

from a pistol. The results were either crazy ravings, or, if they were not ravings, they were prose so dull that it was unworthy of the name of prose. It is just the same in the later philosophies. What is not utterly senseless drivel about the indifference-point and polarity, about oxygen, the holy, the infinite, &c., is made up of thoughts so trivial that we might well doubt our having correctly apprehended their meaning, in the first place because they are given forth with such arrogant effrontery, and in the second place because we cannot help trusting that what was said was not so trivial as it seems. As in the Philosophy of Nature men forgot the Notion and proceeded in a dead unspiritual course, so here they lose sight of spirit entirely. They have strayed from the right road ; for by their principle, Notion and perception are one unity, but in point of fact this unity, this spirit, itself emerges in immediacy, and is therefore in intuitive perception, and not in the Notion.

E. FINAL RESULT.

The present standpoint of philosophy is that the Idea is known in its necessity ; the sides of its diremption, Nature and Spirit, are each of them recognized as representing the totality of the Idea, and not only as being in themselves identical, but as producing this one identity from themselves ; and in this way the identity is recognized as necessary. Nature, and the world or history of spirit, are the two realities ; what exists as actual Nature is an image of divine Reason ; the forms of self-conscious Reason are also the forms of Nature. The ultimate aim and business of philosophy is to reconcile thought or the Notion with reality. It is easy from subordinate standpoints to find satisfaction in modes of intuitive perception and of feeling. But the deeper the spirit goes within itself, the more vehement is the opposition, the more abundant is the wealth without ; the depth is to be

measured by the greatness of the craving with which spirit seeks to find itself in what lies outside of itself. We saw the thought which apprehends itself appearing ; it strove to make itself concrete within itself. Its first activity is formal ; Aristotle was the first to say that *νοῦς* is the thought of thought. The result is the thought which is at home with itself, and at the same time embraces the universe therein, and transforms it into an intelligent world. In apprehension the spiritual and the natural universe are interpenetrated as one harmonious universe, which withdraws into itself, and in its various aspects develops the Absolute into a totality, in order, by the very process of so doing, to become conscious of itself in its unity, in Thought. Philosophy is thus the true theodicy, as contrasted with art and religion and the feelings which these call up—a reconciliation of spirit, namely of the spirit which has apprehended itself in its freedom and in the riches of its reality.

To this point the World-spirit has come, and each stage has its own form in the true system of Philosophy ; nothing is lost, all principles are preserved, since Philosophy in its final aspect is the totality of forms. This concrete idea is the result of the strivings of spirit during almost twenty-five centuries of earnest work to become objective to itself, to know itself :

Tantæ molis erat, se ipsam cognoscere mentem.

All this time was required to produce the philosophy of our day ; so tardily and slowly did the World-spirit work to reach this goal. What we pass in rapid review when we recall it, stretched itself out in reality to this great length of time. For in this lengthened period, the Notion of Spirit, invested with its entire concrete development, its external subsistence, its wealth, is striving to bring spirit to perfection, to make progress itself and to develop from spirit. It goes ever on and on, because spirit is progress alone. Spirit often seems to have forgotten and lost itself, but

inwardly opposed to itself, it is inwardly working ever forward (as when Hamlet says of the ghost of his father, " Well said, old mole ! canst work i' the ground so fast ? " ¹), until grown strong in itself it bursts asunder the crust of earth which divided it from the sun, its Notion, so that the earth crumbles away. At such a time, when the encircling crust, like a soulless decaying tenement, crumbles away, and spirit displays itself arrayed in new youth, the seven league boots are at length adopted. This work of the spirit to know itself, this activity to find itself, is the life of the spirit and the spirit itself. Its result is the Notion which it takes up of itself ; the history of Philosophy is a revelation of what has been the aim of spirit throughout its history ; it is therefore the world's history in its innermost signification. This work of the human spirit in the recesses of thought is parallel with all the stages of reality ; and therefore no philosophy oversteps its own time. The importance which the determinations of thought possessed is another matter, which does not belong to the history of Philosophy. These Notions are the simplest revelation of the World spirit : in their more concrete form they are history.

We must, therefore, in the first place not esteem lightly what spirit has won, namely its gains up to the present day. Ancient Philosophy is to be reverenced as necessary, and as a link in this sacred chain, but all the same nothing more than a link. The present is the highest stage reached. In the second place, all the various philosophies are no mere fashionable theories of the time, or anything of a similar nature ; they are neither chance products nor the blaze of a fire of straw, nor casual eruptions here and there, but a spiritual, reasonable, forward advance ; they are of necessity one Philosophy in its development, the revelation of God, as He knows Himself to be. Where several

¹ Hamlet, Act I. Scene V.

philosophies appear at the same time, they are different sides which make up one totality forming their basis; and on account of their one-sidedness we see the refutation of the one by the other. In the third place we do not find here feeble little efforts to establish or to criticize this or that particular point; instead of that, each philosophy sets up a new principle of its own, and this must be recognized.

If we glance at the main epochs in the whole history of Philosophy, and grasp the necessary succession of stages in the leading moments, each of which expresses a determinate Idea, we find that after the Oriental whirl of subjectivity, which attains to no intelligibility and therefore to no subsistence, the light of thought dawned among the Greeks.

1. The philosophy of the ancients had the absolute Idea as its thought; and the realization or reality of the same consisted in comprehending the existing present world, and regarding it as it is in its absolute nature. This philosophy did not make its starting-point the Idea itself, but proceeded from the objective as from something given, and transformed the same into the Idea; the Being of Parmenides.

2. Abstract thought, *νοῦς*, became known to itself as universal essence or existence, not as subjective thought; the Universal of Plato.

3. In Aristotle the Notion emerges, free and unconstrained, as comprehending thought, permeating and spiritualizing all the forms which the universe contains.

4. The Notion as subject, its independence, its inwardness, abstract separation, is represented by the Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: here we have not the free, concrete form, but universality abstract and in itself formal.

5. The thought of totality, the intelligible world, is the concrete Idea as we have seen it with the Neo-Platonists.

This principle is ideality generally speaking, which is present in all reality, but not the Idea which knows itself : this is not reached until the principle of subjectivity, individuality, found a place in it, and God as spirit became actual to Himself in self-consciousness.

6. But it has been the work of modern times to grasp this Idea as spirit, as the Idea that knows itself. In order to proceed from the conscious Idea to the self-conscious, we must have the infinite opposition, namely the fact that the Idea has come to the consciousness of being absolutely sundered in twain. As spirit had the thought of objective existence, Philosophy thus perfected the intellectuality of the world, and produced this spiritual world as an object existing beyond present reality, like Nature,—the first creation of spirit. The work of the spirit now consisted in bringing this Beyond back to reality, and guiding it into self-consciousness. This is accomplished by self-consciousness thinking itself, and recognizing absolute existence to be the self-consciousness that thinks itself. With Descartes pure thought directed itself on that separation which we spoke of above. Self-consciousness, in the first place, thinks of itself as consciousness ; therein is contained all objective reality, and the positive, intuitive reference of its reality to the other side. With Spinoza Thought and Being are opposed and yet identical ; he has the intuitive perception of substance, but the knowledge of substance in his case is external. We have here the principle of reconciliation taking its rise from thought as such, in order to abrogate the subjectivity of thought : this is the case in Leibnitz's monad, which possesses the power of representation.

7. In the second place, self-consciousness thinks of itself as being self-consciousness ; in being self-conscious it is independent, but still in this independence it has a negative relation to what is outside self-consciousness. This is infinite subjectivity, which appears at one time as the critique of thought in the case of Kant, and at another

time, in the case of Fichte, as the tendency or impulse towards the concrete. Absolute, pure, infinite form is expressed as self-consciousness, the Ego.

8. This is a light that breaks forth on spiritual substance, and shows absolute content and absolute form to be identical; —substance is in itself identical with knowledge. Self-consciousness thus, in the third place, recognizes its positive relation as its negative, and its negative as its positive,—or, in other words, recognizes these opposite activities as the same, *i.e.* it recognizes pure Thought or Being as self-identity, and this again as separation. This is intellectual perception ; but it is requisite in order that it should be in truth intellectual, that it should not be that merely immediate perception of the eternal and the divine which we hear of, but should be absolute knowledge. This intuitive perception which does not recognize itself is taken as starting-point as if it were absolutely presupposed ; it has in itself intuitive perception only as immediate knowledge, and not as self-knowledge : or it knows nothing, and what it perceives it does not really know,—for, taken at its best, it consists of beautiful thoughts, but not knowledge.

But intellectual intuition is knowledge, since, in the first place, in spite of the separation of each of the opposed sides from the other, all external reality is known as internal. If it is known according to its essence, as it is, it shows itself as not existing of itself, but as essentially consisting in the movement of transition. This Heraclitean or Sceptical principle, that nothing is at rest, must be demonstrated of each individual thing ; and thus in this consciousness—that the essence of each thing lies in determination, in what is the opposite of itself—there appears the apprehended unity with its opposite. Similarly this unity is, in the second place, to be recognized even in its essence ; its essence as this identity is, in the same way, to pass over into its opposite, or to realize itself, to become for itself something different ; and thus the opposition in it is brought

about by itself. Again, it may be said of the opposition, in the third place, that it is not in the Absolute; this Absolute is existence, the eternal, &c. This is, however, itself an abstraction in which the Absolute is apprehended in a one-sided manner only, and the opposition is apprehended only as ideal (*supra*, p. 536); but in fact it is form, as the essential moment of the movement of the Absolute. This Absolute is not at rest, and that opposition is not the unresting Notion; for the Idea, unresting though it is, is yet at rest and satisfied in itself. Pure thought has advanced to the opposition of the subjective and objective; the true reconciliation of the opposition is the perception that this opposition, when pushed to its absolute extreme, resolves itself; as Schelling says, the opposites are in themselves identical—and not only in themselves, but eternal life consists in the very process of continually producing the opposition and continually reconciling it. To know opposition in unity, and unity in opposition—this is absolute knowledge; and science is the knowledge of this unity in its whole development by means of itself.

This is then the demand of all time and of Philosophy. A new epoch has arisen in the world. It would appear as if the World-spirit had at last succeeded in stripping off from itself all alien objective existence, and apprehending itself at last as absolute Spirit, in developing from itself what for it is objective, and keeping it within its own power, yet remaining at rest all the while. The strife of the finite self-consciousness with the absolute self-consciousness, which last seemed to the other to lie outside of itself, now comes to an end. Finite self-consciousness has ceased to be finite; and in this way absolute self-consciousness has, on the other hand, attained to the reality which it lacked before. This is the whole history of the world in general up to the present time, and the history of Philosophy in particular, the sole work of

which is to depict this strife. Now, indeed, it seems to have reached its goal, when this absolute self-consciousness, which it had the work of representing, has ceased to be alien, and when spirit accordingly is realized as spirit. For it becomes such only as the result of its knowing itself to be absolute spirit, and this it knows in real scientific knowledge. Spirit produces itself as Nature, as the State; nature is its unconscious work, in the course of which it appears to itself something different, and not spirit; but in the State, in the deeds and life of History, as also of Art, it brings itself to pass with consciousness; it knows very various modes of its reality, yet they are only modes. In scientific knowledge alone it knows itself as absolute spirit; and this knowledge, or spirit, is its only true existence. This then is the standpoint of the present day, and the series of spiritual forms is with it for the present concluded.

At this point I bring this history of Philosophy to a close. It has been my desire that you should learn from it that the history of Philosophy is not a blind collection of fanciful ideas, nor a fortuitous progression. I have rather sought to show the necessary development of the successive philosophies from one another, so that the one of necessity presupposes another preceding it. The general result of the history of Philosophy is this: in the first place, that throughout all time there has been only one Philosophy, the contemporary differences of which constitute the necessary aspects of the one principle; in the second place, that the succession of philosophic systems is not due to chance, but represents the necessary succession of stages in the development of this science; in the third place, that the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit affords of itself. The latest philosophy contains therefore those which went before; it embraces in itself all the different stages thereof;

it is the product and result of those that preceded it. We can now, for example, be Platonists no longer. Moreover we must raise ourselves once for all above the pettinesses of individual opinions, thoughts, objections, and difficulties ; and also above our own vanity, as if our individual thoughts were of any particular value. For to apprehend the inward substantial spirit is the standpoint of the individual ; as parts of the whole, individuals are like blind men, who are driven forward by the indwelling spirit of the whole. Our standpoint now is accordingly the knowledge of this Idea as spirit, as absolute Spirit, which in this way opposes to itself another spirit, the finite, the principle of which is to know absolute spirit, in order that absolute spirit may become existent for it. I have tried to develop and bring before your thoughts this series of successive spiritual forms pertaining to Philosophy in its progress, and to indicate the connection between them. This series is the true kingdom of spirits, the only kingdom of spirits that there is—it is a series which is not a multiplicity, nor does it even remain a series, if we understand thereby that one of its members merely follows on another ; but in the very process of coming to the knowledge of itself it is transformed into the moments of the one Spirit, or the one self-present Spirit. This long procession of spirits is formed by the individual pulses which beat in its life ; they are the organism of our substance, an absolutely necessary progression, which expresses nothing less than the nature of spirit itself, and which lives in us all. We have to give ear to its urgency—when the mole that is within forces its way on—and we have to make it a reality. It is my desire that this history of Philosophy should contain for you a summons to grasp the spirit of the time, which is present in us by nature, and—each in his own place—consciously to bring it from its natural condition, i.e. from its lifeless seclusion, into the light of day.

I have to express my thanks to you for the attention

with which you have listened to me while I have been making this attempt ; it is in great measure due to you that my efforts have met with so great a measure of success. And it has been a source of pleasure to myself to have been associated with you in this spiritual community ; I ought not to speak of it as if it were a thing of the past, for I hope that a spiritual bond has been knit between us which will prove permanent. I bid you a most hearty farewell.

(The closing lecture of the series was given on the 22nd March, 1817 ; on the 14th March, 1818 ; on the 12th August, 1819 ; on the 23rd March, 1821 ; on the 30th March, 1824 ; on the 28th March, 1828 ; and on the 26th March, 1830.)

THE END.