sport and external accident," must fairly be held to acknowledge a breakdown in its attempt to grasp the whole of existence. Hegel makes this acknowledgment, after a fashion, in what may be distinguished as a second point of view. He says that we must not pretend to reduce this contingency to reason, or, as he expresses it in the 'Naturphilosophie'—"The impotence of nature sets limits to philosophy, and it is most unseemly to demand of the Notion that it shall comprehend such contingencies, and, as it is called, construct or deduce them." But he throws the blame on Nature. If we cannot rationalise the facts, that is merely because

the facts are of no interest or importance to reason. Now, in a sense, this is a position which no one would think of disputing. So far as the *meaning* of the universe is concerned, it may be said that it does not matter whether such details are arranged in this way or in that way. And to expound the meaning of the universe constitutes, it may be argued, the essential task of philosophy. Philosophy has to show that the world embodies a rationally satisfying End, which does not fail of realisation; but it is of necessity precluded from taking any notice of the individual facts, whether persons or things, in which this meaning, End, or Idea is realised. There is a certain amount of truth in this contention, though I venture to think that such a philosophy would remain seriously incomplete on its metaphysical side. But however that may be, Hegel, as the propounder of an absolute system, is not entitled to hold such language. It might be intelligible on the part of a philosophy which, professedly starting with the tangled facts of experience, endeavoured to trace in them a thread of rational purpose, and thus work its way to the more or less confident assertion of a rational harmony or system. But it is otherwise with a philoso-

phy which sets out from a completed system of thought, and professes to explain the factual world to its inmost fibre out of reason. Because it starts from the contingent individual facts of experience, the first system is in no danger of abolishing its own standing-ground. But for a system like Hegel's to waive aside all consideration of mere matter-of-fact, means not so much that the matter-of-fact basis is taken for granted, as that it is systematically ignored. And an important practical result will be that the End in which the meaning of the world is found will be the realisation of some abstract idea, without any regard for the individuals for whom or in whom it can alone be realised. The universe will tend to shrink together into a logical process, of which individuals are merely the foci.

It will be seen in the next lecture that this is a special danger of the Hegelian system.

APPENDIX TO LECTURE IV.

It may be instructive and not without interest to place on record the expressed opinions of Kant and Fichte on the question of real existence. They will be found (what we should hardly expect in the case of Fichte) to form an effective contrast to the tendency of Hegelian thought as indicated above. The comparison is the more easily made since Hegel in his 'Logic' is going over essentially the same ground as Kant in the 'Transcendental Logic' and Fichte in the theoretical part of the 'Wissenschaftslehre.'

Of Kant not much requires to be said. To him, of course, the categories are mere empty forms without the matter of sense. For the rest, his position has been indicated above. Every existential proposition, he says, is synthetical. Its truth can only be ascertained *a posteriori*, or by a reference to experience. Hence existence is something which no notion or system of notions can give us. This is the line of thought which he brings to bear with conclusive force upon the ontological argument for the existence of God; and Hegel's persistent attempts to rehabilitate that argument are not without significance for a final estimate of his own system.

Kant, as is well known, criticised Fichte's system (in his public declaration on the subject) as "neither more nor less than a mere logic, whose principles do not reach the material element in knowledge, but which, on the contrary, *as pure logic*, abstracts from the content of cognition. To extract from pure logic a real object is a futile task, and hence one which

has never been essayed."[1] But though there is much in the form of the 'Wissenschaftslehre' to justify this censure, it is less than just to Fichte. It is, however, by anticipation, a very apt description of Hegel's procedure. Fichte expressly guards himself against the imputation in question. The theoretical part of the 'Wissenschaftslehre' corresponds, as has been said, to Hegel's 'Logic';[2] and at the end of this analysis Fichte tells us that the whole inquiry has been moving hitherto in a world of unrealities. We have been talking of the Ego, he says, but, so far, we have been talking "of a mere relation without anything that stands in relation—from which something, indeed, complete abstraction is made in the whole theoretical part of the 'Wissenschaftslehre.'"[3] In other words, we have been talking of the notion of the Ego, but not of any real Ego; we have been dealing throughout with abstractions, not with real existences. Similarly, on coming to the second part of his investigation, he says: "In the theoretical 'Wissenschaftslehre' we have to do solely with *knowledge;* here, in the practical part, with *what is known.* In the former case, the question is, *How* is anything posited, perceived, or thought [*i.e.*, what are the formal conditions of knowledge,—what is the notion of knowledge in general]? in the present case it is, *What* is posited? If, therefore, the 'Wissenschaftslehre' is to be taken

[1] Werke, viii. 600.

[2] It is, of course, far from being so exhaustive, and the order of the deduction is the reverse of Hegel's, beginning with the notion of the Ego as a synthesis of subject and object, and deducing a variety of categories from that relation. But differences of procedure do not affect the correspondence in aim of the two undertakings.

[3] Werke, i. 207.

as a metaphysic, it must refer the inquirer to its practical part, for this alone speaks of a primitive reality."[1] A little later, he is speaking of feeling, which ordinary consciousness attributes to the action of a thing, but which Fichte maintains to be due to the Ego itself, and he adds this emphatic statement: "Here lies the ground of all reality. Solely through the reference of feeling to the Ego is reality possible for the Ego, whether it be the reality of the Ego itself or of the Non-Ego. . . . Our attitude to *reality in general*, whether of the Ego or the Non-Ego, is one of *belief* and nothing more."[2] "To forget this original feeling," he says elsewhere, "leads to a baseless transcendent Idealism and an incomplete philosophy which cannot explain the merely sensible predicates of objects."[3] It is true that Fichte does not leave this feeling a mere fact, as Kant did; he refers it to the needs of the moral life, thus seeking, as it were, to rationalise it and bring it within the compass of his Monism. But what we are here concerned with is his insistence upon feeling as the only point where we touch solid ground and get a basis for our whole structure. The same point of view is still more impressively urged in the eloquent 'Bestimmung des Menschen,' which he wrote in 1800 for use outside the schools; it forms, indeed, the turning-point of the whole discussion.

This treatise is divided into three books, the first of which, entitled 'Doubt,' portrays the misery

[1] Werke, i. 285.

[2] Ibid., i. 301. "An Realität überhaupt . . . findet lediglich ein Glaube statt."

[3] Ibid., i. 490. This passage is from the Second Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre, published in 1797; the previous passages are from the Wissenschaftslehre itself.

of a man entangled in Materialism and Fatalism, through viewing himself simply as a natural thing among other things—a mere wheel in the vast machine of the universe. The second book, entitled 'Knowledge,' describes his deliverance from such fears by the Kantio-Fichtian theory of knowledge. He is made to recognise the inner impossibility of the position which Fichte designates Dogmatism—the impossibility, that is to say, that a system of mere things should give rise to the unique fact of self-consciousness. On the contrary, he finds that the mere object is an unrealisable abstraction, and that the whole of the natural world, in which he seemed to be imprisoned as an insignificant part, exists only as a phenomenon—that is, relatively to the consciousness which it threatened at first to engulf. But in the midst of his exultation there is suddenly borne in upon him the conviction that such a deliverance is, after all, purely illusory. For the demonstration has simply shown that all objects must, as such, be brought under the form of the knowing self. But such a self has no predicates of reality about it; it is simply a formal point of unity for the process of knowledge. If the system of things is reduced to ideas or objects in consciousness, he himself is likewise resolved into a mere *Vorstellen* or process of ideas without significance or aim, because without self-initiated activity.[1] When this insight is reached,

[1] "*Ich selbst* weiss überhaupt nicht, und bin nicht. *Bilder* sind; sie sind das Einzige was da ist, und sie wissen von sich nach Weise der Bilder: Bilder die vorüberschweben, ohne dass etwas sei, dem sie vorüberschweben. . . . Bilder ohne etwas in ihnen Abgebildetes, ohne Bedeutung und Zweck. . . . Alle Realität verwandelt sich in einen wunderbaren Traum, ohne ein Leben von welchem geträumt wird, und ohne einen Geist, dem da träumt."—Werke, ii. 245.

Fichte turns upon his anxious inquirer and upbraids him for supposing that this theory—which represents the theoretical 'Wissenschaftslehre'—was to be taken as a complete system of the human spirit. "Didst thou imagine," he says, "that these results were not as well known to me as to thee? . . . Thou askedst to know of thy knowledge. Dost thou wonder, then, that upon this path nothing more is to be found than just what thou desiredst to know—thy knowledge? . . . What arises through knowledge and out of knowledge is only a knowing. But all knowing is only representation or picture, and there always arises the demand for something which shall correspond to the picture. This demand no knowledge can satisfy. . . . But, at least, the reality whose slave thou fearedst to be—the reality of an independent sensible world—has vanished. For this whole sensible world arises only through knowledge, and is itself part of our knowledge. . . . This is the sole merit of which I boast in the system which we have but now discovered together. It destroys and annihilates error; truth it cannot give, because in itself it is absolutely empty."

Only in the third book, entitled 'Belief' or 'Faith,' does Fichte proceed at last to satisfy the demand of his disciple for reality, and to communicate his own final position. "There is something in me," he says, "which impels to absolute, independent, self-originated activity. . . . I ascribe to myself the power of forming an idea or plan, and likewise the power, through a real action, of embodying this idea beyond the world of ideas (*ausser dem Begriffe*). I ascribe to myself, in other words, a real active force—a force which produces being, and which is quite different

from the mere faculty of ideas. The ideas or plans spoken of above, usually called ends or purposes, are not to be considered, like the ideas of cognition, as after-pictures of something given; they are rather fore-pictures, or exemplars of something which is to be produced. The real force, however, does not lie in them; it exists on its own account, and receives from them only its determinate direction, knowledge looking on, as it were, as a spectator of its action. Such independence, in fact, I ascribe to myself in virtue of the afore-mentioned impulse." "Here," he proceeds, "lies the point to which the consciousness of all reality is attached. This point is the real activity of my idea, and the real power of action which I am obliged, in consequence, to attribute to myself. However it may be with the reality of a sensible world external to me, I myself am real; I take hold on reality here; it lies in me, and is there at home. This real power of action of mine may doubtless be made an object of thought or knowledge, but at the basis of such thought lies the immediate feeling of my impulse to self-originated activity. Thought does nothing but picture or represent this feeling, and take it up into its own form of thought." Actual existence, in brief, or the consciousness of reality, is reached, according to Fichte, only in Will, or in the immediate feeling of my own activity. Even in opposition to the sceptical doubts which the understanding may subsequently raise as to a possible self-deception, this feeling must be accepted as our only firm standing-ground; it must be *believed*. Belief is "the organ with which I lay hold upon reality."

These quotations have run almost to undue length.

But Fichte's testimony is especially important in view of his constitutionally deductive mind and his fondness of construction whenever an opening for it could be found. The passages quoted show him laying stress, even in his earliest writings, upon the essentially *given* character of reality. It must be lived or experienced, if we are to know of its existence at all; our relation to it must be that of immediate consciousness or feeling. Knowledge may afterwards take up this datum into its own forms, but knowledge stands always in this dependent or parasitical relation to reality. It is the picture or representation, the symbol of what is real; but as Fichte says, "Knowledge just because it is knowledge is not reality." It comes not first but second. As Schelling put it in his later writings—"Not because there is thought is there existence, but because there is existence is there thought." Or as we might express the same thing, connecting it with our parallel between Hegel and Plato, real things are not the shadows of intellectual conceptions, but intellectual conceptions are themselves the shadows of a real world. Nor is it allowable to reply that this is true only of human thought, and that the real world must still be admitted to be but the shadow of a divine or absolute thought. For, in the first place, God is included in the real world when that term is taken in its fullest extent, and the divine thoughts evidently presuppose the divine existence—a divine being whose thoughts they are. And, secondly, though we may perhaps speak of the real world in the narrower sense, as shadows or effects of the creative thoughts of God, the thoughts in that case are not active of themselves. "The real force," as Fichte says above, "does not

lie in them": it lies in the divine Being as living active Will.

But here again Hegel parts company with Fichte. Just as he apparently makes a systematic attempt to deduce existence from pure or abstract thought, so the divine existence itself tends to shrink in his hands into a priority of certain logical notions, to which, as we have seen in the foregoing lecture, a dynamic or creative efficiency is attributed. This fact—which will be fully discussed in the lectures that follow—appears to be a striking confirmation of the view taken above of Hegel's real meaning.

LECTURE V.

HEGEL'S DOCTRINE OF GOD AND MAN.

IN the last lecture, Hegel's attempt to construct the world out of mere universals was somewhat fully dealt with, and we have now to consider more particularly the account which the system gives of God and man. Does it provide for their concrete reality, or is the general criticism of the last lecture applicable here too? Do we recognise the same tendency to sublimate reality into abstract universals?

The first thing that strikes an attentive student is the way in which Hegel manages to evade giving any definite answer to the world-old questions which lie at the root of all philosophy—the questions as to the nature of God and His relation to man. This may seem a strange assertion to make regarding a system

in which there is so much talk of the Absolute, so much talk of God, even under that more homely name. Yet I think it must be admitted that at the end Hegel leaves us in grave doubt both as to the mode of existence which he means to attribute to the Divine Being, and as to his deliverance on the question of immortality, which is after all the most pressing problem of human destiny. I need appeal no further than to the example of Dr Stirling, than whom no man has studied Hegel more profoundly or more honestly. Dr Stirling, as is well known, gives his ruling on the side of a personal God and human immortality. But whence the need of this laborious assurance, if Hegel's statements had been forthright, and the inevitable consequence of his system? Whence those waverings in the 'Secret' before the final deliverance; whence, even after that deliverance, the hesitation that leavens the last notes to Schwegler? "Very obscure, certainly, in many respects,"—so we read in the 'Secret'[1]—"is the system of Hegel, and in none, perhaps, obscurer than in how we are to conceive God as a Subjective Spirit and man as a Subjective Spirit, and God and Man in mutual relation." If further evidence of this

[1] I. 244.

ambiguity were necessary, it would be sufficient to refer to the history of the Hegelian school in Germany, which shows us Christian Theist and logical Atheist alike appealing to the Master's words and claiming to be the true inheritor of his doctrine.

Such ambiguity was possible just because the question, which Dr Stirling formulates as the question of "God as a Subjective Spirit and man as a Subjective Spirit" is one of concrete existences, whereas it is the peculiarity of the Hegelian system that it deals throughout only with generals. Hegel speaks in strictness, from beginning to end of his system, neither of the divine Self-consciousness nor of human self-consciousness, but of Self-consciousness in general—neither of the divine Spirit nor of human spirits, but simply of "Spirit." The process of the world is viewed, for example, as the realisation of spirit or self-conscious intelligence. But spirit is an abstraction; intelligence is an abstraction,—only *spirits* or *intelligences* are real. It is the same even when we come to absolute spirit—a case which might seem at first sight to leave no loophole for doubt. The forms of the German language itself seem to abet Hegel in his evasion: for though he talks (and by the

idiom of the language cannot avoid talking) of "der absolute Geist" (the absolute spirit), that by no means implies, as the literal English translation does, that he is speaking of God as a Subjective Spirit, a singular intelligence. It no more implies this than the statement, "Man is mortal" (in German, "the man is mortal") implies a reference to a specific individual. The article goes with the noun in any case, according to German usage; and "absolute spirit" has no more necessary reference to a concrete Subject than the simple "spirit" or intelligence which preceded it. Absolute spirit is said to be realised in art, in religion, in philosophy; but of the real Spirit or spirits in whom and for whom the realisation takes place we are not told, and are ultimately left to choose between two sharply opposed and irreconcilable positions.

This, however, is precisely what was to be expected from a philosophy which treats notions as the ultimately real, and things or real beings as their exemplifications. Hegel has taken the notion or conception of self-consciousness—Subject, as he calls it in his earlier writings, Spirit in his later—and he conceives the whole process of existence as the evolution, and ultimately

the full realisation of this notion. But it is evident that if we start thus with an abstract conception, our results will remain abstract throughout. Spirit, when it reappears at the end of the development, will reappear, certainly, in a singular form, and we may imagine, therefore, that the reference is to the Divine Spirit; but as a matter of fact it is the abstract singular with which we started, which means no more than "*there is* intelligence or spirit" —"the form is realised." But where or in whom the realisation takes place, of this nothing is said, or can be said, along these lines. For an answer we are forced to fall back upon ordinary experience; and there it may be said that the action is realised in our personal existence and in the products of human civilisation. But as to any further and more perfect realisation in a divine Spirit, recourse must be had, I fear, to more homely methods of inference than Hegel patronises.

Spirit, or "the concrete Idea," was beyond doubt *intended* by Hegel to be the unity in which God and man shall both be comprehended in a more intimate union or living interpenetration than any previous philosophy had succeeded in reaching. And this unity or

interpenetration was to be asserted without prejudice to the play of difference — without, therefore, falling back into a pantheistic identity of substance. It was an aim and task worthy of a philosopher, for both philosophy and religion bear ample testimony to the almost insuperable difficulty of finding room in the universe for God *and* man. When speculation busies itself with the relation of these two, each in turn tends to swallow up the other. The pendulum of human thought swings continually between the two extremes of Individualism, leading to Atheism, and Universalism, leading to Pantheism or Akosmism. This insight into the history of the past makes it all the more the imperative task of further philosophising to seek a statement of their relations which can be accepted as true by the speculative and the moral consciousness alike. Hegel was fully alive to this obligation, and his scheme of reconciliation is in its conception a peculiarly grand one. It is no less than to exhibit the whole process of the universe as so many necessary moments or stages in the triumphant and all-embracing life of God. Nor need there be any hesitation in allowing that the execution of the conception, too, will always remain one

of the great monuments of the human mind. Even in its error, the Hegelian system is one of those "splendid faults" which may serve for the instruction of generations. But it cannot be accepted as a solution of the problem. Spirit is not the real unity of the two sides which it is intended to be, and is put forward as being. Though it is called "the concrete Idea,"[1] we have no evidence that it is really concrete in the sense of designating an actual existence; it is concrete only with reference to the "logical Idea" which preceded it. Spirit or Absolute Spirit is the ultimate product of that self-creative projection of the Idea into existence which has been already criticised; and it may therefore be denominated the Idea as real. It is the real duplicate of the Idea, the notion of knowledge hypostatised. But we have abundantly

[1] Werke, xv. 685, at the end of the 'History of Philosophy,' where it is also "die sich wissende Idee" "der Gedanke der sich selbst fasst." Similarly, at the end of the 'Encyclopædia' (Werke, vii. 2, 468-469), Absolute Spirit is spoken of as "die sich wissende Vernunft," "die sich denkende Idee"; and it is said in the concluding sentence that "die ewig an und für sich seyende Idee sich ewig als absoluter Geist bethätigt, erzeugt und geniesst." Hence the term "the Idea" is often used, in a wider sense, to designate not the logical Idea specifically, but what Hegel would call "the concrete totality" of which his system is the explication.

seen the impossibility of reaching a real existence by such means. "The concrete Idea" remains abstract, and unites God and man only by eviscerating the real content of both. Both disappear or are sublimated into it, but simply because it represents what is common to both, the notion of intelligence as such. They disappear, not indeed in a pantheistic substance, but in a logical concept. If we scrutinise the system narrowly, we find Spirit or the Absolute doing duty at one time for God, and at another time for man; but when we have hold of the divine end we have lost our grasp of the human end, and *vice versâ*. We never have the two together, but sometimes the one and sometimes the other—a constant alternation, which really represents two different lines of thought in the system, and two different conclusions to which it leads. But the alternation is so skilfully managed by Hegel himself that it appears to be not alternation but union.

The truth of this statement will be best seen by pressing the question of the relation of God or the Absolute to the development sketched by Hegel in the 'Encyclopædia.' That development proceeds from Logic to Nature, from Nature to Spirit, and in Spirit through

all the grades of the slowly-opening individual intelligence to the Objective Spirit of society and the State, and further still to the Absolute Spirit, as existent and known in art, religion, and philosophy. The crucial question, therefore, comes to be, what is the Subject here developed, and in what sense are we to take the term development? According to Hegel's usage, the Subject of the development is spoken of in the singular number, as "a universal individual," and is expressly styled the Absolute. The Absolute is said in this development to come to itself or to realise its own nature. This seems, therefore, the answer to our question, and the *existence* of God (to go no further) would appear to be placed beyond dispute by such a statement. Nor is there any lack of explicit assertions of the divine existence on Hegel's part. It is as if he was conscious of the misleading effect liable to be produced by the form in which he had cast his system, and was desirous of counteracting such mistaken impressions. He reminds us, therefore, ever and anon, that what appears as the end of the development is in reality also the beginning — the living presupposition of the whole. Thought does not exist first as Logic,

then as Nature, and finally in its completed form as Spirit; it *exists* only as Spirit, which is thus the one *res completa*, or completed Fact, from which Logic and Nature are alike abstractions. Accordingly this triple development has been, after all, only an ideal analysis, a logical separation of elements which are never really separate, but exist only within the concrete life of Spirit. This is abundantly plain in the enigmatical but striking sayings that form the bulk of the Preface to the 'Phænomenology,' some of which were quoted in a former lecture.[1] We meet the same thing in the larger 'Logic';[2] and in the 'Philosophy of Religion,' where he is applying or carrying over the results of the 'Logic,' he takes even more pains to avoid misconception. In consequence of the logical

[1] At the beginning of the Third Lecture, pp. 85-87 *supra*. Among other passages which might be quoted are such as the following: "The True is the becoming of itself, the circle which presupposes its end as its aim, and thus has its end for its beginning" (Werke, ii. 15). "The Absolute is essentially result, *i.e.*, only at the end does it exist as what it truly is;" but "the result is for that very reason the same as the beginning, for the beginning is to be taken as aim or purpose" (Ibid., pp. 16-17).

[2] *E.g.*, in the passage formerly quoted: "We may very well say that every beginning must be made with the Absolute, just as all advance (that is, all dialectical development) is only its exposition."

evolution, he says, "We may have the misleading idea that God is represented there as result; but if we are better acquainted with the subject, we know that result in this connection has the sense of absolute Truth. Hence that which appears as result, just because it is the absolute Truth, ceases to be something which results or draws its existence from anything else. . . . 'God is the absolutely True,' is equivalent to saying that the absolutely True, in so far as it is the last, is just as much the first. It is, in fact, the True, only so far as it is not only beginning, but also end or result —in so far, namely, as it results from itself."[1] This is a point on which references might be indefinitely multiplied. It is enough, therefore, in the meantime to accept Hegel's reiterated assurance that the Absolute—"absolute self-conscious Spirit"—is eternally self-existent, the only Fact in the strict and full sense of that term.

How, then, is this completed self-consciousness related to the development which constitutes the world-process? If we look closely

[1] Werke, xi. 48. So again (p. 132), "The result casts off its character of result. . . . Absolute Spirit, conscious of itself, is thus the First and the Last." Cf. also xii. 178.

at the account Hegel gives, we find, I think, that there is no real connection between the two, and that the appearance of connection is maintained by the use of the term development in a double sense. In the first place, the term is used with the associations derived from its use in the 'Logic.' We may, if we will, call the systematic placing of conceptions in the 'Logic' a process or development; and if we do so, it is perfectly apparent that there is nothing here analogous to a development in time. There is a system of abstract notions mutually connected, which permit us therefore to pass from one to another by logically necessary but altogether timeless transitions. In fact, the whole system, as a system of abstractions, may be said to be out of time; and the process of development, if we persist in calling it so, may also be spoken of as a timeless or eternal process. Now Hegel extends this idea of logically necessary and timeless transition to the process by which, in his own language, thought externalises itself in Nature, and returns to itself in Spirit. It is with logical necessity, we are told, that the logical Idea determines itself to be more than logic, and the same necessity drives it back upon itself

out of its temporary alienation. Hence Hegel speaks of this also as an eternal process. Expressed in the language of religion, "God is the creator of the world; it belongs to His being, to His essence, to be creator. . . . Creation is not an act undertaken once upon a time. What belongs to the Idea belongs to it as an eternal moment or determination."[1] "God is, as Spirit, essentially this revelation of Himself. He does not create the world once; He is the eternal creator—this eternal self-revelation, this *actus*. This is his notion, his definition. . . . God posits the other and sublates it in His eternal movement."[2] "Without the world, God would not be God."[3]

These expressions are all taken from the 'Philosophy of Religion,' but the doctrine is one which meets us throughout Hegel's works. The terms used are intended to convey the impression that the life of the world is included within the process of the absolute self-consciousness, and that everything is thereby satisfactorily comprehended within the all-containing walls of the divine unity. But it is impossible at one and the same time to describe this process as necessary and eternal,

[1] Werke, xii. 181. [2] Ibid., xii. 157. [3] Ibid., xi. 122.

and to include within it the real course of the world—nature and history. If we choose the first alternative, then Hegel's Nature — his second stage — is in no way different from Fichte's Non-Ego; it is, indeed, as he himself describes it, simply the necessary negative or opposite involved in self-consciousness. An opposition or duplicity of some sort may readily be deduced as necessary to the existence of self-consciousness as such; but that is very far from constituting a deduction of nature or the world as an infinitely varied concrete fact. Fichte's construction, as he himself admitted, was an ideal construction of *the notion of self-consciousness*, not an account of any real process or real existence; and it is exactly the same with Hegel's. This eternal process of creation or self-revelation is simply the general notion of self-consciousness as such. To treat the divine life as the perfect example of this was perhaps not extraordinary; certainly Hegel was not the first to do so. But it is simply matter of assertion on Hegel's part to draw Nature with its real processes and living forms within the circle, and to treat it all as simply the objective side of the divine Self-consciousness. And even if we were inclined

to let that pass, his construction leaves no room for any other self besides the divine Spectator. In short, as we have had so often to remark in Hegel, there has been a daring but unjustifiable stride from an ideal or notional analysis to real facts. Every Ego carries in itself a Non-Ego, but that does not justify us in sweeping all existence without more ado into the circle of a single Self-consciousness, identifying Nature with the Non-Ego of God, and simplifying the problem by extruding our own self-consciousness altogether. And it cannot be said that this is a misrepresentation of Hegel. If we are consistent with his position here, there is room only for one Self-consciousness; finite selves are wiped out, and nature, deprived of any life of its own, becomes, as it were, the still mirror in which the one Self-consciousness contemplates itself. Such is the scheme of the universe contemplated from the divine point of view. But I must repeat that it is reached by hypostatising the notion of self-consciousness and not by any progress from reality. There is, in fact, no bridge between this hypostatised conception and the world of real things and real men.

This comes out very plainly in Hegel's own

account in the 'Philosophy of Religion,' where he begins, contrary to his usual practice, with the Absolute in the completed perfection of its notion. Adopting religious terminology, Hegel speaks here successively of the kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of the Son, and the kingdom of the Spirit. The kingdom of the Father is further described in the heading as "God in his eternal idea, in and for himself." He begins by arguing that God, thus contemplated in his eternal idea, is still in the abstract element of thought; the idea is not yet posited in its reality. But he goes on, under this same head, to speak of the absolute diremption or distinction which must take place within this pure thought; and thirdly, still under the same head, of God as Spirit, or the Holy Trinity. This "still mystery," as he calls it, is "the eternal truth" of philosophy; it is "the pure idea of God." In fact, it just brings to light the essential nature of Mind or Spirit, as seen in the act of knowledge. "God, who eternally exists in and for Himself, eternally distinguishes Himself from Himself—that is to say, eternally begets Himself as His Son. But what thus distinguishes itself from itself has not the form of otherness or alien being; on the contrary,

that which is distinguished is immediately identical with that from which it has been separated. God is Spirit; no darkness, no tinge of foreign colour, passes into this pure light."[1] In this separation, the first — that which distinguishes—may be called the universal; and the second—that which is distinguished — the particular: but the two determinations are the same. The distinction is at once laid down and removed; it is laid down as a distinction which is no real difference. "The fact that it is so constitutes the nature of Spirit, or, if we express it in the form of feeling, eternal Love. The Holy Ghost is this eternal Love. . . . Love is a distinction between two who are yet for one another absolutely without distinction. . . . God is Love—*i.e.*, he is this distinction and the nullity of this distinction—a play of distinction in which there is no seriousness."[2] In spite, therefore, of what is said at the outset—that God is contemplated here as still in the abstract element of thought—it does not seem possible to understand this elaborate construction as anything else than an account of the divine Self-consciousness as that really

[1] Werke, xii. 185. [2] Ibid., 187.

exists for God Himself. As Hegel does not fail to tell us himself, it is a speculative construction of the Trinity; and on Hegelian principles, the Trinity, so conceived, must undoubtedly be held to exist for itself and on its own account.

The construction itself is not peculiar to Hegel. He traces what he calls anticipations of the doctrine not only in Aristotle's statements about knowledge, and in what he says of the *νόησις νοήσεως*, but more particularly in the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the Logos. Hegel's speculative Trinity is, in fact, simply the rehabilitation of that ancient philosopheme which, at the end of the prosaic age of the Enlightenment, Lessing had laid his vivifying hand upon,[1] and made a present of to the new German philosophy. But whatever be its value as a speculative construction of the divine nature, what we have to observe here is that Hegel's object is to represent the life of the universe as a whole under the form of this perfect self-consciousness. It is essential to his purpose, therefore, that the second stage of the process—what is here called the Son—should be understood as equivalent to the

[1] In his Education of the Human Race.

world. The passages, indeed, asserting an eternal creation of the world as an essential element of the divine nature, are taken from this very section; so that the intention of identifying the Son and the world is obvious. But it is eventually found impossible to carry out this identification. The religious consciousness itself is the first to revolt against the representation of the world-process as a play of love with itself—a play of distinction in which there is no difference. If that were so, what would become of the consciousness of alienation, of sin, and the need of reconciliation, which Hegel accepts as the most fundamental feature of religious experience? This points to a real difference which is not covered by such phrases as those quoted above. And accordingly, when he comes to treat, in the second place, of the kingdom of the Son, Hegel has to admit, though it fits in badly with the preceding, that the Son and the world are not *quite* the same. In order to pass from the one to the other, the ideal difference must become real. "The Son must receive the determination of the other as such; he must exist as something free and on his own account, and must appear as something actual, beyond

and without God,—something existent."[1] And then we fall back upon a set of phrases almost identical with those which met us before at the end of the 'Logic,' as an explanation of how real existence came to be. These need not be repeated here.[2] If we compare the world with the Son, Hegel proceeds, "the finite world is the side of difference emphasised against the side of unity; it is a world which is outside of the truth—a world in which the other has the form of being."[3] But how is this accentuation of the otherness to be explained? Whence this relative freedom and independence which makes the world so much more than the mere reflex of a theoretic consciousness? This is the very problem of the real world—the very *crux* of the difficulty in Hegel's system. But, at the critical point, Hegel has nothing to offer us except the phrases from the 'Logic,' and a quotation from Jacob Boehme. "This passing over into difference in the element of the Son has been expressed by Jacob Boehme in this wise: The first-begotten was Lucifer, the light-bearer, the bright, the clear one; but he lost himself in his own imaginings;

[1] Werke, xii. 206. [2] Cf. *supra*, pp. 111-113.
[3] Werke, xii. 208.

he asserted his independence, and fell."[1] This was not merely a casual figure, for it was repeated in the lectures on the 'Philosophy of Nature.'[2] But in reference to it, it is surely sufficient to say that, if Plato's myths indicate the break-down of scientific explanation, there is a break-down much more complete in this borrowed myth of Hegel's.[3]

The apostasy and fall of Lucifer is, of course, a mythical explanation that explains nothing; but the figure seems at all events to embody the acknowledgment that the world-process and the eternal process described above as constituting the divine life are not one and the same. The latter is an eternal or timeless process, in which we do not work from point to point of time at all, but analyse the different elements of one conception. The former—the

[1] Werke, xii. 207. [2] Ibid., vii. 1, 31.

[3] It is worth noting how closely the figure approaches to Schelling's explanation of the finite world, when he was at the turning-point of his philosophical career—namely, as the result of an act of primal apostasy or revolt from God. In the treatise where he first makes use of this idea—'Philosophy and Religion' (1804)—Schelling treats the world-process as a process towards the culmination of this apostasy and separation in the independent self-assertion of the Ego. The world-process is thus definitely placed outside the inner circle of the divine Self-consciousness—outside the life of God as a Subjective Spirit.

world-process—is a real process in time, in which one stage laboriously prepares the way for another and gives place to it. In short, to sum up what I have been urging, the self-consciousness of God here constructed is simply the construction of the notion of self-consciousness as such; and no evidence is adduced of the existence of a Being corresponding to the notion. If, however, we assume such a Being to exist, it offers no point of transition at which we might pass from it to the real world we know. We can describe its connection with that world in none but the old-fashioned figurative way, which it was the boast of the Hegelian philosophy to have stated at last in terms of pure reason. Strictly, indeed, if we *start* with this conception, as Hegel does in the 'Philosophy of Religion,' the conception carries with it no hint of the existence of a finite world at all; there is no escape from the charmed circle of the perfect Self, unless *per saltum*. We fall back suddenly on our empirical knowledge, reversing henceforth our whole procedure, taking our stand on the facts of difference and imperfection, and treating the conception of God as the ideal of human effort. Hegel, then, either gives us no demonstration of the exist-

ence of God in the ordinary sense—of His existence, that is to say, as a self-conscious being, a Subjective Spirit; or if, following the persistent bent of the system, we take the construction of the notion of self-consciousness for such a proof, then such a construction is all-inclusive, and eliminates the time-process of the finite world altogether.

But the time-process of the finite world is, after all, the reality with which we are immediately acquainted; and, to do Hegel justice, it is here that his real strength lies. He grapples like a giant with the real matter of experience, in his determination to reduce it from a merely empirical chaos to something in which the action of reason may be traced. It may be said with truth that it was Hegel's interpretation of history that made the success of his system, and gave it its wonderful hold over a full generation. It is here, and not in mere Neo-Platonic play with an abstract notion, that we have to seek his actual achievements. History lived in his hands anew,—the past being no longer indifferent to the present, but linked to it indissolubly in one great process of development. It is enough here merely to indicate that this

process is conceived as the realisation of self-conscious life in the widest sense—the realisation of the external conditions of such a life in society and the State, and the attainment through religion and philosophy of that subjective satisfaction which comes from the insight into the rationality and self-centred completeness of the whole process. Such a perfect demonstration may be, in the nature of the case, a task too great for human powers. Doubtless, too, Hegel's interpretations and sequences may at times be arbitrary. The tendency to construct history in accordance with a foregone conclusion, rather than faithfully to construe the refractory facts, can hardly fail to be sometimes too strong for a man in whom ideas are much alive. But when Hegel is at his best, he is beyond such cavilling; his profound knowledge of the past is matched by the sympathetic insight which enables him to go straight to the heart of the matter in hand and lay bare its inner significance. So important is the historical side to Hegel, that it may almost be said that history is elevated in his hands into a philosophy. If the side of Hegel's thought that we have been considering up till now exhibits him divorced from reality altogether, we see

here the counter-tendency—so at least it seems at first,—the tendency to merge philosophy in history, and to take the results of the historical process, just as they are, for philosophic truth. The absolute philosophy becomes in this way an absolute empiricism. The actual is the rational, the real is the ideal; and the absolute takes up its abode among men in the most unequivocal fashion. But this identification of human history with the divine life springs, as I propose to show, from the very same attempt to bring together the real process in time and the so-called eternal process of the absolute self-consciousness. The attempt has just been seen to collapse when made from the other side. We have now to test its success when made from the side of human history and finite reality.

Here it is all-important to note at the outset that, from the moment we touch Nature—the perceptual elements of time and space—we are no longer on logical ground. We are in the realm of facts, and are dealing with the infinitely varied particulars of concrete reality. It is no longer, therefore, a logical or timeless evolution that we have before us, but a process of real development in time. In view of the double sense of the term development already adverted

to, we should be at pains to make this point clear; for the conversion of history into metaphysic seems to depend upon a subtle confusion of the two senses. In the first sense, as has been seen, development means simply logical implication. This sense we have in the 'Logic' and in the construction of the Trinity as given above: Ego logically implies non-Ego. The second sense is the ordinary one, in which the presence of the element of time is essential. In a development so conceived the stages are successive, each stage preparing the way for the next, and then yielding place to it. Now it appears to me that, just as Hegel tries to embrace within logic the transition from logic to what is not logic, so he contrives, though not in so many words, to carry over into the real development the associations of the first or logical sense of the term. An impression is thus created that it is permissible to treat time as an unessential factor, which virtually disappears when the necessity of the evolution has been grasped. And accordingly, the way is prepared for identifying the long series of events in time with a single perfect and timelessly existing Form. But even if we allow to Hegel that, in the Philosophy of Nature and

the Philosophy of Spirit, we get not an actual history but a philosophised history—that is to say, a statement of the essential or necessary moments in the evolution freed from their time-vesture of detail—it must still be maintained that the original, the actual process, was one in which real being passed from phase to phase in time. Indeed we may go further and say that *if we give up time we move out of reality altogether.* Nor need it be supposed that ample acknowledgment of the time-nature of the process is wanting in Hegel himself. "History in general," he says, "is the development of Spirit in time." [1] And it is hardly necessary to refer to his impressive and often-quoted utterances

[1] Philosophy of History, 75 (Sibree's translation). Such acknowledgments in Hegel will be found—and this is intelligible enough—to refer to history as opposed to nature. In this passage he opposes history as the development of Spirit in *time* to Nature as the "development of the idea in *space.*" Space, with the individuation and multiplicity to which it gives rise, seems, rather than time, to be the outstanding feature of Nature. Moreover, though Nature is undoubtedly in a process of perpetual change, and so subject to the dominion of time, still change in Nature does not seem to carry with it the notion of progress or real development. The system of things seems to resolve itself into a few physical constants, which form the permanent basis of all Nature's transformations; and thus change tends to take the form of cycles in which we recur at the end to our first starting-point. This, at least, was Hegel's

in regard to the labour and the pain—the slow travail, as one might say—undertaken by the spirit of the world—"the tremendous labour of world-history," "the sacrifices that have ever and anon been laid on the mighty altar of the earth through the vast lapse of ages." [1] What becomes of the whole Philosophy of History if we deny a real development in time? Or where shall we find a place, in that case, for the History of Philosophy and for the historical development of Art and Religion, so fully treated by Hegel? All these disciplines necessarily assume that we are dealing not with a logical process but with a real development in time. And it is implied in all real development that, though the less perfect is destined to give place to the more

view. "In Nature," he says, "there is nothing new under the sun, and the multiform play of its phenomena so far only induces a feeling of *ennui*. Only in those changes which take place within the realm of Spirit does anything new take place." —(Phil. of History, 65.) "The world of mind and the world of matter," he says elsewhere, "continue to have this distinction, that the latter moves only in a recurring cycle, while in the former an advance or progress (*Fortschreiten*) certainly takes place."—(Encyclopædia, Wallace, 323.) This difference, embodied in the current opposition between the natural and the historical sciences, does not, however, affect the character of natural changes as events in time.

[1] See the prefaces to the Phenomenology and the Philosophy of History.

perfect, yet the less perfect *exists* in its own time and place no less than the more perfect to which it leads up.[1]

Accepting, then, these characteristics of history as a real development, let us look shortly at Hegel's philosophical conclusions. Nature is a process towards spirit: it is the becoming of spirit, and is only intelligible when related to its end or outcome, which is, therefore, at the same time its immanent or indwelling purpose. Spirit appears at first as the sensuous or merely natural consciousness—a centre of sensation and desire, but otherwise hardly separated, as it were, from the nature in which it is rooted. History—that is, the history of humanity, of civilisation—is the record of the gradual unfolding of the potentialities of reason

[1] Every form except the highest must, of course, according to Hegel's phraseology, be "untrue,"—that is to say, inadequate to its notion. But in spite of that it is none the less actual, and to be reckoned with as such. It may either co-exist with the more perfect form, as often happens, or, if it has disappeared, still it *did* exist, and formed the real condition of the present existence of that which has supplanted it. This protension, as Hamilton would have called it—this stretching out of the contents of reality in time—makes it impossible to resume all existence in one perfect form, as Hegel tends to do, when he dismisses this and the other phenomenon from consideration on the plea that they are "untrue."

that lay concealed within this insignificant and unpromising beginning.[1] "The destiny of the spiritual world and the final cause of the world at large," Hegel declares to be, "the consciousness of its own freedom on the part of spirit, and, *ipso facto*, the reality of that freedom."[2] Out of the conflicting passions and interests of men there is built up—built up *by* them, acting as the unconscious instruments of reason—that stable system of law and custom which sets bounds to individual lawlessness and caprice. This edifice of institutions, laws, and customs goes by the name of the Objective Spirit; in it spirit is, as it were, externalised, and takes visible shape before us. The perfect form of this edifice is the rationally organised state. Only within the bounds of ordinance thus set can the true destiny of spirit be realised; that is, only here can it come to full consciousness of itself. Universal history traces the rise and fall of states—*i.e.*, of the different national forms

[1] "History constitutes the rational necessary course of the World-spirit—that spirit whose nature is always one and the same, but which unfolds this one nature in the phenomena of the world's existence." "History exhibits spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially."—Philosophy of History, 11 and 18.

[2] Philosophy of History, 20.

in which the Ideal of Freedom has been approximately realised, leading us eventually to the culminating, and, as it would seem, perfect realisation of the Idea in the modern German constitution. The successive forms pass away, being judged, as it were, and superseded by the further progress of history; but the whole process is "the unfolding and realisation of the universal spirit:"[1] or, as it is expressed in the 'Phænomenology,' "the World-spirit had the patience to traverse these forms in the long extent of time, and to undertake the tremendous labour of world-history, in the course of which he infused into each form all of his own content which it was capable of holding; and he did so because by no less a labour could he attain to a consciousness of his own nature."[2] This consciousness is *practically* realised in the state which Hegel terms the divine Idea as it exists on earth.[3] In it, he says, "the true atonement or reconciliation is made objective—the atonement which unfolds the State as the image and reality of reason, in which self-consciousness finds in organic development the reality of its

[1] Werke, viii. 431 (from the Philosophy of Law).
[2] Ibid., ii. 24.
[3] Philosophy of History, 41.

own inmost knowing and willing."[1] The same atonement or reconciliation is realised in the subjective sphere of feeling, through religion, and in the element of knowledge through philosophy. In the Hegelian philosophy, Spirit at last reaches complete insight into its own nature —complete self-consciousness. This perfect self-knowledge it is which supplies us with the key to the past, enabling us to trace an orderly progress in what were otherwise an aimless succession of mutually contradictory views. Unrolled in the light of consummation, the history of philosophy appears as "the history of thought finding itself."[2] "The time is certainly long which Spirit requires to work out philosophy for itself. But as regards the slowness of the World-spirit, we must reflect that he is not pressed. He has no need of hurry, and has time enough: a thousand years are before Thee as one day."[3]

The substitution of the obviously more convenient term "Weltgeist," or World-spirit, in several of these passages, need not obscure the

[1] Werke, viii. 440 (Philosophy of Law).

[2] Die Geschichte von dem Sichselbstfinden des Gedankens.—Werke, xiii. 15.

[3] Werke, xiii. 49.

fact that Hegel knows but one subject of the development. The real development here traced is a development of what he calls in the 'Phænomenology' "the universal individual" or "the universal self;"[1] it is the Absolute itself which arrives at full self-consciousness in the absolute philosophy. The Absolute is this process and its culmination. And it will be noted that just as this view of the Absolute comes into prominence, the other view of it as existing timelessly in static perfection recedes into the background, and becomes unreal. It is, however, the very gist and heart of the Hegelian philosophy that these two are one. The Absolute of the system is professedly a reconciliation of the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite, aspects of existence; and in order to achieve this unity, Hegel is bound to represent the subject of the development and the perfect subject which forms the presupposition of the whole development as one and the same subject. He turns round, therefore, to assure us that what thus appears under the form of time exists really in an eternal present. For example, he adds to the quotation made above: "A thousand years are before Thee as one day: He has time

[1] Werke, ii. 22 and 25.

enough, just because He is Himself out of time; because He is eternal."

The appearance of unity is thus gained by pressing the philosophical or Aristotelian view of evolution, which implies the presence of the End in the beginning. The Idea, Hegel would seem to say, is the eternal, which possesses itself equally in each of its forms—to which, therefore, the time-evolution is in a sense indifferent. But, in point of fact, this application of the philosophical notion of development does not give a true rendering of the doctrine. Hegel's view practically identifies the different stages; to be implicit and to be explicit makes no real difference to what may be called the developing subject. In the real world, however, this does constitute a difference to the developing subject, and without this real difference the notion of development would disappear altogether. The oak-subject is different when it is an acorn from what it is when it is a full-grown oak; the human subject is different as a child from the same subject as the full-grown philosopher. And what is more, only one stage is real at a time.[1] The subject of these trans-

[1] This is quite consistent with saying that nothing of the past is lost. As Hegel puts it, "The grades which spirit seems to

formations does not exist as the perfect form while it is still struggling towards it; it does not exist as the ἐνέργεια, while it is still in the δύναμις, and when it has attained the ἐνέργεια, it exists no longer as the δύναμις. The acorn does not exist as the oak-tree while it is still the acorn, but only afterwards when it has grown into the oak; and *then* it no longer exists as the acorn. If we apply the same idea to the process of the universe, and treat it as the evolution of a single subject or Universal Self, we must, if the process is to be a real one and to correspond to the notion of development, have a self which grows from less to more—a self, at least, which is somehow different at A from what it is at B, and still more different from what it is at its culmination in Z. We must either admit a growing Absolute of this description, or say that the Absolute exists only in eternal perfection at Z, and that A, B, C, D, and the rest are the result of something very like subjective illusion. Passages might be quoted from Hegel which apparently make

have left behind, it still possesses in the depth of its present." But they do not exist now in the same sense in which they existed then; their present existence is only in the form of memory, conscious or organic.

for the latter view. Perhaps the strongest of these is in the 'Encyclopædia,' where he says: "Objectivity is, as it were, only a hull or wrapping under which the Notion lies concealed. . . . The consummation of the infinite End or Aim consists, therefore, merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished. . . . This illusion it is under which we live, and it alone supplies the actualising force on which our interest in the world depends. In the course of its process the Idea makes itself that illusion by setting up an antithesis to confront itself, and its action consists in getting rid of the illusion which it has created."[1] But such a passage does not fairly represent the general tenor of his thought: this morally paralysing view of existence represents rather a rebound on Hegel's part from the opposite extreme of a growing God. For, as he insists himself so strongly in his criticisms of Fichte, it is absurd to place the reality of the universe in an End which is nowhere as yet realised. On precisely the same grounds, it is a perversion of the notion of immanent development to argue as if a development could be explained by a principle which, at the outset of the de-

[1] Wallace, 304.

velopment, existed, as the saying is, only potentially. If the completed self-consciousness is to be in truth the actuality — the moving and directing power — of the whole process, then it must exist as such throughout the process. But in that case it cannot be identified, as Hegel identifies it, with the subject which undergoes development, and which distinctly does *not* exist in completeness except at the end of the process, if, indeed, then. In other words, we have not one subject, but two. To fall back upon our simple instance—which, of course, is only an analogue—the full-grown oak gives rise to the fresh acorn, but the oak-subject is not therefore to be identified with the acorn-subject which passes from stage to stage, and eventually becomes an oak itself. Similarly, although we may assume a divine Subject as in some, to us incomprehensible, way, the author and inspirer of the time-development which is for us the immediately real, it nowise follows that the divine Subject is to be identified with the Subject which undergoes this development—or rather, we should say, with the innumerable *subjects* of this development, for there is no one Subject of history, and to speak of the World-spirit as such is at most a pardonable figure of speech.

LECTURE VI.

HEGELIANISM AS AN ABSOLUTE SYSTEM.

I ENDEAVOURED in the preceding Lecture to point out two lines of thought in Hegel. The one starts from the idea of God, which is Neo-Platonically constructed as Trinity in unity, but which is simply the idea of knowledge as such, treated as a real being. There is no passage from this hypostatised conception to the facts of the finite world. The second line of thought starts with these facts, and treats the historical development of humanity as the process in which the Absolute comes to itself. These two lines of thought, I argued, are not successfully brought together by Hegel, and the attempt to bring them together involves a violation of the true notion of development. One of these views was bound to give way to

the other; and it was only natural that the strength which the second view derived from its contact with reality should enable it to triumph over the first. This is observable in Hegel himself, and still more in the history of the school. In spite of a certain mystic or Platonic vein, there never lived a man more wedded to hard fact than Hegel; and he had an instinctive aversion to seeking the Divine in some ideal beyond the confines of the world that now is. God must be found here, he argued, or not at all. Hence he came more and more strongly to insist upon the fact that the revelation and the reality of the Divine existence is contained in history. He undoubtedly insists in this connection on much that is true; but when the position is transformed by some of his ablest followers into a frank identification of the Absolute with man, we are face to face with a consequence of the Hegelian argument to which attention has not yet been called.

This is, that if we identify the Absolute with the subject of the development, we are unable to rise higher than man's actual achievement, and are therefore inevitably led to put man in the place of God. God or the Absolute is represented in the system as the last term of

a development into which we have a perfect insight; we ourselves, indeed, as absolute philosophers, are equally the last term of the development. It is impossible, therefore, to discriminate in the account given between the absolute philosopher and God. The philosopher's knowledge is God's knowledge of himself; and, with some reservations as to particularity and contingency, this knowledge is apparently put forward as perfectly adequate. No provision is made, no room seemingly is left, for any further knowledge of himself on God's part. The Philosophy of Law, of History, of Æsthetics, of Religion, and the History of Philosophy itself, all conclude in the same style. The Absolute is attained in each of these spheres, being simply man's record and ultimate attainment along these various lines. "God is not a Spirit beyond the stars," says Hegel. "He is Spirit in all spirits"[1]—a true thought finely expressed. But if the system leaves us without any self-conscious existence in the universe beyond that realised in the self-consciousness of individual philosophers, the saying means that God, in any ordinary acceptation of the word, is eliminated from our philosophy altogether. Thus trans-

[1] Werke, xi. 24.

lated, it is no longer fine and no longer true. The same tendency is observable throughout the 'Philosophy of Religion,' where we should naturally expect to meet it least. The self-existence of God, if I may so speak, seems to disappear ; God is begotten, and has His only reality in the consciousness of the worshipping community. Evidently this is to renounce the idea of anything like a separate personality or self-consciousness in the Divine Being. Whether Hegel had himself explicitly renounced the idea, it is perhaps impossible to say with certainty. Many students from his own day till now have refused to draw this conclusion from his writings, finding in them, as I am far from denying, numerous passages which seem to support their view. But to me most of these utterances have a doubtful ring. The drift of Hegel's mind appears to me, on the whole, to be in the opposite direction ; and the religious or theological form into which he often throws his thought I cannot regard as other than a metaphorical expression of positions which, in themselves, have no affinity with the dogmas in question. In a notable passage in the 'Philosophy of Religion,' he frankly compares his own treatment of the Christian dogmas to the

procedure of the Neo-Platonists in infusing a philosophic meaning into the popular mythology which preceding thinkers of a rationalistic turn had altogether cast aside.[1] But whatever may have been Hegel's personal position in the matter, the negative view taken by his most daring and perhaps his ablest followers—the Hegelians of the Left, as they were called—would appear to be the only one for which, in consistency, the system has room. For as water cannot rise higher than its source, so the development cannot go further than the philosopher himself. As long as we claim to have an absolute philosophy in the Hegelian sense, so long must we identify our own thought with the divine, and treat the Absolute as a mere expression for human achievement in its different spheres.

This consequence was frankly avowed by the Hegelians of the Left. The Absolute realises itself, they declared, only in the human individual. Behind or beside the individuals, there exists only the logical Idea, in which we are asked to recognise the ultimate self-sustaining reality of the universe.[2] The Absolute, accord-

[1] Werke, xi. 95.

[2] Hegel, himself, it may be remarked, had spoken of the logical Idea as "the realm of truth as it is without hull or

ingly, is not a complete and eternally existent self-consciousness, but an impersonal system of thought. This is the only thing permanent in phenomena; from it the phenomenal world arises, and into it it returns. In man this impersonal Absolute—this eternal system of abstract thoughts—comes to consciousness of itself. Human persons are, as it were, the foci in which the impersonal life of thought momentarily concentrates itself, in order to take stock of its own contents. These foci appear only to disappear in the perpetual process of this realisation.

The independent existence here attributed to abstract thoughts or categories makes this result one of the most remarkable theories on record. The categories not only exist of themselves, but they creatively give rise to the phenomenal world of men and things. In comparison with this apotheosis of logic, materialism itself seems mildly reasonable. Yet these Hegelians of the Left—men like Feuerbach, Ruge, Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and others—were only taking literally Hegel's own statements

wrapping in and for itself"—"the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence, before the creation of nature or any finite spirit."—Ibid., iii. 36.

about the Logic, and abolishing that supreme Spirit, for whom, so long as the Absolute is identified with the subject of the process, there is really no room in the system. Indeed we may go further, and say that this is the natural outcome of a theory which endeavours to construct reality out of the logical Idea. What other result could we expect than that both God and man, as real beings, would vanish back into their source, leaving us with the logical Idea itself as the sole reality? This is asserted in so many words of God. Man, of course, as a phenomenal existence, is in evidence, and cannot be simply denied; but he, too, is robbed of all true personality, and appears only as the vanishing centre of a system of knowledge, an exemplification of the form of consciousness in general. The Idea is all in all. Truly, as Dr Stirling says, the Idea so conceived is "a blind, dumb, invisible idol," and the theory is "the most hopeless theory that has ever been offered to humanity."[1] And it is instructive to notice how the most absolute Idealism and Rationalism historically transformed itself into its diametrical opposite—into the most thoroughgoing Materialism and Sensualism. The process may

[1] Schwegler, 474 and 435.

be traced in Feuerbach, Strauss, and others. For if the Idea realises itself in man alone, then man, as this sensuous individual, is the only reality which in any wise concerns us. The metaphysical priority assigned to the logical system pales before the imperious reality of the senses. "The new philosophy," says Feuerbach, laying down the lines of the 'Philosophie der Zukunft,' "has for its subject not the Ego, not absolute, that is, abstract, Spirit, in short not Reason *in abstracto*, but the actual and whole essence of man. The reality, the subject of reason, is only man. Man thinks, not the Ego, not Reason. The new philosophy rests therefore on the divinity (*Gottheit*), that is, the truth, of the whole man. If the old philosophy said, 'Only the rational is the true and the real,' the new philosophy says, on the other hand, only the human is the true and the real; for only the human is the rational. Man is the measure of reason."[1] A personal God to this philosophy is no more than man's projection of his own image upon the screen of his imagination. Immortality is likewise a delusion; to the individual belongs only the sensuous present. As Idealism does not recognise the distinction of popular

[1] Philosophie der Zukunft, § 51, quoted by Harms.

philosophy between the body and the soul, the reality of man is thus, practically, identified with his bodily existence, and we pass to a consistent Sensationalism and an essentially materialistic view of the universe.[1] A similar transition to Materialism, or something indistinguishable from it, achieved itself more slowly in Strauss. Strauss began his career as one of the ablest and clearest of Hegel's followers. His last book, 'The Old Faith and the New'—a very interesting personal record—is to all intents and purposes a confession of Materialism. But, indeed, what is the difference between Idealism and Materialism, if in the one case human existence is the outcome of an unconscious system of logical conceptions, and in the other the outcome of unconscious matter? In the latter case, man is the chance result of mechanical laws; in the former, the process is said to be controlled by a logical necessity. But in both cases the evolution is for us—and for us

[1] A logical Idealism of the Hegelian stamp lies, in truth, in some respects very near to Materialism. The categories, it is no doubt asserted, form the immanent reality of the material universe; and therefore, when man arises out of Nature, it is as if thought came to itself. But the frank derivation of man from Nature holds its own, while the unsubstantial basis of categories falls altogether into the background.

alone it exists—in a true sense aimless. It is a spectacle constantly repeated, but it discards and tramples under foot those conscious ends which alone are to be deemed worthy of attainment. If we take away from Idealism personality, and the ideals that belong to personality, it ceases to be Idealism in the historic sense of that word. To call it so is merely confusing the issues, for it has joined hands with the enemy, and fights on the other side of the field.

A very simple reflection, however, suffices to deliver us from these results. We have only to remember that to speak of the self-existence of thoughts, without a thinker whose they are, is to use words without a meaning; and the whole fabric of this Hegelianism of the Left collapses. Nevertheless, as has been contended, it has the consistency of the system on its side, so long as we identify the Absolute with our knowledge of the Absolute, and take the process of human development as in very truth the evolution of God. Hegel's determination to have one process and one subject was the original fountain of error. This identification, therefore, is what we must begin by denying. The development we can trace is not the development of God, but of man's thoughts about God—a development,

therefore, which does not affect the existence of their object. In the history of philosophy, for example, who can believe that we have the successive stages by which God arrived at a knowledge of Himself, complete knowledge being dated from the beginning of the present century? What we really have is the history of man's repeated efforts to solve the problem of the universe—a history which, even from this point of view, we might not unreasonably expect to show marks of progress and increasing insight; though even at the end, if we are honest with ourselves, the insight is so dim that the title of absolute knowledge applied to it has the sound of Mephistophelian mockery. It is, if possible, even more plainly so in the case of religion. What is religion, if not an attitude of the subjective spirit of man? We are here altogether on human ground. And the same is true of art, and of history itself—the history of civilisation, of states and empires. Is it not effrontery to narrow down the Spirit of the universe to a series of events upon this planet? Can we believe, as Lotze puts it, "that the creative cause of the universe issued from its darkness into the light of manifestation only by the narrow path of earthly nature, and

after having formed man and human life again retreated into infinity, as if with all its ends accomplished? For this dialectical idyll we must substitute an outlook into the boundlessness of other worlds, not with the vain effort to know the unknowable, but with the view of letting the boundlessness of this background mark out the narrow limits of the realm of existence actually knowable by us."[1] It seems strange, he adds, in the 'Metaphysic,' that these Idealists, though fully aware of the Copernican discoveries and living under their influence, "should yet be able to persuade themselves that the spiritual development of their Absolute was confined to the shores of the Mediterranean."[2] Surely the explicit statement of such results is sufficient to discredit them. Only under cover of an ambiguous phrase can they have been believed.

It is perhaps in ethics and politics, which are essentially sciences of the ideal—the ought-to-be—that the malign influences of Hegel's attitude are most clearly seen. I am fully aware while saying this, that it is precisely in these spheres that some of Hegel's best work was

[1] Lotze, Microcosmus I. 458 (English translation).
[2] Metaphysic, 379 (Clarendon Press).

done. But while recognising the solidity and strength of his writing on these subjects, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the assumption of finality made here as elsewhere. And it is natural that in this more concrete sphere the assumption should appear more grossly at variance with the facts of the case. There are few more constantly recurring polemics in Hegel than that which he carries on against Fichte's *Sollen*, the attempt, that is, to interpret the universe entirely through the notion of duty, something that is not, but is to be. As against this conception Hegel repeatedly tells us that "the Idea is not so feeble as merely to have a right or an obligation to exist without actually existing."[1] And he is fond of justifying his position by reference to the religious consciousness. "The religious mind," he says, "views the world as ruled by Divine Providence, and therefore as corresponding with what it ought to be;" or in more technical language, the Will must return to the point of view of Intelligence or cognition, which "apprehends the world as the notion actual."[2] "It is easier," he says in the 'Philosophy of History,' "to discover a deficiency in individuals, in states, and in Pro-

[1] Wallace, 9. [2] Ibid., 322, 323.

vidence, than to see their real import. This subjective fault-finding is easy. . . . Age generally makes men more tolerant; youth is always discontented. . . . The insight, then, to which philosophy is to lead us is, that the real world is as it ought to be."[1]

Now there is no difficulty in admitting that when we try speculatively to comprehend all existence within our view, it is impossible to rest in Fichte's position. This has been already urged in a former lecture, and it was eventually admitted by Fichte himself in the emphasis which he laid in his later writings upon the actuality of God as distinct from the process of becoming. Both this later position of Fichte's, therefore, and the religious point of view to which Hegel appeals, affirm the reality of the Ideal; but there seems to be a not unimportant difference between the sense in which they do so and that in which Hegel asserts it. Hegel's invocation of "the religious mind" here is perhaps hardly fair. It is quite true that the religious man views the world as ruled by Divine Providence, but this view is surely to be interpreted as a faith or belief—a faith which he clings to, may one not say, often with a

[1] English translation, 38.

species of desperation in the face of anomalies and difficulties which he cannot pretend to solve. This faith is his last refuge against complete moral scepticism; but he does not profess to *see* the plan of the Divine government. Still less does he make any assertion of the perfection of the actual world, such as Hegel puts in his mouth. On the contrary, the religious man is almost always found painting the present state of things in the darkest colours; and, if his religion be real, this is the source of his energy as a practical reformer. Hegel's position is essentially different. His whole theory leads him up to the assertion that here too, just as in knowledge, the circle is closed, finality is attained; the ideal is real, and we see that it is so.

This position is most clearly expressed in the 'Philosophie des Rechts,' published in 1820. But the acceptance, nay, the worship, of mere fact which it consistently involves is so destructive of all ethical ideals, and the air of almost brutal Actualism so fatal to further progress, that, when Hegel slipped into the unqualified assertion of it in the Preface to this work, the utterance roused something like a storm of obloquy. It is here that the famous saying

occurs—"What is rational is real, and what is real is rational;" and it is followed by other passages equally strong. "This treatise is intended to be nothing else than an attempt to comprehend and to exhibit the State as an existence essentially rational. As a philosophical work, it must most carefully avoid all construction of a State as it ought to be. The instruction which it may contain does not lie in instructing the State as to the form in which it ought to be, but simply in teaching how the State, the moral universe, is to be cognised. The task of philosophy is to understand the 'what is,' for 'what is' is reason."[1] Thus on his reconstruction or transcript of man's creation, Hegel echoes the verdict of the Divine Workman, when He saw everything He had made, and, behold, it was very good. The resemblance is striking, and was dictated by the whole tenor of his philosophy. But such praise applied to the Prussian State in the year 1820 seems to have almost too strong an infusion of the tolerance of age which he commends as the insight of true philosophy. We can scarcely wonder that his enemies attributed such utterances to no loftier source than the

[1] Werke, viii. 18.

optimistic conservatism of the man with whom the world has dealt liberally and who sees his own life-purpose achieved. Hegel was branded as a reactionary, as the "official" philosopher of the Prussian State, whose business it was to rehabilitate the actual by decking it out in the trappings of rational necessity. In this his enemies were certainly unjust. The statements in question are not insincere opportunisms; they are the genuine outcome of one whole side of Hegel's thought. That side was uppermost when he wrote the 'Philosophy of Law,' and they seem to have slipped from him almost unconsciously in this strong and unqualified form.

The clamour, however, to which this Preface gave rise, roused Hegel to a sense of his imprudence, and to an acknowledgment that his statements were not to be taken in their frank literal meaning. In the Introduction to the 'Encyclopædia'[1] he expressly replied to his critics in a passage which reads very like a palinode. He begins by sheltering himself behind the religious doctrine already referred to, and then proceeds as follows: "Existence is in

[1] A second edition of the 'Encyclopædia' appeared in 1827, a third in 1830.

part mere appearance, and only in part reality. In common life, any freak or error, evil and everything of the nature of evil, as well as every miserable and transient existence whatever, gets in a careless way, and as it were by accident, the name of reality. But even our ordinary feelings are enough to forbid an accidental existence getting the emphatic name of a reality. When I spoke of the real, it might have been understood in what sense I used the term, seeing that in a detailed Logic I had treated among other things of Reality, and had accurately distinguished it not only from the contingent, which, after all, has also existence, but even from the ordinary categories of mere existence (*Dasein, Existenz und andern Bestimmungen*)." "The understanding prides itself," he proceeds, "upon its 'Ought,' which it takes especial pleasure in prescribing in the field of politics; . . . for who is not acute enough to see a great deal in his own surroundings which is really far from being what it ought to be? But such acuteness is mistaken in the conceit that when it examines these objects, and pronounces what they ought to be, it is dealing with the interests of philosophical science. Philosophy has to do only with the Idea—with a reality,

therefore, of which those objects, institutions, and conditions represent only the outward and superficial side."[1]

The Preface does not mean, therefore, that "whatever is is right." Not the real in the ordinary sense of that word is the rational, but only the truly real—that which reason justifies as such. The idea realises itself, but still the external fabric cannot be taken as its complete or even consistent realisation. In short, the real, so far as it is rational, is rational; the rest we leave out of account. We deny the term real of that which is not rational. Surely this is to reduce the position to an empty tautology.[2]

[1] Werke, vi. 10, 11; Wallace, 8, 9.

[2] Mr Ritchie has on more than one occasion objected to my treatment of this distinction. "Surely," he says, in an essay on Darwin and Hegel, "it is a perfectly legitimate use of that fatally ambiguous word 'real.' The use of real in antithesis to sham is common enough." And in his recent interesting essay on 'What is Reality?' (Philosophical Review, vol. i., No. 3) he distinguishes as the fifth use of the term "that in which real is used in a moral sense, the sense in which it is held that 'the Real is the Rational.' . . . We go behind the phenomenal existence of institutions to examine their ethical content, and we pronounce them real or unreal. Now this sense fits in with the main sense of reality as the coherent and intelligible, except that we bring a moral standard of value, so that what is real in the sense of not being imaginary may yet be unreal in the sense of being absurd or mischievous." Or again, taking his examples

This equivocation between "the real" and "the truly real" is more, however, than an isolated quibble on Hegel's part to extricate himself from an uncomfortable position. It is not a piece of conscious insincerity; for we can hardly impute to him the stony-hearted optimism and the peculiarly gross empiricism which a literal rendering of his words would imply. He probably meant to say substantially what he afterwards explained that he had meant—namely, that *on the whole* a purpose of reason is visible in the social and legal structures of mankind. Philosophy, working on the great scale, can afford to neglect exceptions, misgrowths, positive evils. In itself, this is

from another sphere, he says, "the real as the rational differs from the merely existent, just as definite species in plants and animals differ from 'sports' and from 'survivals.'" Such passages seem to me to admit in the fullest way all that is contended for in the text, namely, that the real does not cover the whole field of existence, but must be interpreted as the truly real or the good. An absolute system, however, cannot afford to leave any nook or cranny of existence unoccupied.

Similarly, Hegel's Optimism may be, as Mr Ritchie says, "no more than that faith in the ultimate rationality of the universe, which is the presupposition of all scientific interpretation, and of all practical effort" (Darwin and Hegel, 18). But when the position is whittled down to this expression of philosophic faith, it ceases to bear the significance which it was intended to convey as the watchword of an all-inclusive and all-explaining philosophy.

perhaps an intelligible and justifiable position, but is it one which is open to an absolute philosophy? The old difficulty of the contingent, of reality as such, is upon us again, and again Hegel tries to wave it contemptuously aside. The embarrassing facts are not "truly real," or, more concisely still, they are not "true." Hegel's use of this constantly recurring term is little more than an index to the difficulty in question. In the 'Logic' every higher category is looked upon as the "truth" of the lower, and the Absolute Idea is the full truth of which all the preceding forms of thought were imperfect expressions. Used thus of categories or abstract definitions, the term is sufficiently in place, and might be rendered by a phrase like "adequate expression." But it receives from Hegel a much wider extension, being applied to existences as well as to conceptions. Here the ambiguity begins, for an existence is properly said to have "reality," truth being a term properly applicable to conceptions alone, and signifying their correspondence with reality. We have, however, the advantage of an express declaration by Hegel as to the sense to be attached to the term in this new connection. He dis-

tinguishes "truth" in his usage from mere correctness or "formal truth," as he calls it. "Truth in the deeper sense consists in the identity between objectivity and the notion. It is in this deeper sense that truth is understood when we speak of a true State or a true work of art. These objects are true, if they are as they ought to be—*i.e.*, if their reality corresponds to their notion. When thus viewed, *to be untrue means much the same as to be bad.* A bad man is an untrue man, one who does not behave as his notion or vacation requires of him."[1] Hegel has the grace to say in another place that "when the term untrue occurs in a philosophical discussion, it does not signify that the thing to which it is applied does not exist. A bad State or a sick body may certainly exist; but these objects are untrue, because their notion and their reality are out of harmony."[2] Nevertheless, he seems to say, such existences do not count; we may exclude them from our reckoning altogether. Would that we could believe this comfortable saying! That these facts have no place in an absolute system — that they "ought not" to be there—is plain enough. They are

[1] Wallace, 306. [2] Ibid., 211.

the standing refutation of its claims. But dismissed in this fashion they cannot be.

The distinction which Hegel here attempts to draw marks the reappearance of the other line of thought which runs through the system. This Platonising strain, as it has been aptly named,[1] predominates in the 'Logic,' and appears more or less in other works, but is markedly absent in the 'Philosophy of Law.' Under its influence, as we have seen, Hegel, like Plato, seeks reality not in the actual world, but in the eternal realm of an absolute and self-guaranteeing thought. The world of timeless forms is the real world, not the world of existing things and persons. To this latter world Hegel (when following out this train of thought) accords, like Plato, only as it were a quasi-reality. He even speaks, as we have seen, of the whole course of finite development as a species of illusion—"only a hull or wrapping under which the notion lies concealed." But, on the other hand, the identity of the real and the ideal is to an absolute system the very breath of its life. "The real is rational" is the necessary

[1] By Haym in his 'Hegel und seine Zeit,' a book a good deal marred by its rhetorical strain and a semi-popular looseness of treatment, but often containing suggestive criticisms.

complement of "the rational is real." Hence Hegel's apparent rebound from his Platonising strain to the opposite extreme of Empiricism or Actualism. His philosophy can justify itself only as the union of its Platonism with its Empiricism, or as the exhibition of the one in the other. Divorced from the world of facts, the Platonism or Idealism is all in the air. The reality of the rational is ultimately the proof of its rationality; for unless it asserts itself in existence, the circle of the system is not closed. Just so far indeed as the real does *not* correspond to the rational, the system itself falls to the ground, and its statements as to the nature of the rational take the character of undemonstrated assertions. Sweeping, therefore, though the statements in the 'Philosophy of Law' and the 'Philosophy of History' are, they seem to me to represent the attitude which an absolute philosophy must necessarily assume so long as it is animated by a confident belief in itself. Strictly speaking, we can have no standing-ground in a system like Hegel's from which to criticise the actual. None the less, however, is this attitude one which will not bear examination. It only requires to be openly avowed, as here by Hegel, and it is at once seen to be

untenable. The explanations or apologies to which Hegel has recourse do but acknowledge with a bad grace that the brave words formerly used will not bear to be pressed. The real and the ideal do not coincide or interpenetrate, and the two sides of the system are therefore not really brought together. Nature or existence, says Hegel, is the home of Contingency, and so it fails of truth—fails, that is, to body forth the notion. Necessity, says Plato, is mingled with Reason in the origin of the world, and Reason cannot quite subdue Necessity to itself. The very form of words is almost the same, in which the two thinkers record their own failure in the attempt to conceal it.

If we turn to the 'Philosophy of Law,' it will be found that, in spite of Hegel's subsequent attempts to guard his meaning, the descriptions of it in the Preface were essentially correct. It is a transcript of what is—of existing institutions and customs, and of the existent State. There is throughout the book none of the enthusiasm of moral progress which meets us, for example, in Kant and Fichte. Indeed the inner side of actions — that which constitutes their whole *moral* significance — is hurriedly passed over, in order to arrive at a considera-

tion of those bonds of social observance which keep the individual right, as it were, without his thinking about it.[1] The conscientious or self-questioning habit of mind is studiously depreciated, and no higher standard is set up than that of the society in which a man lives. Do as others do; perform the duties of your station; be a good father and a good citizen, and get rid of windy enthusiasms. Such is the temper of the book from first to last. It is, as it were, the externalisation of morality. For the inner fact of duty there is substituted an automatic adaptation to an external mechanism of observance and respectability. Unquestionably there is a great deal of massive commonsense in all this; and Hegel is never happier than when administering a slap in the face to some superfine feeling. But it is also true that it is the justification of the existing standard. It is the mood of satisfied acquiescence in things as they are, which the years bring to the man of the world—a mood as far removed as possible from the atmosphere of moral endeavour. There is in it no impulse onwards, no impulse

[1] It need hardly be pointed out that though the title of the book is the 'Philosophy of Law' (Philosophie des Rechts), it is a complete treatise on Hegelian ethics.

upwards. It is an atmosphere fatal to moral progress, and ultimately fatal to morality itself. Green is not slow to point out that the habit of conscientiousness—of moral self-interrogation—is the very mainspring of morality, essential even for preventing the deterioration of moral practice, much more so for the elevation of the existing standard. "The standard of respectability," he says, "could never have been attained, if the temper which acquiesces in it had been universal—if no one had been lifted above that acquiescence—in the past. It has been reached through the action of men who, each in his time and turn, have refused to accept the way of living which they found about them."[1] Hence when he comes to treat of ethics, Green is forced to desert the Hegelian Absolutism, and to insist upon "an ideal of virtue" as "the spring from which morality perpetually renews its life." He philosophises here more in the spirit of Kant and Fichte than of Hegel. Fichte is in a manner the typical moralist; for the moral man can never tell himself that he has already attained. In the character of logical necessity which he imparts to the historical process, and in his contention that the goal *is*

[1] Prolegomena to Ethics, 324.

reached and the long march of the Spirit ended, Hegel's attitude is as typically non-ethical.

This attitude of attainment and finality is also curiously observable in the 'Philosophy of History.' As Haym observes, the Hegelian philosophy of history has no future. From youth in Greece and manhood in Rome, Spirit has advanced in the German or Teutonic world to the stadium of old age. It is true, Hegel adds that while the old age of nature is weakness that of Spirit is its perfect maturity and strength; but he fully accepts the finality of the comparison.[1] Yet, as the same writer acutely points out, this would-be absolute and final philosophy naively supplies us with its own condemnation. All readers of Hegel will remember the finely inspired passage in which he compares philosophy to the owl of Minerva. It forms the conclusion of the Preface to the 'Philosophy of Law,' and breathes at its outset the same spirit as the passages formerly quoted: "If it were the purpose of philosophy to reform and improve the existing state of things, it comes a little too late for such a task. It is only when the actual world has reached its full fruition that the ideal rises to

[1] Philosophy of History, 115 (English translation).

confront the reality, and builds up, in the shape of an intellectual realm, that same world grasped in its substantial being. When philosophy paints its grey in grey, some one shape of life has meanwhile grown old: and grey in grey, though it brings it into knowledge, cannot make it young again. The owl of Minerva does not start upon its flight until the evening twilight has begun to fall." "Just as each individual," he says a little before, "is the son of his own time, so philosophy is *its own time formulated or reduced to thoughts* (in Gedanken erfasst); it is as foolish to imagine that a philosophy can go beyond the world present to it, as that an individual can overleap his own time."[1] This is an idea deeply rooted in Hegel, and it forms the staple of most Hegelian histories of philosophy. But how are we to reconcile this acknowledgment of thoroughgoing relativity with the absolute claims made for his own philosophy? Is the future to be an absolute monotony, bringing us no new lessons, and yielding us no deeper insight? Not for

[1] Werke, viii. 18. Cf. the emphatic assertion of the same position in the 'Philosophy of History'—"Each individual is the son of his nation and of his age. None remains behind it, still less advances before it" (English translation, 55).

a moment can we entertain such an idea.[1] The "horologue of the universe" did not run down and come to a standstill with the dawn of the nineteenth century. In truth, this golden age of philosophy, with its absolute knowledge and its rational state, strikes at last upon the spirit with a sense of intolerable *ennui.* We feel instinctively with Lessing that the search for truth is a nobler thing, and better for our spirits' health, than the truth here offered for our acceptance. It might be otherwise if *the truth* were really ours, but that, we may well believe, is reserved for God alone. The perfect knowledge and the perfect State of Hegelianism ring alike hollow, when brought face to face with the riddle of the painful earth—with the always solemn and often terrible mystery that environs us. Let us be honest with ourselves, and let us be shy of demonstrations which prove too much. We are men and not

[1] The idea, however, is naturally suggested to the student who has lived himself into the Hegelian system, and it was not uncommon among Hegel's earlier and more confident followers. "Jenes Pathos und jene Ueberzeugtheit der Hegelianer vom Jahre 1830 muss man sich vergegenwärtigen, welche im vollen bitteren Ernste die Frage ventilirten, was wohl den ferneren Inhalt der Weltgeschichte bilden werde, nachdem doch in der Hegel'schen Philosophie der Weltgeist an sein Ziel, an das Wissen seiner selbst hindurchgedrungen sei."—Haym, p. 5.

gods; the ultimate synthesis is not ours. The universe is *not* plain to us, save by a supreme effort of faith—of faith in reason and faith in goodness. It is the splendid faith of Hegel in reason which gives such massive proportions to his thought, and makes it like the opening up of a new world to him who enters upon it. But if this faith be reduced to system, and put forward as a demonstration, I feel equally certain that the effect is as harmful as it was at first beneficial. It saps the springs both of speculative interest and of moral endeavour. No, we may rest assured that finality is not for the race of man; we cannot lift ourselves out of the stream of ever-flowing time in which our lives are passed. Hegelianism is one more great attempt satisfactorily to name the Whole, and to find room within it for all the different sides of existence. But Time is still the god who devours his own children, and the Hegelian system will be no exception. It will remain as the system of Aristotle or as the system of Spinoza remains, and men will draw from its rich materials for their own intellectual structures. They will draw inspiration and guidance from its successes; they will take warning by its mistakes.

CONCLUSION.

If any justification be needed of this prolonged criticism of Hegel, it must be found in the considerations which I adduced at the outset. The truth of the Hegelian system, or of some essentially similar scheme, is presupposed in the doctrine of English Neo-Kantians or Neo-Hegelians as to the universal Self and its relation to the world. There may be no mention of Hegel in their writings, and the doctrine itself may be explicitly derived by them from a development and criticism of the Kantian philosophy; but the nerve of such development and criticism is supplied by Hegel's professed exhibition of existence as the process of such a Self. Hegel also exemplifies on a great scale the same mode of reasoning which was animadverted upon in the first lecture as the fallacy of Neo-Kantianism; and a study

of his system enables us, better than anything else, to see the results to which this line of thought conducts us.

The radical error both of Hegelianism and of the allied English doctrine I take to be the identification of the human and the divine self-consciousness, or, to put it more broadly, the unification of consciousness in a single Self. The exposure of this may be said to have been, in a manner, the thesis of these lectures. This identification or unification depends throughout, it has been argued, upon the tendency to take a mere form for a real being—to take an identity of type for a unity of existence. Each of us is a Self: that is to say, in the technical language of recent philosophy, we exist *for* ourselves or are objects to ourselves. We are not mere objects existing only for others, but, as it were, subject and object in one. Selfhood may also be said to imply that, in one aspect of my existence, I am universal, seeing that I distinguish my individual existence from that of other beings, while embracing both within a common world. Irrespective of metaphysical theory every Self is universal in this sense, and by all means let this characteristic be embodied in the definition of the Self. If a mere individual,

as we are often told, would be a being without consciousness of its own limitations—a being, therefore, which could not know itself as an individual—then no Self is a mere individual. We may even safely say that the mere individual is a fiction of philosophic thought. There could be no interaction between individuals, unless they were all embraced within one Reality; still less could there be any knowledge by one individual of others, if they did not all form parts of one system of things. But it is a great step further to say that this universal attitude of the Self, as such, is due to the fact that it is one universal Self that thinks in all so-called thinkers. This is, to say the least, an extremely unfortunate way of stating the necessities of the case. For though selfhood, as was seen in the earlier lectures, involves a duality in unity, and is describable as subject-object, it is none the less true that each Self is a unique existence, which is perfectly *impervious*, if I may so speak, to other selves—impervious in a fashion of which the impenetrability of matter is a faint analogue. The self, accordingly, resists invasion; in its character of self it refuses to admit another self within itself, and thus be made, as it were, a mere retainer of something

else. The unity of things (which is not denied) cannot be properly expressed by making it depend upon a unity of the Self in all thinkers; for the very characteristic of a self is this exclusiveness. So far from being a principle of union in the sense desired, the self is in truth the very apex of separation and differentiation. It is none the less true, of course, that only through selfhood am I able to recognise the unity of the world and my own union with the source of all, and this is the incentive to the metaphysical use of the idea of a universal Self which I am criticising. But though the self is thus, in knowledge, a principle of unification, it is, in existence or metaphysically, a principle of isolation. And the unification which proceeds in the one case is, to the end, without prejudice to the exclusive self-assertion in the other. There is no deliverance of consciousness which is more unequivocal than that which testifies to this independence and exclusiveness. I have a centre of my own—a will of my own—which no one shares with me or can share—a centre which I maintain even in my dealings with God Himself. For it is eminently false to say that I put off, or can put off, my personality here. The religious consciousness lends no counte-

nance whatever to the representation of the human soul as a mere mode or efflux of the divine. On the contrary, only in a person, in a relatively independent or self-centred being is religious approach to God possible. Religion is the self-surrender of the human will to the divine. "Our wills are ours to make them Thine." But this is a *self*-surrender, a surrender which only self, only will, can make.

The doctrine of the universal Self is reached by a process of reasoning which I have already compared to the procedure of Scholastic Realism in dealing with individuals and "universals." Realism also treated the individual as merely the vehicle of a universal form. It took the species as a real existence apart from its individuals; more real than they, and prior to them, for they are regarded as in effect its creatures. The individual man stands in this secondary and dependent relation to the species "humanitas," and that universal inheres in turn in a higher genus, till we reach the ultimate abstraction of a universal Being or substance of which all existing things are accidents. For the ultimate goal of Realism is a thorough-going Pantheism. Any student of the Scholastic period may see that only inconsistent reserva-

tions and the compromises necessitated by their churchly position restrained the Realists from this conclusion. It was widely drawn, however, in the heresies of the time, and the greater the speculative ability and consistency of the Realistic thinker, the nearer he approached it. And beyond the pale of Christendom altogether, in the system of Averroes, the typical infidel of the middle ages, the same Realism meets us in the doctrine of the identity of the human intellect in all individual men—identity not in the sense of essential similarity, but of existential unity. Though this universal intellect is regarded by Averroes as an inferior emanation of the Divine Being, and not as immediately identical with the divine intellect, the striking similarity of the doctrine to the Neo-Kantian theory of the universal Self cannot fail to be remarked. The fundamental doctrine common to all forms of Realism is the doctrine of the species as an entity in the individuals, common to all and *identical* in each, an entity to which individual differences adhere as accidents. As against this view we may set Cousin's rendering of Abelard's doctrine—"Only individuals exist, and in the individual nothing but the individual." When existence is in question, it is

the individual, not the universal, that is real; and the real individual is not a composite of species and accidents, but is individual to the inmost fibre of his being.[1]

In the last resort this realistic fallacy, whether in the Schoolmen or in Hegel and the Neo-Kantians, may be traced, as I suggested in the end of the first lecture, to a confusion between logic or epistemology and metaphysic or ontology. The imaginary subject (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*) of the theory of knowledge is hypostatised by the Neo-Kantians as the one ultimately real Thinker. Hegel's metaphysical logic may be taken without injustice as the culmination of this tendency. Kant ridiculed Fichte's system (not unnaturally, but, as we have seen, not quite fairly) as an attempt to extract existence from mere logic, and said it looked to him like a kind of ghost.[2] This criticism would have been more applicable to Hegel's attempt to construct

[1] There is no attempt here, it may perhaps be observed, to fall back upon isolated self-existent reals. Each finite individual has its place within the one real universe, or the one real Being, with all the parts of which it is inseparably connected. But the universe is itself an individual or real whole, containing all its parts within itself, and not a universal of the logical order containing its exemplifications under it.

[2] Wie eine Art Gespenst: in a letter dated April 1798 (Werke, viii. 812).

the world out of mere universals. And even if we decline to take such Hegelian statements literally, the vice of the position still clings to the system; for the existence of things, however explained, is still regarded as serving only for the exemplification of these abstract notions. This holds true of the whole course of development, even in the case of spirit. If we examine Hegel's statements as to the nature of spirit, they are all cast in the same mould. Spirit is that which has returned out of otherness to be at home with itself; spirit is that which restores itself; it is not an immediate but a mediated or restored unity; it is an identity which is not blank but constitutes the negation of the negation. Such are the constantly recurring phrases that meet us, and they all express the same thing—namely, that unity in duplicity (or trinity in unity, as Hegel might have called it) which characterises self-conscious life. They give us simply the abstract scheme of intelligence which Fichte constructs for us in the 'Wissenschaftslehre.' But there is no virtue in this abstract form as such, and if the goal of the development is represented as the realisation of the mere form of knowledge, it ceases to be anything of real value. It is this idealism of

logical formulæ with its sacrifice of the true goods of the spirit, which Lotze censures so severely in the Hegelian system.

My contention throughout these lectures has been that the attempt of the Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian schools to unify the divine and the human subject is ultimately destructive of the reality of both. If, as has been argued above,[1] the theory deprives man of his proper self, by reducing him, as it were, to an object of a universal Thinker, it leaves this universal Thinker also without any true personality. We cannot rightly conceive either the divine or the human Self in this impossible union, nor is this wonderful, seeing that they are merely two inseparable aspects of our own conscious life isolated and hypostatised. As for the divine Self, if *per impossibile* we figure this abstraction to ourselves as the permanent counterpart or sustainer of an objective world, such a purely objective consciousness is not in any true sense of the word a Self; it is no more than an imaginary focus into which an objective system of relations returns. We have learned—and this is well—to be chary of attributing to the Divine Spirit a subjectivity like our own. But

[1] Cf., for example, pp. 67-69.

it must not be forgotten that if we are to keep the name God at all, or any equivalent term, subjectivity—an existence of God for Himself, analogous to our own personal existence, though doubtless transcending it infinitely in innumerable ways—is an essential element in the conception. If it is said that this is abstract thinking, and illegitimately separates God's being from His manifestation or working in the universe, the charge does not appear to be borne out by the logical doctrine of Essence as we know it in its application to man. A man may be said to be for others what his acts and words are; and if we know these, we rightly say that we know the man. Similarly we may be said to know God as manifested in nature and history. Knowledge of the manifestation is in both cases knowledge of the essence; it does not cut us off from knowledge of the essence, as the Relativists would have us believe. But just as the man has a centre of his own, which we cannot occupy, and from which he looks, as it were, upon the inner side of his acts and words (as well as upon a private world of thoughts and feelings, many of which do not take shape in the common or general world at all), so, if we speak of God

at all, there must be a divine centre of thought, activity, and enjoyment, to which no mortal can penetrate. In this sense every man's being is different for himself from what it is as exhibited to others, and God's being may infinitely transcend His manifestation as known by us.

Moreover, the admission of a real self-consciousness in God seems demanded of us if we are not to be unfaithful to the fundamental principle of the theory of knowledge—interpretation by means of the highest category within our reach. The self-conscious life is that highest, and we should be false to ourselves, if we denied in God what we recognise as the source of dignity and worth in ourselves. Only, as was said in a previous lecture, though we must be anthropomorphic, our anthropomorphism must be critical. Just as we do not read our full selves into life of lower forms, so—or rather much more so—must we avoid transferring to God all the features of our own self-consciousness. God may, nay must, be infinitely more—we are at least certain that He cannot be less—than we know ourselves to be.

The Hegelian system is as ambiguous on the question of man's immortality as on that of the personality of God, and for precisely

the same reason—namely, because the Self of which assertions are made in the theory is not a real but a logical self. Hence, although passages may be quoted which seem direct assertions of immortality, they are found, on closer examination, to resolve themselves into statements about the Absolute Ego, or the unity of self-consciousness as such. Thus, we are told, Time is but a form of the Ego's own life—a form in which it knows objects—but the Subject itself is not bound by time-determinations. It is present to all the moments of time alike, being, in fact, the bond which unites the several moments in one Time. The Ego, it is argued, is, in a strict sense, timeless or out of time, and it becomes absurd, therefore, to apply time-predicates to it and to speak of its origin or decease.[1] As applied to the immortality of the individual self, however, this argument proves nothing. It only proves that the Ego must have coexisted with, or been present to, all its experience in the past; it

[1] This argument involves, it may be remarked, the subtle confusion between the logical and the metaphysical criticised in a former lecture. Only an abstraction can properly be spoken of as out of time; so far as the Ego is real, it is not out of time, but abides or persists through time. Even in speaking of the Divine Being, that is the only sense which the term "eternal" can bear to us.

does not prove that that experience may not come to an end, and the Ego along with it. Or again, we are told that the Ego is the absolutely necessary presupposition of thought and existence. We cannot strip off the Self; we cannot even conceive our own annihilation. But this is one of the demonstrations which prove too much. It applies as much to the times before our birth as to the times after our death. If we think at all, we cannot abstract from self-consciousness. But if, as Lucretius says, the future is to be of no more import to us than the days of old when the Pœni flocked together to battle, and the empire of the world was at stake, then surely the immortality thus guaranteed can be of no concrete concern to us. It rests, indeed, again, upon the conversion of a logical necessity into a metaphysical existence. This logical necessity under which we lie is said to be due to the presence in each of us of an unoriginated and unending Self. Even if we take the argument at its own valuation, therefore, it is the immortality of this Absolute Self which it proves. In like manner Aristotle maintained the eternity of the Active Reason,[1] and Aver-

[1] Aristotle's theory of the Active Reason has already been

roes the immortality of the intellect identical in all men. Spinoza, too, spoke of the *pars æterna nostri.* In no other sense does Hegel speak of the immortality of "man as spirit" —an immortality or eternity which he is at pains to designate as a "present quality," an actual possession.[1] Hegel's utterances on this subject are all pervaded, to my mind, by this *double entendre,* and virtually amount to a shelving of the question. For it has been abundantly seen that the Absolute Ego or the Active Reason is in itself a pure abstraction; and to be told that we survive in that form is no whit more consoling than to be told that the chemical elements of our body will survive in new transformations.

The two positions—the divine personality and human dignity and immortality—are two complementary sides of the same view of existence. If we can believe, with the Hegelians of the Left, that there is no permanent Intelligence and Will at the heart of things,

compared to the doctrine of the universal Self. The history of the Peripatetic school, it may be added, forms an interesting parallel to the development of the Hegelian school as indicated in the sixth lecture. The Active Reason speedily disappeared in the purely naturalistic system of Strato of Lampsacus.

[1] Werke, xii. 219.

then the self-conscious life is degraded from its central position, and becomes merely an incident in the universe. In that case we may well believe that human self-consciousness is but like a spark struck in the dark to die away presently upon the darkness whence it has arisen. For, according to this theory, the universe consists essentially in the evolution and reabsorption of transitory forms—forms that are filled with knowledge and shaped by experience, only to be emptied and broken by death. But it is a mockery to speak as if the universe had any real or worthy End, if it is merely the eternal repetition of this Danaid labour. And an account which contradicts our best-founded standards of value, and fails to satisfy our deepest needs, stands condemned as inherently unreasonable and incredible. I do not think that immortality can be demonstrated by philosophy; but certainly to a philosophy founding upon self-consciousness, and especially upon the moral consciousness, it must seem incredible that the successive generations should be thus used up and cast aside—as if character were not the only lasting product and the only valuable result of time. It may be said that morality is independent

of the belief in immortality — that its true foundation is goodness for the sake of goodness, virtue for virtue's sake—and I willingly admit the nobility of temper that often underlies this representation. As against the theory which would base morality upon selfish rewards and punishments in a future state, it is profoundly true. But immortality is claimed by our moral instincts in no sense as a reward, but simply as "the wages of going on and not to die." And the denial of immortality seems so much at variance with our notions of the moral reasonableness of the world, that I believe it must ultimately act as a corrosive scepticism upon morality itself.

"Gone for ever! Ever? No; for since our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials killed the slave and slew the wife,
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just,
Take the charm 'for ever' from them, and they crumble into dust."[1]

[1] Locksley Hall: Sixty Years After.

One word by way of conclusion and epilogue. It is possible that to some these lectures may appear to contain only unmitigated condemnation of Hegel and his system. That is an impression which I should much regret. I should regret it, not only because of my own great personal obligations to Hegel, which would make such a condemnation savour of ingratitude, but also on account of the great debt which philosophy in general owes to Hegel, and the speculative outlook which is got by studying him. I would dissuade no one from the study of Hegel. His aim is so great that the mere effort to keep pace with him strengthens the thews of the mind. Moreover, there is much in Hegel of the highest philosophical importance and truth. His services to the phænomenology or philosophical history of consciousness in all its forms have been simply immense. His 'Logic,' looked at as a criticism of categories, with its insistence on self-consciousness as the ultimate principle of explanation, is also an imperishable gift. I have already defended his anthropomorphism in this respect, and am ready to do battle for it again. Nothing can be more unphilosophical than the attempt to crush man's spirit by

thrusting upon it the immensities of the material universe. In this respect, Hegel's superb contempt for nature as nature has a justification of its own. In fact, we might adopt Fichte's strong expression, and say, that if matter alone existed, it would be equivalent to saying that nothing existed at all. In all this, Hegel is the protagonist of Idealism in the historic sense of that word, and champions the best interests of humanity. It is Hegelianism as a system, and not Hegel, that I have attacked. The point of my criticism has been that in its execution the system breaks down, and ultimately sacrifices these very interests to a logical abstraction styled the Idea, in which both God and man disappear. Nor are these interests better conserved by the Neo-Kantianism or Neo-Hegelianism, which erects into a god the mere form of self-consciousness in general.

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