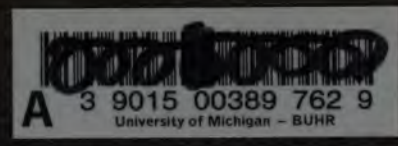

AN INQUIRY
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SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

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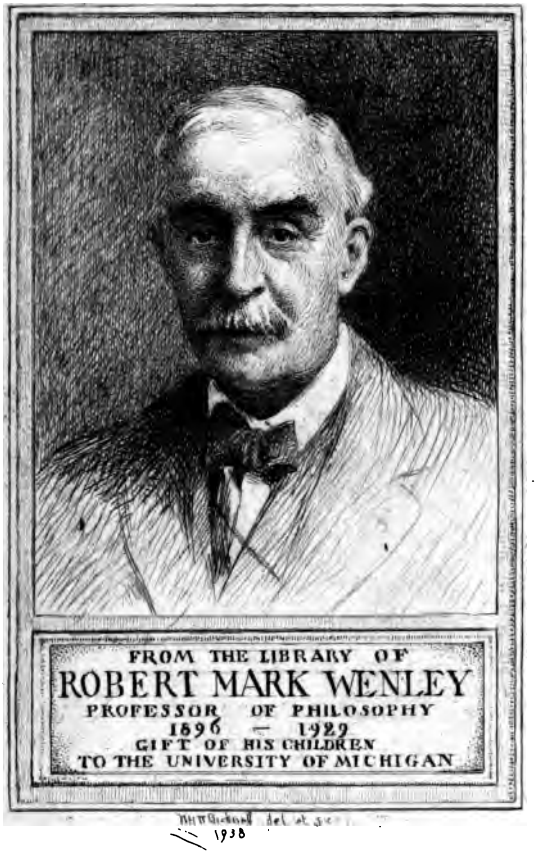

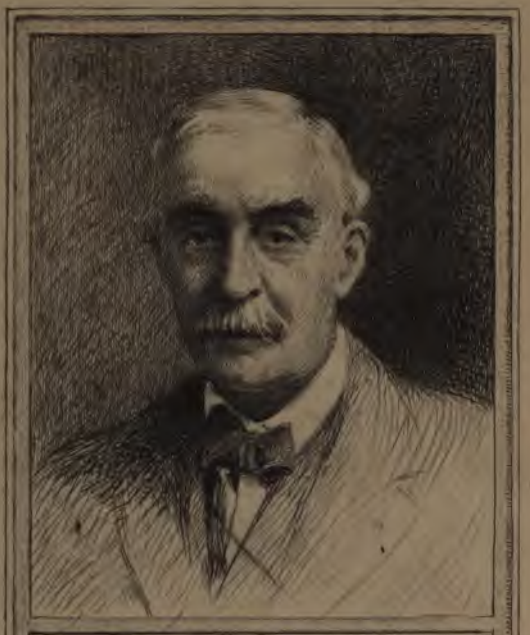

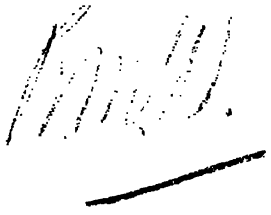

AN INQUIRY

INTO

SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.

AN INQUIRY

INTO

SPECULATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE,

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

MR. CALDERWOOD AND PROFESSOR FERRIER'S RECENT PUBLICATIONS, AND TO HEGEL'S DOCTRINE.

By A. VERA,

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LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

TO

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ., M.P.,

WHOSE NAME IS VALUED

BY ALL WHO LOVE FREEDOM, ARTS, AND SCIENCE,

These Pages are respectfully Inscribed

BY

THE AUTHOR,

AS A MARK OF SYMPATHY WITH HIS HIGH ENDOWMENTS OF

HEART AND MIND,

AND OF GRATITUDE FOR THE KIND ENCOURAGEMENT

HE HAS MET FROM HIM IN HIS PURSUITS

SINCE

HIS ARRIVAL IN THIS COUNTRY.

PREFACE.

THIS small Paper was originally intended as a contribution to some Periodical that would have done me the honour of inserting it. But having been told that its contents would be too technical, and of too speculative a character for the usual readers of such publications, I have thought proper to give it in a separate volume, leaving it as it was originally written, except the few verbal alterations that the difference between a book and a contribution to a Periodical requires. The objection of its being too metaphysical, instead of deterring me from publishing it, has been, I must confess, my chief inducement to lay it before the Public; for, the present languishing and unpromising state of philosophical studies is, in my opinion, to be principally attributed to the neglect of Metaphysics, the consequences of which may be traced also in other de-

partments of Science, and even in that of the Fine Arts.

But it has of late become a sort of fashion to despise Metaphysics and what is termed German Rationalism, as useless and dangerous; and the dread of these speculations has been carried to such a climax as to excite, in the mind of some, more anxiety and suspicion than what they call Romish Idolatry.

Whatever may be the causes which have brought such discredit upon Metaphysics, be it want of an adequate philosophical training, or some other not quite disinterested motive, my opinion is, that, by the disparagement of speculative inquiries, Science and Truth, and Religion itself, are lowered,—nay, are called into question; and nothing will be left but materialism,—a materialism disguised perhaps under a less repulsive form and softened by a milder name, but not differing in reality from actual materialism. For I do not see how not only Science, but Religion—and even positive Religion—can stand without Metaphysics, if it be true that the object of Metaphysics, that is, the Eternal and the Absolute, is the very soul of all religious creed, however different may be the way by which Philo-

sophy and Religion attain their object, and the degree of fulness and clearness with which they apprehend it. But it seems that the present generation of our Divines, instead of directing all their efforts towards the reconciliation of Philosophy and Religion, have no other aim but to keep them in a state of mutual suspicion and hostility,—a proceeding from which it is difficult to see what advantage will accrue to Religion; the result of such an unscientific and unphilosophical way of dealing with Religion being, I am afraid, calculated to bring down to a lower level the standard of religious Truth, as well as of Truth in general. In fact, with the neglect of metaphysical speculations, the sense and traditions of profound theological studies must also perish, and Truth and Science will appear of so easy an access, as to be within the reach of every man's understanding, and to be obtained without learning, without labour, and without genius. And as common things are worthless, Science and Religion will become worthless also.

That this is the case I find a confirmation in what we often see and hear around us. For we hear that Religion has no need of Science,—that religious Truth is so plain, so obvious to every man's

mind, that Science is rather a hindrance than a help to its comprehension.

Now if any one were to come forward and say that the knowledge of God is not worth our trouble, or that it lies, as it were, at the surface of things, and may be obtained at a glimpse, by the unlearned as by the learned, and better perhaps by the former than by the latter, these despisers of Science and Philosophy would not hear of such a doctrine. But what else, must I ask, does their own teaching involve, except this very same doctrine? For what is God, but the Eternal and Absolute Truth? And if God is, at the same time, the supreme and most profound object of thought, how can Truth be so easily attained? The only way, therefore, by which they could hold their ground would be, either by disuniting God and Truth, or by denying that it is in the power of our mind to apprehend Truth, *i. e.* by throwing themselves into the arms of Scepticism,—two consequences from which they are deterred by reason, as well as by their own interest.

Besides the above adversaries, Metaphysical speculations have others to contend with; and these stand in a still more formidable array, as they are

gathered from among all classes, and all descriptions of men and avocations,—I mean *practical men.*

The contest between Speculation and Practicality is not a new phenomenon in the history of mankind; indeed, its origin may be traced to the origin of man, and it will last as long as man himself; for, the root of the struggle springs from man's inward constitution, and is nothing else than the struggle between pure thought and sensation, between the eternal and temporal, the invisible and visible reality. Yet never perhaps was the pride, and I would say the mania of Practicality, carried to such a pitch as at the present time. For it is no longer satisfied with the sway of its own province, but threatens to invade the whole man, mind and body, and to become the sole and supreme standard of truth and excellence; so that, agreeably to this criterion, nothing henceforth will be left worth our attention and admiration but what we shall be able to turn to some practical account,—a doctrine which constitutes, in the opinion of its worshippers, the most striking feature of our age, and the triumph of the present over the past generations.

Now, it had always been taught and admitted on all hands, that Truth and Beauty and Goodness, as

well as Genius and Heroism, ought to be loved and sought after for their own sake, for their intrinsic and absolute value, and apart from all actual and even possible application and usefulness. For the Eternal, the Absolute, and the Ideal can never be *applied, i. e.* be brought into a sensible shape, or converted into a national, temporary, and limited object; and it is precisely this *uselessness,*—this inward virtue of keeping its nature unalloyed and uncontaminated from all perishable elements,—that constitutes the Absolute. But the devotees of Practicality pretend to have done away with this antiquated criterion of Truth and Science, by inverting, as it were, the terms of the problem; so that the new tenet, which will in future be the leading principle of science and life, is, that we must love and revere Truth, not because it is Truth, but because it is practical, and only when it becomes practical; and if God be Truth, we are not bound to love and reverence Him independent and in spite of any advantage we may expect from Him, but because we can turn Him to some practical account, and make Him subservient to our wants and purposes, however selfish, capricious, and irrational they may be; the only thing that is required being that they

be practical. In fact, Practicality—I mean Practicality which is not guided by any abstract and speculative principle—is irrationality; for, if Practicality is to be the criterion of Truth and the leading tenet of life, the value of things ought to be estimated according to their practical usage; and consequently, as in trading professions there is a larger amount of Practicality than in Politics, tradesmen would be entitled to a larger share of respect and authority than Politicians; and as servants are more useful, in this point of view, than their masters, it is the servants who ought to be attended by their masters.

Again, if we bear in mind that what is practical becomes in many instances unpractical, that what is practised in one point of time and space cannot be practised in another; nay, what is practised in the latter is the reverse of what is practised in the former, it will become evident that what is at the bottom of this doctrine is the absence of all universal and absolute principle, and consequently Scepticism. Indeed, Practicality, when not governed by any theoretical principle, is a bare fact,—a fact which rests upon no principle, and can be justified and rationally demonstrated by none. But then, how,

in the name of what criterion do they speak of the Beautiful, of Truth, of Right and Wrong, of the better and the worse, of Science, and of progress of mankind? For there are nations to which Mohamedism and Heathenism are as practical as Christianity is to others, and more practical than Christianity; and to the unlearned Practicality is ignorance, which he holds as preferable to science, to the toil and labours—useless in his opinion—that the acquisition of knowledge entails upon man. The practical life of the savage differs from that of the civilized nations, and the first is as practical to the first, as appropriate to his tastes, wants, and avocations, as the last is to the last; and in straining the principle, we might say that theft and murder are legal because of their being practical. These are the consequences to which the doctrine of Practicality would irretrievably lead, and from which it cannot escape but by placing near and above Practicality a higher and firmer criterion, that will impart to Practicality itself all its value, its beauty and perfection. For if there be degrees in practical life, —if there be a Practicality high and low, rational and irrational, a Practicality by which men and nations are raised, and a Practicality by which they

are lowered on the stage of the world,—it is because there are rules and principles, eternal and absolute, by which Practicality itself is judged, and from which it derives whatever truth and power and beauty it possesses; and it is the knowledge of these principles that constitutes the peculiar business of metaphysical speculations, a knowledge which through that medium only can be acquired, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate in the present inquiry.*

* This paper was written before the publication of my 'Introduction to the Philosophy of Hegel' (London, Jeffs; Paris, Franck), where some of the points which are here handled cursorily, and, as it were, in a fragmentary way,—as, for instance, what relates to Method, to the theory of Ideas and Thought, to Science and Common Sense,—are more fully and systematically inquired into.

London, December, 1855.

AN INQUIRY

INTO

SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.

I.

THE appearance of Messrs. Calderwood and Ferrier's inquiries* ought to be welcomed with real satisfaction by all friends of Philosophy, not so much, I am sorry to say, on account of their containing any new method, or original views, or giving a deeper insight into the philosophical problem, as for the attempt made by these authors to place the Philosophy of this country on a broader and higher basis, by snatching it from the trammels of psychology, of inductive method, and of what has been termed the *Philosophy of Common Sense*, and by seeking the solution of the problem where only—if

* 'Theory of the Infinite,' by Mr. Calderwood.—'Institutes of Metaphysic,' by Professor Ferrier.

there be any—it can be found, I mean in the field of speculative and metaphysical researches. There is an opinion spreading abroad, that the Philosophy of this country is not on a level with its civilization; that, whilst England takes the lead in all matters concerning political freedom and social improvement, she is left far behind in the path of philosophical pursuits: nay, there is an impression that the genius of the English nation is unfit for abstract researches; that it is too practical, too much addicted to commercial and material pursuits, to feel and appreciate the importance of purely speculative truth. The country which has given birth to such highly speculative minds as Newton's, Clarke's, Cudworth's, Berkeley's, etc., has already shown, and will show, I trust, in future, how unfounded this last opinion is. But, confident as one may be that the English genius, when properly directed, is fit for the highest speculations, it must be owned, at the same time, that the present state of philosophical studies in this country does not keep pace with that of the Continental nations; and if there be a value to be set upon the publication of the above-named volumes, it is principally, I think, because it marks a first step in what I consider the right direction and

because it may eventually form a link between Continental Philosophy and the Philosophy of this country.

One of the main features, and we might say the common standard of English Philosophy, has been, for many years, the absence of ontological and metaphysical speculations. There have been, I know, some occasional attempts at metaphysics; and some isolated questions, bearing on this province of Science, have been as it were accidentally taken up; but systematic and uninterrupted metaphysical researches, handed down from man to man and from generation to generation, as, in ancient times, we have it exemplified in the history of Greek, and, in modern times, of French, and even more, of German Philosophy—a fact which shows the national earnestness in the investigation of these high matters,—this is what has not been as yet accomplished in this country; and not only that, but an opinion seems to prevail, that Metaphysic is either unattainable or useless,—that either it is beyond the reach of human capability, or that it cannot be brought to bear on any practical purpose or result.

Were we to inquire into the various causes which have brought indifference and contempt upon Metaphysic and Speculation in this country, we should

find that the principal one is the opinion which, since Bacon, has become predominant, and has, as it were, invaded all departments of science, namely, that the sole and truly philosophical method, the method by which the mind may be safely guided in its scientific disquisitions, is *Induction*. This method, as applied to the study of our mental faculties, and combined with the analysis and enumeration of the internal phenomena, and of what has been termed *Facts of Consciousness*, has given birth to the Philosophy of *Common Sense*. Induction and Common Sense are the two main pillars on which they have striven to raise the structure of philosophical knowledge,—the two extreme points within which they have encompassed the field of philosophical investigation; one—the first—affording the *material*, and the other the *criterion* by which it may be tested.

Now my firm belief is, that this is a kind of delusion under which the Philosophy of this country has been labouring; because I think that Science, in the strict sense of the word, is placed without the pale of Induction, of observation, of Common Sense, and even Consciousness, and can only be obtained, in its highest and most real object, by the contem-

plation of Ideas and by purely speculative proceedings. I go further, and say that Inductive Method and Common Sense, held up as the only and legitimate foundation of Science, lead gradually, but fatally, to the disparagement of Ideas and of all knowledge obtained through them, and bring forth, as their ultimate result, the negation of Science, and Scepticism. This statement, I know, is so much at variance with prevailing opinion, and with a doctrine which has become a kind of popular dogma, that to many it will appear strange and paradoxical. But I must be allowed to say, that the surprise I feel on the subject runs in the opposite direction: for, what is startling to me is, that such a doctrine should have been able to hold sway for centuries in the philosophical province. And, as the elucidation of this point has a general, nay, a vital interest for Science, as well as for mental education, the reader will not object to enter with me into the somewhat arid technicalities of the subject.

But, in the first place, let us correct an historical and material misrepresentation of a fact which seems admitted on all hands, namely, that Bacon is the founder of the Inductive Method, and further, that the progress of modern Sciences is mainly due to

the more accurate working and to a wider application of this method. On the first point I have only to refer the reader to the 'Analytics' of Aristotle, where he will find that the nature of Induction, its rules, its limits, and its relation to objective knowledge, have been described by the philosopher in his usually concise, but substantial manner, which, although essentially analytical, disdains the unimportant details, the secondary and distant consequences of the problem. And did Bacon make any essential addition to the Aristotelian theory? did he point out any new principle, any unknown proceeding which might have escaped the keen sight of the Greek philosopher? Not in the least. On the contrary, it is manifest from his own theory of Inductive Method, that, not possessing a clear and comprehensive view of the nature and requirements of scientific knowledge, he, for this very reason, had not a correct notion of Induction itself, as his statement, that Science is to be obtained only through Induction, evidently demonstrates.

That Bacon was but imperfectly versed in ancient Philosophy, may be easily collected from the critical review he has prefixed to his 'Novum Organum,' a review full of misstatements, of super-

ficial criticisms, and betraying a merely second-hand knowledge of the philosophers he criticizes. His contemporaries, not being more acquainted than he was with the original sources and the real bearing of the Aristotelian theories, unhesitatingly adopted his statement, and the more eagerly, that he came boldly forward, announcing, in pompous and impressive language, an unknown and marvellous method, which would not only do away with the Aristotelian, but with the cumbrous and hollow speculations of Schoolmen. This distortion of a fact, handed down unopposed through centuries, and corrected only by the more accurate knowledge and sounder criticism of the present time, is one of the most curious phenomena in the history of Science; and it shows how easily errors, bearing upon material points, and which might be dispelled as it were by the turning of a page, may take root, not only in the popular, but in the most enlightened and highly trained mind.

As to the other statement,—namely, that the progress of modern Science is to be accounted for by a more rigorous application of Inductive Method,—it is as little justifiable as the former. And here too our opinion does not rest upon any abstract or

conjectural reasoning, but upon facts. All who are acquainted with the labours of ancient Philosophy, are not ignorant that the same philosopher, who laid down the rules which regulate the human understanding,—of Induction, as well as of other forms of Thought,—knew also how to apply them. It has always been acknowledged that his 'History of Animals' is one of the most beautiful monuments raised by observation, analogy, and induction; and according to the judgment of the greatest naturalist of present times, Cuvier, it stands unequalled in most of its parts and fundamental principles. But, besides the 'History of Animals,' we find Aristotle in his other works, in his 'Politics' for instance, and other philosophers, using the same method, and this not accidentally or unconsciously, but systematically, within the limits in which it may be usefully and legitimately applied. What is the method followed by Plato in many of his Dialogues? This very Inductive Method —ἐπακτικοὶ λογοί,—that has been held out as a discovery of modern times. The way by which Socrates or Plato gradually elevates the mind to the contemplation of Ideas, is nothing else than an inductive proceeding; it is by collecting facts, by

pointing out their similarities or dissimilarities, and thus eliciting from the depths of the human mind the eternal principles involved in its constitution. Of course this is for Plato merely a preliminary step towards Science,—a kind of preparatory exercise, whose object it is to train and strengthen the mental powers, in order to enable them to deal, directly and without any intermediate help, with Ideas; but it only shows that his conception of Science was more correct, more comprehensive and profound than that of Bacon, and of those who come forward proclaiming Induction as a marvellous discovery, as a sort of intellectual panacea, which is to dispel all inveterate mental infirmities, and disclose to the human eye the inward sanctuary of Truth.

If, therefore, ancient Science has been left behind by modern, it is not because we have discovered a new Method, or more soundly applied an old one; but the reason is simply this, that we have followed in the steps of our forefathers,—that, whilst we have profited by their labours, we have added, according to the natural law of progress, our own labours, our own observations and discoveries, to theirs.

And that this is the case, a closer insight into the mechanism of inductive proceedings will demonstrate. For, if we are satisfied by this inquiry, that Induction is an inadequate means for the attainment of our object, namely, the knowledge of real and ultimate principles, the inference to be drawn from such a result is, that either the progress of modern sciences is delusory,or, if there be any progress, it is to be attributed to other causes, and, consequently, that it is in another direction and by other means that scientific knowledge is to be sought.

The general form of inductive ratiocination is this: A, B, C, D, etc., have a common quality, therefore the same quality will be found in all terms belonging to the same species. Peter, Paul, Francis, etc., are mortal,—all men are, therefore, mortal; or, taking a higher form of Induction, the man, the horse, the lion are mortal, consequently all animals are mortal. Now, let us analyze this argument. When we say that *all* men or animals are mortal, because of some of them being so,—no matter what is their number, they may be ten, they may be a million; in a strictly scientific point of view, the number does not alter the case,—it is quite clear that the word *all*, in the conclu-

sion, is a new element which is not contained in the premises. And it will be observed that the whole strength of the argument rests on this word, *quo evanescente*, the whole argument vanishes at once, and there will be nothing left but the scattered members of the syllogistic structure, as mere isolated facts, without any connection or scientific bearing. Whence is this general element—be it called *principle*, *category*, *species*, *notion*, or any other name—derived? To what faculty does the mind apply, in order to obtain that which, by connecting the disjoined parts of the argument, imparts to the conclusion all its value? This is the decisive point; and whatever may be this faculty, certain it is that the conclusion is obtained by another method, by another mental power than by inductive proceedings. Now, that which is at the bottom of this difficulty is the problem of Ideas. The Inductive Method, starting as it does from pure experience, and doing away with Ideas, necessarily bars all access to metaphysical knowledge, and general conclusion. But in reality it is only a delusion of inductive science to believe that it does away with Ideas, for the fact is, that Ideas are not only at the extreme end, but at the starting-

point of its investigations. The inductive doctrine uses and combines ideas, as well as the idealistic; the only difference between them being, that the latter deals with them consciously, whilst the former does so unconsciously, proceeding as it were at random, and boldly denying their meaning and objective reality, although, at the same time, it is from them it borrows all the value its own theories possess.

The common error of all these theories, if they deserve such a name, is that they begin by suppressing the mind, and then they proceed to rebuild it, and to readjust its faculties with the very same materials that form the primitive and essential elements of our mental constitution. Let the reader recollect the famous *man statue* of Condillac, which exhibits the doctrine in its nakedness, stripped of all arbitrary and contradictory restrictions, and, for this very reason, in its real meaning. Locke was more liberal towards the mind: he did not begin by suppressing it, and even allowed it to possess what he termed the power of reflection. Had he more closely inquired into the nature of this faculty, he would have seen that the reflective mind must be regulated, in its operations, by some internal law

or principle inherent to its own constitution, and which, whatever may be the name assigned to it, must need be a primitive and innate idea; unless it be contended that the mind performs its operations arbitrarily and at random, or that these laws are successively and accidentally imprinted, as it were, on the mind by external objects,—two hypotheses equally inadmissible. The alternative is this: either you strike off the mind, and thus bar the way to any rational and consistent reconstruction of it; or you presuppose the mind, and, with the mind, you also presuppose all that belongs to its nature —Faculties, Principles, Ideas.—And when I say all (and this last word applies to Ideas), I mean the whole range of Ideas; for the distinction drawn by some idealistic philosophers between innate and adventitious Ideas is quite arbitrary, and is founded neither upon any principle nor upon an accurate observation of facts. *All* Ideas are innate, or *none* are. Why, for instance, should the idea of *Heat* be acquired, and the idea of *Infinite* innate? The only difference between these two ideas is in the objective meaning and application, as representing two different objects; but the relation in which they stand to the mind is the same. Our mind could

no more apprehend a particular phenomenon of heat, had we not the idea corresponding to it, than it could apprehend the Infinite, had we not the idea representing this object. When we speak of *Heat*, of *Sensation*, of *Hunger*, etc., we generally use the word *feel*, and this is what gives rise to the popular opinion that we *feel*, but do not *think*, the *Sensation*, the *Heat*, and, in general, all physical objects. However, it may be easily ascertained that there is no *feeling*, there is no *sensation*, let it be as obscure as it may, that could take place without being thought. As long as the impression of *Heat*, of *Hunger*, is not thought, as long as it is not converted by the touch of the mind into an intellectual phenomenon, there is no impression at all—neither the impression of *Heat*, nor of any other external object. There may be some organic motion and modification, but we know nothing of it: we cannot say whether it exists or not; in fact, it does not exist for us. It must therefore be thought, and, if thought, it must be thought through the idea corresponding to each of these phenomena. For how could we distinguish these phenomena and objects—*Heat*, *Light*, *Tree*, *Animal*, as well as *Infinite*, *Time*, *Space*, *Cause*, *Substance*—from each other? how could we appre-

hend them, however superficially and cursorily it may be, and stamp them with a peculiar character and denomination, did we not possess a fixed and determined criterion, by the aid of which we perform this mental operation? And this criterion cannot be gradually inured to the mind by experience and generalization, as it has been so often and so inadvertently asserted; for, experience and generalization presuppose this very power, and are as it were worked and brought to light by it. Let us go back to the starting-point of our intellectual development: let us suppose whatever state or object our mind may have felt or apprehended,—a sensation of hunger, of pain, of cold, or even the dim perception of its own existence,—and it will be seen that, had not the mind been originally endowed with the corresponding idea, the apprehension of such a phenomenon could never have taken place. And if we are not aware of the presence of these ideas, it does not follow, as has been objected by Locke, that they do not pre-exist in our mind. Consciousness is science, and unconsciousness is ignorance, and every step we advance in the province of knowledge is a gradual disentanglement of our mind from the trammels of ignorance, and a gradual progress from

unconsciousness toward consciousness. To say that there is no primitive idea in our mind, because we are not aware of it, or because we do not perceive it as distinctly and fully in our infancy as we do in mature age, is to say, that there is no law which regulates the organic operations of the body because we originally walk, eat, digest without being conscious of these laws,—or that the universe is not governed by any law, because we are not cognizant of them. And if this argument holds good, it ought to be said, that since the laws of the internal as well as of the external world begin with the knowledge we gain of them, and since there are some of us who know, and some who do not know them, they exist for the former, and do not exist for the latter; that is to say, they do not exist at all. These are the results to which invariably lead all experimental and inductive proceedings. Inductive method is constantly fluctuating between scepticism and an artificial, and I should say, hypocritical science. For if it be consistent, starting as it does from experience, and rejecting all primary and absolute notions, it is rationally debarred from all scientific knowledge. If, on the other hand, it be inconsistent, it uses hypocritically, or by an illegitimate

assumption, the very innate and primordial principles it denies. And this is generally the case with experimental philosophy. Placed as it is between scepticism and inconsistency, and as the former would strike at the very root of its own theories, it is compelled by a rational necessity to be inconsistent, and this, not only in the course of its inquiries, and on some secondary point, but in the very beginning, and on the point at issue. Thus, whilst the experimental philosopher is all intent upon collecting facts and observations, upon combining and generalizing them, thinking that it is only with phenomena that his mind is busily engaged, he brings into operation those very laws he denies or disregards,—the logical laws of judgment and reasoning, the categories of *Unity*, of *Plurality*, of *Quantity*, of *Quality*, of *Causality*, of *Substance*, etc., etc.,—all laws which he presupposes and tacitly acknowledges, and which are indispensable to his experimental proceedings. This is not all. The very law, the very principle which forms the present subject of his researches must pre-exist in his mind; nay, it must be apprehended by it, though dimly and through an uncertain and confused light. Were it not so, what would induce the mind to

consult experience in order to obtain the knowledge of the law? Would ever the mind, by the mere apprehension of single and isolated phenomena, be led to inquire into their common principle, did it not already possess a precognition, however imperfect, of this very same principle?

But it is in the field of ontological and metaphysical science that the inconsistency and inadequacy of inductive method are mainly brought to light. Here the principles that result from inductive proceedings are the reverse of what they ought to be, and of what the inquiries are intended for. The leading criterion of inductive method is, that similar phenomena must have one and the same principle, that this principle is the unity of these phenomena, and that it is what these phenomena are, the only difference between them being the difference of unity and plurality, or that what is scattered and separated in the phenomena is united in their principle; in other words, that what is in the effect, this must be in the cause, and that what the effect is, this the cause must be; from which flows the other criterion that the cause can only be reached through its effects. Now this instance shows how fallacious experimental proceedings are,

when not guided and completed by a higher criterion, which speculation only is able to afford. For it is obvious that cause and effect—let the effect either be thoroughly and essentially distinct from its cause, or let it be an emanation, and as it were an extension of it—for this very reason that one is the cause and the other the effect, each of them has its own nature and essence, and consequently the knowledge of one is not the knowledge of the other; nay, the knowledge of one may be the very reverse of the knowledge of the other. For if the matter be closely investigated, it will be seen that between cause and effect, if there be relation, there are, at the same time, difference and opposition. And as a general illustration of this dialectic, it may be said that the invisible world, the world of causes and principles, must be the reverse of the visible, of the world of effects and phenomena, differing, as they do, by their qualities and mode of existence; for, phenomena are *felt*, and principles are not *felt*, and can only be apprehended by pure and unsophisticated thought, by thought free from all mixture of sensitiveness; the former are divisible and temporary, the latter are indivisible and eternal. And this does not only apply to what has been

called metaphysical principles, but to all principles indiscriminately,—the principles of *Light*, of *Heat*, of *Organism*, being not more felt and divisible than the *Substance*, the *Infinite*, the *Absolute*. And if we want some instances of this misconception of principles, we may observe that when from man's free will, or from the operation of his mind, and from what has been called Consciousness, we are led, by analogy and inductive inference, to realize God's will and consciousness like ours, we uproot the very notion of God. For if God's freedom is like man's freedom, it must be like man's—variable, capricious, and, even represented in its most perfect state, wavering between good and evil, the better and the worse;—and if his intellect is consciousness, it must be like man's consciousness, successive, limited, and not free from sensitiveness. If, on the other hand, in order to raise man's will and intellect to the perfection of the Divine nature, they add some new quality to it, as, for instance, the notion of the *Infinite*, this element is supplied by another source and by another method than experience and induction. In fact, an infinite will, that is to say, a will that never hesitates between contending motives, and whose decisions are not embodied by successive acts, is no

longer anything like man's will, but it is the very reverse of it: I mean, the rational and eternal necessity. And an infinite intellect, which is nothing but pure thought, and a thought in which are involved the ultimate principles and essences of things, is no longer *Self-consciousness*, like man's individual perception and sentiment, but it is, in this sense, *Unconsciousness*.

Again, according to the same rule of inductive inference, from man being mortal, we ought to conclude that the cause of death—be it God or any other principle—is mortal too, which would be absurd, because man's death would become impossible as soon as the principle which causes it would have ceased to exist. And, consequently, whilst man is mortal, the principle that produces death is immortal.

Here then Inductive Method is placed again in the same alternative we have already pointed out. For either it acknowledges that the science of causes and principles is obtained by another faculty, and through another method, than that by which facts are observed and gathered, and that the mode of existence of the former differs from that of the latter, and, in this case, Inductive

Method contradicts itself, or, to speak more correctly, is no longer Inductive Method; or it denies this difference, and contends that principles and facts, causes and effects, essences and their manifestations, are attained in the same way and are possessed of the same qualities and nature, and then Science is done away with at once, and, as we have already stated, Scepticism is the necessary result of experimental method.

Now this result, which infallibly awaits experimental method when consistent with itself, has been concealed from the popular eye by the proceedings and organization of Physical Sciences, by their practical results, and by their boldly setting themselves forth as the only *positive* science, meaning by this word, that all other sciences, with the exception of Mathematics, are merely conjectural, rest upon probabilities, and are not entitled to the name of *Science*.

I am far from denying the great practical results of experimental inquiries, and even their very great importance for the development and final constitution of metaphysical knowledge. But when looked upon from a strictly scientific point of view, they will be seen to afford only new materials, collected

for a higher purpose, and which are to be fashioned and brought into a rational shape by the philosophical mind. For when I come to examine the organization of physical sciences, their proceedings, and the way in which they deal with their own fundamental principles, their assumption to be the only positive sciences appears to me most unwarrantable. If, by positive, they mean that the practical and material side of the question is never lost sight of by them, I grant them to be positive in this sense. But it constitutes neither positive science, nor any science at all, if Science be the knowledge of principles consistent with themselves, standing upon their own ground and by their own virtue, and which, far from being demonstrated and explained by experience, demonstrate and explain it. Brought to this test, physical sciences will appear as a sort of amalgamation of rational and irrational materials,—of arbitrary proceedings and hypotheses,—of elements derived partly from experience, and partly from speculative sciences, from Mathematics, from Logic, and from Metaphysics, and mingled together as though they had the same value and sprang from the same source. Thus, for instance, being unable to explain ration-

ally, and by direct demonstration, the circular motion, they say that motion in a straight line was converted into oblique motion sometime, and by some force or power. At what time, and by what power, they do not say; but, as to the time, we may suppose it was at the beginning of the world, when planets were set in motion; and the power that diverted the course of matter, or of the celestial bodies from their straight direction, was God. Their theory of the Pendulum is founded upon similar proceedings. The Pendulum would endlessly swing along the segment of the circle by virtue of its accelerated speed, were it suspended to some mathematical point, and its speed were not gradually subtracted by the rubbing of the body from which it hangs, or by the resistance of the air. Now, people smile at Fourier, who, in order to reconcile man with his theories, was obliged to endow him with a new organ, a tail terminating with an eye. The proceeding is the same in both cases. What is the tail in Fourier's system is the nameless power, and the mathematical point in the explanation of circular motion and of the swinging of the pendulum; that is to say, in both instances they are hypotheses contrived to

prop up a structure which could not stand on its own foundation, and hypotheses which are justified neither by experience nor by reason. They are not justified by experience, because this unknown Power or Being was never seen, nor could ever be seen and brought under the senses in any material and tangible shape, unless it be fancied something like a human being, soaring high in the ethereal region, stopping the matter in one direction and pushing it into the opposite,—an image very appropriate in Milton's or Klopstock's poems, but puerile if tendered as a scientific explanation. They are not justified by reason, for either the power that deflects the initial motion from its course is the same power that sets the matter in motion, or it differs from it. If it differ, there will be two powers, two principles,—something like the principle of good and the principle of evil. But, even granted that there are two principles, there must be, at any rate, a third principle that connects and conciliates them. And this third principle is the circular motion itself, which forms the unity of the opposite—the central and the tangential—forces; in other words, there is but one force, dividing in two opposite directions, to bring

out the circular or spheroidal motion, in which the antagonism is involved and conciliated; and it is the unity of the force that forms the unity of the motion. The scientific demonstration, therefore, would be to show how by its own internal constitution, by its own essence, the force deflects from the straight line, and how from this antagonism springs the circular motion. This is the only direct and real demonstration, because it is drawn from the nature of the object itself. Any other demonstration must necessarily be imperfect, hypothetical, arbitrary,—which is no demonstration at all.*

These and similar remarks extend to the theory of the Pendulum. Here too the mathematical point is an hypothesis, forced as it were upon the demonstration, and which does not belong to the object to be demonstrated. A mathematical point is a point in pure or abstract space which it is the business of Geometry to consider: whilst the Pendulum is a physical object; and to suppose that the Pendulum might be suspended on a geometrical point, is to confound two distinct provinces

* See on these questions Hegel's profound disquisitions in his 'Logic' and in his 'Philosophy of Nature.'

of being and principles, nay, it is to suppose an impossibility; and we do not know of any Logic which allows of proving the real by the impossible,—what is, or must be, by what cannot be,—even if the impossibility be used as a supposition, and not as an essential element of demonstration. Therefore, in the construction of the Pendulum, the friction, as well as all other physical conditions, must be taken into account; and to say that the swinging of the Pendulum would never cease, *if*, etc., is to say that man would fly *if* he had wings, that he could support a tower *if* he had the strength of an elephant, or any other supposition that imagination might suggest. I could quote other instances, but the two I have pointed out afford a fair specimen of the way in which Sciences arrogating exclusively to themselves the name of Positive, and not unfrequently regarding metaphysical disquisitions with indifference and contempt, deal with Logic and principles.

But this is the very reason why the bare result of the inductive method has escaped general observation. Starting from experience, and looking mainly, we might say exclusively, to material results and practical applications, the inductive

Sciences are not over-nice in their way of dealing with principles. Their main object, as well as their standard of Truth, being facts and experience, when a theory does not coincide with these, they give it up, and fill up the gap with a new one; and if further observation leads them to think that the new one does not hit the mark any better, they take leave of the latter as they did of the former, and so forth. And it is this kind of indifference towards principles, this indefinite labour of altering, readjusting, doing and undoing their theories, according to facts and observations, this art of keeping always the material side and result of the problem in the foreground, and throwing into the background the abstract side and the principles, and borrowing, at the same time, from other sciences and other methods, notions and principles which, intermixed with their own lucubrations, give them a rational appearance; it is all this which sustains the popular belief that inductive inquiries may lead to real, certain, and ultimate knowledge.

But, as I have demonstrated, Scepticism is the necessary result of inductive Science, when left to itself and unassisted by any speculative notion and

proceedings. In modern Science we find this result exemplified in the history of Scottish philosophy. This philosophy affords the most striking instance of the inevitable consequences awaiting a doctrine that scorns Metaphysics and Speculation, and pretends to found a system of firm and irrefragable truths on the ground of experience, of observation—internal or external,—and of what has been termed *Common Sense*, which is nothing else than popular opinion, clothed in a scientific name. For it may be said that Scottish philosophy has tried all its strength, strained all its nerves against Sensualism and Scepticism; and yet it is by Scepticism that its career is wound up, in the doctrine of one of its most distinguished and perhaps last representatives.

II.

MR. CALDERWOOD'S THEORY.

THE Infinite, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, says Sir William Hamilton, is beyond the reach of human comprehension; nay, it is a merely *negative* notion. Now, this proposition is nothing else than the mother-proposition of all sceptical and sensualistic doctrines, and betrays what is at the bottom of the Scottish philosophy,—the exact value of its method and bearing of its principles. Pyschology,—that is to say, the description of internal phenomena, combined with a desultory and clumsy analysis of a certain number of categories or primitive ideas, which become mere *facts* in the hands of Scottish philosophers, and a sort of contempt for Ontology and Metaphysical Speculation,—these are the main features of this philosophy, the general spirit which pervades its labours. The result of

these proceedings is exhibited in the above propositions, the purport of which will be better understood if presented in the following shape: "As the Infinite does not fall under the sense—internal or external—of the observer, the Infinite is unconceivable; and as the only object falling under the sense is the Finite, the Finite alone is the real and *positive* being, the Infinite, when compared with the Finite, being only a *negative* notion." The first and second parts of this proposition are intimately connected, and the first must be considered as the consequence of the second, the second being the principle of *Sensualism*, and the first of *Scepticism*. For if, according to the dogma of sensualistic philosophy, experience alone affords the legitimate test of Truth and reality, the Finite alone can be positively known and affirmed; and the Infinite, not coming within the limits of the Finite, is uncogitable and uncognizable. In fact, the Infinite is a Non-entity in itself, and nothing but an indefinite extension or an indefinite subtraction of the Finite; in other words, it is a *negation* of the limits of the Finite, but a negation that has no positive and actual reality.

Mr. Calderwood's disquisitions are mainly di-

rected against this proposition, and, as far as the point at issue between him and Sir William Hamilton is concerned, I think there cannot be the least hesitation left in the mind of an impartial and attentive reader as to the untenable ground of his distinguished adversary. Mr. Calderwood fully demonstrates that the notion we realize of the Infinite is not *negative*, but *positive;* that this notion is not realized by gradual addition and progression, but by a direct apprehension of the mind, in whose constitution it is involved.

But however valuable and attractive these disquisitions may be in a local and limited point of view, I think that, to those who are acquainted with the philosophical labours of the last half-century, the question whether the idea of the Infinite is derived from reason or from experience, whether it is a positive or a negative notion, is of very small, if any, importance; therefore, in the actual state of philosophy, these questions cannot be raised to the level of general interest, unless they are made a starting-point to some higher and original researches. Now I have not been able to discover any such views and results in Mr. Calderwood's book. I do not mean to say that other and more important on-

tological and metaphysical questions are not raised and examined by him; but when I consider the ground on which he seems to establish his opinions, the method he follows, the conclusion he arrives at, I do not see any new light coming out of his inquiries. Is the author an Idealist or a Psychologist? Does he adopt the Speculative or the Experimental method? Has he a clear and well-defined notion of the nature and bearing of these methods, and of the relation in which they stand either to each other or to the object of knowledge? I cannot say that these and other questions are affirmatively answered by the volume before me.

I will give an instance, bearing on an essential and decisive point, of the way in which Mr. Calderwood handles these matters.

In some preliminary remarks, he has thought proper to caution the reader against any apprehension he might entertain of his adopting Eclectic views. He enters his protest against such a doctrine, and wishes it to be understood that he is tending neither towards Eclectism in general, for which he has very little sympathy, nor towards M. Cousin's peculiar eclectic schemes, which, according to our author, have fallen beneath the effective

assaults of the Scottish metaphysician: he means Sir W. Hamilton.

Now I cannot say what Mr. Calderwood's peculiar notion of Eclectism may be, but I think I may safely affirm that all his solutions of the most important questions are eclectic, and not of that lofty and comprehensive Eclectism which, like Plato's, Aristotle's, Hegel's, starting from a superior method, concentrates and harmonizes, as it were, in the same mould the various and scattered elements of Truth; but of that superficial and shilly-shally Eclectism (if I may be allowed the expression), adopting this and rejecting that, snapping the same principle and the same being asunder, keeping one half of it and throwing away the other, nobody knows upon what grounds. Thus, having demonstrated, against Sir W. Hamilton's doctrine, that we have a positive notion of the Infinite, Mr. Calderwood was naturally led to inquire into the objective meaning of this notion, and the knowledge we can obtain of it; in other words, if, and how far, our mind is adequate to the knowledge of the Infinite and Absolute. The answer to this question is, that we do obtain a certain and indefinite knowledge of the Infinite, but that we cannot perceive it clearly and

distinctly in all its extent; that we *apprehend*, but we cannot *comprehend*, it. (Ch. V., p. 81.)

Now I expected to find that on such a fundamental point—a point in which the problem of Science itself is involved—he would firmly grapple with the difficulty, distinctly state the grounds on which he rests his opinion, why it is in the nature of our mind to know only a part of the Absolute, and if such a knowledge is rational and possible. My expectation has been disappointed. Mr. Calderwood glides, as it were, over the surface of the question. He confines himself to pointing out some notion,—*Time, Space, Cause*,—and by showing that we possess the notion of an *Infinite Time*, of an *Infinite Space*, etc., he thinks he has made out his case and disposed of the difficulty. But the problem is not so simple as Mr. Calderwood seems to imagine; indeed, it would be too easy if it could be solved by such an off-hand proceeding. Moreover, the solution propounded by the author is the solution propounded, under various forms, by all eclectic philosophers, and flows from the very essence of Eclectism—of that Eclectism from which Mr. Calderwood seemed so anxious to keep his hands unsullied. Amongst these philosophers,

some have divided Truth into *natural* and *supernatural;* others have distinguished *Truth which is the object of Reason,* from *Truth which is the object of Faith;* others, like Mr. Calderwood, have held the doctrine that we can *apprehend* the Infinite, though we cannot *comprehend* it. Now, these and similar distinctions are all founded on the proceeding we have already pointed out, and which consists in dividing the Absolute into two parts, and saying you will go thus far and no further; here are the boundaries within which you must restrain your reason; beyond these boundaries there is a hidden truth, a mysterious region, into which no human eye is allowed to penetrate. These trimming explanations, these theories of *juste milieu,* are, it must be confessed, very convenient. They are echoed by popular opinion, they are in accordance with the methods and results of conjectural knowledge, of inductive and limited science; and they are the more easily received, that they seem to simplify, as they say, the problem, by stopping on one hand Scepticism, and by not setting themselves, on the other, too much at variance with the general current of opinion and the common oversights of mankind. But these simplifications are generally ar-

bitrary and superficial contrivances, by which the real conditions of the problems are disguised or distorted, and the object of knowledge, instead of being embraced in the fulness of its nature, is curtailed and maimed.

The real position of the problem of Absolute Science, or of the Science of the Absolute,—two expressions which are identical,—is this: either we know nothing, or we know all; either our mind is adequate to the knowledge of the Absolute, or we must give up all hopes of ever attaining Truth. Science, in the strict sense of the word, or Scepticism: the problem admits of no medium. They say, You may go as far as this point, but you are not allowed to go any further. Now, who is to lay down this absolute limit of the human mind? Is it some individual, or is it the mind itself? But it cannot be any individual, for, what is darkness to one is light to another; and because my mind, however highly cultivated it may be, is unequal to the undertaking, it does not follow that no mind will ever be equal to it. As to the mind itself, we do not see that it marks any such a limit, nor how it could mark it; to overstep it, is, on the contrary, one of its most unceasing and deepest aspirations;

nay, it is its life and its very essence. Besides, where is the line to be drawn?—is it here, or there? But wherever you draw it, you must do so upon a certain ground,—a fact which already shows that your mind extends beyond the line you mistake for an absolute one, and that it perceives, however obscurely and imperfectly, the object beyond it. They distinguish the *natural* from the *supernatural; apprehensible* from *comprehensible* Truth; *human* from *Divine* Reason; and by this division they flatter themselves to hit upon the exact line of demarcation. But I must remind those who lay down such a distinction, of the elementary rule of Logic which states that one must possess a certain notion, and, strictly speaking, a clear and distinct notion of the terms he divides, or defines, or combines, in a syllogism. Now, when you divide Truth into natural and supernatural, and Reason into human and divine, you are guided by a certain criterion; in other words, you know why Truth must be so classified,—which means, that you know what natural, and what supernatural Truth is. But if you know what supernatural Truth is, supernatural Truth is within the compass of human understanding, and your division falls to the ground. You will say

perhaps that the notion you possess of supernatural Truth is merely a *negative* one, that you are conscious of the failures and limitations of your mind; and at the same time you feel that, beyond these limits, there is a higher Truth and a more profound Reason. But, in this case, how can you affirm that there is any Truth at all beyond these limits, and how could you answer the objection, that what you feel under this obscure and negative form may turn out to be a mere delusion, and quite the reverse of Truth?

Moreover, I should like to see distinctly drawn this line between the Natural and the Supernatural. It is very easy to lay down abstract logical divisions and definitions, but it is not so easy to set them in accordance with the objective and concrete nature of things. Are we to understand by supernatural Truth, the truths of Revelation, as many are wont to do? But these truths are neither more nor less unconceivable than others. It is not easier to explain how the point becomes a line, how the straight line turns into a curve, or the operations of our mind, of memory, of will, of thought, the relations of liberty and reason, of interest and virtue, of Infinite and Finite, than to explain the dogmas

of the Trinity, Redemption, Creation, etc. In fact, everything is incomprehensible and mysterious when not looked upon from a proper point of view, and within the province of scientific thought and speculation; and in this sense it may be said that it is as absurd and incomprehensible to the unlearned that two lines may indefinitely come nearer to each other without ever coming into contact, or that it is the Earth that turns round the Sun, and not the Sun round the Earth, as some of the philosophical and religious truths and theories appear to those whose minds have not gone through the proper training to deal with these subjects.

But even granted that such a line of demarcation might be drawn, that absolute Truth might be divided into two parts, and that one part should come within the reach of our capability, whilst the other, like the statue of Isis, should be veiled and impenetrable to all human eyes: how could we say that the part we know is in accordance with the part we do not know? And if we are unable to decide this point, how can we say that we know anything at all? For instance, when we say that the Absolute is good, that it is absolutely free, or that the soul is immortal, simple in its substance,

and quite independent of matter, etc., how can we feel assured that if we went a little further, and were allowed to glance at this forbidden ground, all our science would not vanish like a dream? And it must be borne in mind that the forbidden part is the most important,—is the part which contains the essence, the ultimate causes and principles of things, without a knowledge of which, no certain knowledge is to be expected.

The fact is, that the Absolute cannot be so dismembered. The Absolute being one, the knowledge of the Absolute must be one also. All questions relating to the Absolute are so intertwined, that, by the starting of one, all others are started at the same time, and, consequently, the solution of one cannot be obtained without the solution of the others. But for the very reason that the problem is raised in and by the human mind, the problem must be solved, and solved in a *positive* way, a *negative* solution being no solution at all; and it must be ultimately solved by the human mind itself. Whether it will be with the aid of Revelation or by the mere power of reason, whether it will be today or tomorrow, in the present or in some future existence, does not alter the case. Under any

supposition, the human mind must be ultimately appealed to. I mean, it must be admitted that the human mind, taught either by itself or by a superior power, either by man or by God, is adequate to the knowledge of absolute Truth.

This is, I think, the *Anti-sceptic* and also the *Anti-eclectic* solution of the problem, and the only ground on which Science may stand. Were this natural and most inward impulse of our mind towards absolute knowledge extinguished, were our mind in its highest soarings marred by the belief or the apprehension that Science is unattainable, that Truth—which is its object, its life, its nourishment—is nowhere to be found, or is above its visual power, the mind would have long ago given up in despair all attempt at knowledge; nay, it would never have made such an attempt, nor even felt any desire for knowledge.

III.

PROFESSOR FERRIER'S INQUIRIES.

PROFESSOR FERRIER'S undertaking aims at a higher and wider object. His inquiries are not, like those of Mr. Calderwood, confined to a few isolated questions, handled in a desultory and unsystematic way; but they embrace the whole range of Metaphysical Science, and draw a systematic outline of the main principles on which this science ought to be founded. Moreover, whilst Mr. Calderwood timidly dissents from Sir W. Hamilton's opinions, and seems still to adhere to the teaching and method of Scottish philosophy, Mr. Ferrier takes a bolder step, and openly secedes from his countrymen's doctrine, declaring that where there is no Metaphysic and Speculation, there is no real philosophical knowledge; that ordinary Psychology, —Psychology as it has been dealt with by Scottish

philosophers,—though clothed with the name and the outward appearance of Philosophy, is in reality no Philosophy at all; that it does not supply the mind with any criterion to guard against the inadvertencies and delusions of popular opinions; in fact, that it is nothing else but a medley of these opinions, to which has been affixed the vague, prosaic, and every-day business name of the Philosophy of Common Sense.

That I entirely concur in the view Professor Ferrier takes of Philosophy in general, and of the Scottish Philosophy in particular, may be inferred from the preceding discussions. I think, with him, that real knowledge, and metaphysical and systematic knowledge, are inseparable; that all other inquiries possess little value unless they are raised to this high scientific level, and that they must only be considered as a preliminary step, as a kind of *propedeutic* towards this culminating structure of the human mind and aspirations. While acknowledging that the labours of Dr. Reid and his disciples have done Philosophy good service, by keeping alive the ardour of philosophical investigation, and by the earnestness with which they have been undertaken, my opinion is, on the other hand,

that they have misdirected the Philosophy of this country, that they have encompassed it within arbitrary, narrow, and artificial boundaries; and that, by throwing Metaphysics into the shade, they have precluded all insight into the Eternal and the Ideal, whence come all freedom, all truth, all beauty, all new expansion of spirit.

I think, therefore, Professor Ferrier's attempt at doing away with the fallacious method and the narrow habits of thought created by the influence of Scottish philosophy, and his endeavours to bring the philosophical inquiries into what I consider the right direction, and to give them, as it were, a deeper and firmer tone, to be highly praiseworthy.

But here, I regret to say, ceases my concurrence in Mr. Ferrier's undertaking. For if his scheme, abstractedly considered, rests on a sound basis, and on a correct view of the nature and condition of philosophical knowledge, he has eventually failed in embodying it into a rational system. Were I to illustrate his undertaking by an example, I would compare him to a painter who realizes the abstract notion of a beautiful picture, but who, when setting his brush upon the canvas, fails to carry it out, from want of the requisite skill.

Professor Ferrier sets Metaphysics against Psychology, and speculative against experimental proceedings, holding—with reason, in my opinion—that Science, in the high sense of the word, can only be reached through the speculative method; but it seems to me that he does not possess a distinct notion of the nature and working of this method, for whilst he professes to adopt the speculative, it is the experimental method he makes use of.

All the strength of Speculation—that by which the speculative distinguishes itself from the experimental method—consists in the direct apprehension of Ideas, in the grasping of Ideas by the intellect, quite independent of the experimental element, and by diving into their eternal, immutable, and universal nature. That the mind is possessed of such a power may be easily ascertained, for it is a fact; and besides, the very definition of Speculative and Inductive methods shows their difference. Thus, for instance, the knowledge of Man in general differs from the knowledge of Man as individual; the knowledge of the ideal, differs from the knowledge of the material triangle; and a theory of education in general, differs from a scheme of national and local education. Whence it follows, that not only

these two kinds of knowledge cannot be obtained by the same proceeding, but that Speculation is the only method adequate to the absolute knowledge. And it is of the utmost importance that this difference should never be lost sight of by the speculative philosopher, lest he should unconsciously mingle the two methods, and mistake one for the other; the consequence of this confusion being a confusion in the result of the inquiry; so that, whilst you think you grasp the essences of man, of religion, of perfection, and describe them, you describe some local and limited manifestation of them; or you set up a kind of chequer-work, where the Universal and Particular, the Infinite and Finite, the Eternal and Temporal, are confusedly cast into the same mould. Now, this confusion is to be met with in Mr. Ferrier's theory, throughout; and in this respect his system is not a system, but a medley, and what he holds out as Speculation, is but a compound of speculative and experimental proceedings.

Professor Ferrier begins by stating that the starting-point must be some principle firm enough to support the whole system; and this principle, firm as a rock, to use one of his rather ambitious

expressions, is the *Self*, or the *Ego*.* His argument is this:—There is no knowledge of any kind whatever, either of the material or immaterial world, that can be obtained without the *Self*. All our cognitions of things go along with the cognition of our *Self*, and there is nothing we can know but what we bring into contact with it, and make, as it were, a part of it. The *Self* forms, therefore, the unity of knowledge; it is a principle that may be found in all other principles, and which renders all other principles cognizable. "*Est ens unum et semper cognitum in omnibus notitiis.*" This is the first step in Professor Ferrier's system, the first link of the chain which will lead the inquirer to absolute Knowledge and absolute Existence.

The second principle is the opposite of the *Self*, *i. e.* the *Non-self*, or *Non-ego*,—the *Object*. Nothing can be known by the *Self* without a *Non-self*, without an Object standing before the *Self*; in other words, the Subjective and the Objective are inseparable, and this inseparability forms what Professor Ferrier calls the *unit*, or *minimum*, of cognition.

We need not follow our philosopher any further

* The *Moi* of the French, and the *Ich* of the Germans.

in his deductions, the above data enabling us to form an accurate idea of the whole system; for, if the starting-point fail, the whole system will fail with it.

First of all, the reader who is conversant with the history of modern Philosophy will recognize, in what Mr. Ferrier seems to propound as an original scheme, the face of an old friend, who attracted, some thirty or forty years since, the attention of the philosophical world: I mean Fichte's theory. The first two principles laid down by our philosopher are the very same principles from which the German philosopher started. I cannot say whether Professor Ferrier is acquainted with Fichte's speculations; I must suppose he is not, for I do not recollect having met with Fichte's name in his book. Had he known his system, had he known also the numerous polemical writings published on this subject, and, above all, the profound criticisms of Schelling and Hegel, he would have been made aware of the failures of his own theory, and would have remodelled or abandoned it.

But I will examine Mr. Ferrier's doctrine in itself, and independent of all analogy and historical precedent.

The first question we must ask, is, how or by what proceeding he has been brought to consider the *Self* as the starting-point of Knowledge. For even supposing that it be a *postulatum*—a principle like those admitted in mathematical and physical Sciences—which cannot be demonstrated, but which is necessary for all subsequent demonstrations, such a *postulatum* cannot be laid down without some rational ground. Besides, it ought to be borne in mind that *postulata*, like those used in the above-named Sciences, are not, strictly speaking, available in philosophical Science, because the former, having a limited field of inquiry, must necessarily admit as *facts* certain principles or notions, as *Time*, *Space*, *Motion*, etc., into the nature of which it is not their business to inquire; whilst Philosophy, being a universal science, must state the grounds on which rest its principles, the starting as well as the closing link of the chain. We have therefore the right to ask Professor Ferrier how he came to state that the starting-point should be the *Self*, and not any other principle? Is it by any speculative proceeding that this principle has been obtained, as we have the right to expect from a philosopher who opposes Speculation to Experi-

ence? His proceeding, we have seen, is this. There is no thought, there is no internal or external phenomenon that can be apprehended without the concurrence of the *Self*. The *Self* is then the principle in whose knowledge is involved the knowledge of all things. The proceeding is the same with respect to the bringing out of the second principle. Nothing can be known by the *Self*, unless there is something that *objicitur*, that comes before it, in order to be known. Now this is sheer experience, under the name of Speculation. Professor Ferrier has *observed*, he has gone round, as it were, the mental phenomena, and perceiving that none of them can be generated and apprehended without coming within the pale of the *Self*, he has inferred that the *Self* is the fundamental condition of all knowledge. But this is the very experimental method he rejects, the method followed by his brethren and Scottish philosophers, in fact, by all experimental inquirers. Had Mr. Ferrier obtained this principle through the speculative method, he would have considered the *Self* in its abstract and pure essence; he would have dealt with the *Self* in a way similar to that in which the Geometer deals with Space;—I say similar, and not identical, because philosophical Speculation,

by the very nature of the subject to which it applies, extends over a wider field, needs to be more systematic in its proceedings, and search more deeply into the principle of things. But had Professor Ferrier really employed the method he professes to have adopted, the fallacy of his proceedings and of his results would, I think, have become apparent to him.

The first, we may say the natural condition of a beginning, is, that it be a real beginning; for if it presupposes some other principle, notion, category, law—little matters the name—it is anything but a beginning. The Geometer starts with Space, and thinks that Space is the starting-point of his speculations. But this is a delusion, as he presupposes some mental laws—logical, ontological, and metaphysical—which he tacitly admits, and unconsciously makes use of, and which enable him to proceed from the first to the concluding point of his theories. And this is also the case with Professor Ferrier's. For in setting forth his principle, we see him using the terms *knowing*, *being*, *condition*, *principle*, *ground*, etc., as if they were known, of which he does not give any rational account whatever, though the knowledge and definition of them ought to precede those by which they are presupposed, and which they make

cognizable. Moreover, it may be asked, what is the *Self?* for if we are to begin with the *Self*, we must know something of its nature. Mr. Ferrier objects to this question being mooted at the commencement because, according to his views, the rational process leads us to describe, first, the laws of *Knowledge*, and then the laws and nature of *Being*. Whence the main division of his *Institutes* into *Epistemology*, or science of *Knowing*, and *Ontology*, or science of *Being*,—a division with which he seems highly satisfied, but in which, even were it correct, I do not see anything very original, as we find it in all old metaphysical treatises. But I must add that this division, already exploded by modern science, is one of these popular oversights and inadequate psychological proceedings against which Mr. Ferrier has set his face. For it is quite manifest that we can say nothing of anything, if we can *affirm* nothing of it. But if we affirm something of it, were it the most elementary and insignificant of its qualities, we state some part of its nature: and this is Ontology. And so does our author himself, by one of those necessary contradictions, into which we are unconsciously driven when our knowledge is at variance with the nature of things. For whilst he says he is going

merely to describe the laws of *Knowledge*, he describes at the same time the laws of *Being*. What is the meaning of the definition, that the *Self* is the *Ens unum in omnibus notitiis*, but that it is in the nature of the *Self* to be possessed of such a quality, which is perhaps the most essential of all? And these remarks apply to the following deductions—*object*, *matter*, etc.—as well as to the *Self*; because Professor Ferrier does not, nor could he, speak of any of them, without stating some of their qualities. Whence it will be seen that he has separated what is inseparable, and that his proceeding comes to this: he has divided one and the same object into two parts, describing some of its qualities and relations in the first part, and the remainder in the second.

The fact is, that at the high level at which Mr. Ferrier's investigations aim, Knowing and Being are indivisible, and a step advanced in the field of Knowledge is a step advanced in the field of Being. For how could there be any knowledge, if it be not the knowledge of something? And what is the value of thought, if it be the thought of nothing? And can we say that the notions of *Self*, of *matter*, of *object*, of *quantity*, etc., constitute a knowledge, or are the foundation of any knowledge whatever, if they

do not involve or represent any reality? Looked at from an inferior point of view, from the point of view of sensation, of popular opinion, of psychological analysis and observation, these questions, I admit, may be divided and separately handled. But it may be said of these proceedings, by which one and the same object is made to appear as twofold, what has been said of youth and manhood when compared with each other, *i. e.* that what is befitting the former is not befitting the latter; which means that there are directions and principles appropriate to the various stages of human life, as there are principles appropriate to each kind of beings. And so it is with our mental education. What is a legitimate and necessary process in one of its stages, becomes inadequate and fallacious in another. And because we observe and collect facts, divide the questions, and proceed by analogy or induction in the former, it does not follow that these same proceedings would be appropriate in the latter. It is rather the contrary that ought to be said, *i. e.* that they are inappropriate, for this very reason, that the latter stage of knowledge differs from the preceding, and consequently possesses its own nature, its own method, and its own view of the subject.

In other words, and as we have already noticed, there is Science, and there are proceedings, acquirements, mental exercises—a progymnastic invigorating the mind and enabling it to attain to the last stage of its evolutions. Science, in the strict and full sense of the word—little matters the name assigned to it, be it called Metaphysics, Ontology, or Speculative knowledge—Science which deals with essences and ultimate principles, is neither *Knowing* nor *Being*, but it is both, grasped by the mind in the unity of their eternal and immutable nature. It is thought which is become adequate and identical to its object, it is the object which has become *intellectualized* (if I may be allowed the expression) by its contact with thought. And this identification of *Knowing* and *Being*, of *Subject* and *Object*, is not to be accomplished at the end of the metaphysical inquiry, as it takes place in Professor Ferrier's '*Institutes*,' where we find the Absolute appearing as the unity of the *Ego* and *Non-ego*, at the winding up of his system, but it must begin at the very beginning. For if Science be what we have stated, this identification of Thought and Object must run from one end to the other, and all throughout the intermediate degrees; the only difference

between the two extreme points being, that the Object of thought is not at the beginning what it is at the end. For instance, if we suppose the starting-point to be the notion of *Being*, and the ending-point the notion of *Absolute Being*, the only difference between the two points will be that, in the first, thought becomes adequate to the essence of *Being*, and in the second to the essence of *Absolute Being*. Were the identification not to take place all throughout these transcendent researches, there would be neither system nor any science at all, as neither the end would be consistent with the beginning, nor the beginning with the end, nor the intermediate parts with either. And this was the result which awaited Mr. Ferrier's disquisitions.

The *Self* is, as we have seen at the starting-point, the universal principle involved in all other cognitions. Further (Prop. VII.), the *Self* is presented as the *Summum Genus Cognitionis*, and in the same place a hint is given that it might turn out also to be the *Summum Genus Existentiæ*. I say a hint, because being still within the limits of Epistemology, Mr. Ferrier seems afraid to encroach upon the province of Ontology. Now one would expect that he should keep his promise, and that the *Self* should

be at the end, what it had been shadowed forth that it would be, the *Summum Genus* of Cognition and Existence. But to our disappointment, we find at the end that "*Absolute Existence*" (I quote his own words) "*is the synthesis of the Subject and Object, the union of the Universal and Particular, the concretion of the Ego and Non-ego,*" which means, if I understand right, that the *Self*, which at the starting-point and in the middle was to be the supreme kind of Cognition and Existence, the highest principle involving in the unity of its nature all Knowing and all Being, is, at the close of its career, debarred from the high rank it had been promised, and compelled to fulfil the subordinate part of attribute or species of the Absolute. This result was inevitable, and it was the necessary consequence of the initial dissociation of Knowing and Being. For it is manifest that, if separated at the beginning, they will never be united again, unless a third principle is brought forward, which shall embrace them in the unity of its essence. But in this case neither Knowing nor Being, neither the Self nor the Non-self, but this third principle, would be the Absolute.

IV.

HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY.

I HAVE met several times in the 'Institutes' with the name of Hegel. Is Professor Ferrier acquainted with his philosophy? This is a question that Mr. Ferrier alone could answer, because the few words I have found in his book respecting this extraordinary thinker, though they seem calculated to convey to the reader's mind that he has a thorough knowledge of the theories of the German philosopher, are of so general and undetermined a character that they might as well apply to Plato, to Aristotle, to Spinoza, or to any other great thinker. But, had we to form our opinion on this point from the contents of the present volume, I should feel some doubt as to his having bestowed upon the Hegelian theories,—of which he says, that, like a gigantic boa constrictor, they will crush the preva-

lent errors within their folds, and that they are impenetrable, like adamant,—the proper degree of attention, the attention which is necessary to melt the adamant, and unfold the mysterious contexture of its pure and precious elements. Had he sufficiently attended to them, he would, I believe, have taken a larger and more correct view of the subject, and his researches would have been stamped with quite a different character; for there are in the Hegelian philosophy certain general directions, certain salient features and results, that cannot escape those who are conversant with it, and which, in my opinion, will form henceforth the criterion and the leading standard of all metaphysical inquiries.

I shall conclude these considerations by drawing the attention of the reader, who may not be acquainted with the Hegelian speculations, to these fundamental points.* According to Hegel, Philosophy, in the high sense of the word, is the science of the Absolute. That there is such a science is not only confirmed by experience, by the labours of the most profound thinkers, but by the most in-

* All these points I have developed and discussed in my 'Introduction to the Philosophy of Hegel.'

ward aspirations of our mind; in fact, by the very essence of the mind itself; for, to understand, and to understand the Absolute, is one and the same thing, and consequently the knowledge of the Absolute is involved in the nature of our understanding. This is the universal *postulatum* of all philosophical inquiries,—a *postulatum* that cannot be demonstrated, but which does not require any demonstration, because it would be as idle to demonstrate it as it would be idle to demonstrate the existence of our understanding,—a fact which shows how contradictory and irrational are those theories which begin by denying or questioning the power and legitimacy of our understanding, and are, at the very same moment, compelled to use it, were it but to establish their own negative arguments.

The science of the Absolute is the science of *Ideas*. It is a delusion, arising from want of sufficient attention and of proper philosophical training, to believe that science may be acquired through any other medium than that of Ideas; and that when we speak of principles, of essences, and of the very nature of things, we speak of anything else than Ideas. It is the Idea involved in these words that

gives them whatever meaning and intrinsic worth they possess, as it is the degree of accuracy, of clearness, and fullness, with which the Idea is apprehended by the mind, that measures the degree of our knowledge. Self and non-Self, Infinite and Finite, Soul and Body, Mind and Matter, Cause, Substance, etc., can only be known by the aid of Ideas; nay, when apprehended in their primitive, universal, and eternal nature, they are Ideas, and nothing but Ideas. Beyond that, *i. e.* beyond the limits of the world of Ideas, we know nothing, we can think and speak of nothing; and when we fancy we may derive our knowledge from a different source, and try to realize the object under a different notion,—as, for instance, when we say that the *Soul* cannot be an Idea, because it is a *force*, a *cause*, a *substance*, *simple*, *immaterial*, and so forth, —we make use of Ideas, and describe the object as an aggregate of the very same elements we have rejected when offered under another form.

But the Science of the Absolute can only be attained by the means of a Method which is adequate to its object, namely, to the Absolute itself. In other inferior degrees of knowledge, Method and Object are separate. The Method appears as

a merely subjective instrument of knowledge, which has no consubstantial relation with the object of inquiry. Hence follows that the methods made use of by these sciences are either borrowed or arbitrary, artificial, and extraneous to their object, as is the case with Mathematics, with Psychology, and even with ordinary Logic,—which is represented as the *organon* of knowledge, but which, having been constituted abstractedly, and without any regard to the *matter* or *content* of knowledge, leads to no real knowledge whatever; indeed, it may be said that, in some respects, misleads and vitiates the genuine logical power of the mind. In the Science of the Absolute, Method and Object are inseparable, and Method is nothing else than the *Form* under which things are known and exist. This method is what Hegel calls sometimes *Speculation* (*Das Speculative*), sometimes *Speculative Dialectic*, or simply *Dialectic*. For the same reason that Method and Object are here intimately connected, Speculation and Ideas are inseparable. There is no genuine Speculation without Ideas, and there is no Idea that could be fully and distinctly apprehended without Speculation.

But *Knowledge* as well as *Being* are necessarily a

System, and there is neither knowledge nor being that could be conceived out of a systematic proceeding and arrangement. It is to the absence of rational arrangement that most of our errors and misconceptions must be ascribed; because we are led by it to use Ideas at random, connecting those which are discrepant, and disjoining those which are similar, inverting their natural order, rejecting or admitting the very Idea we have admitted or rejected under a different form, satisfied as we are with a superficial view of the subject, and relying on opinion, on individual or local habits of thought, or even on the mere word, instead of ascertaining by an independent and direct inquiry the natural and inward meaning of it. Speculative method is therefore essentially systematic; *i. e.* it brings out each Idea according to its own nature, defining each of them, describing its essential qualities and relations, and assigning to each the part it has to play and the room it has to fill up in the concatenation and adjustment of the whole.

Again; a system implies unity and multiplicity, *i. e.* is an aggregate of elements similar and dissimilar, identical and contradictory. The speculative method grasps these twofold sides of Absolute Truth:

it shows how and why unity is duality, and duality is unity; and this it shows at each degree of its progress, as well as in the structure of the whole, bringing out at once the contradiction and conciliating it. And this is what mainly distinguishes Speculation from *Rationalism*, or from the *Philosophy of Understanding* as Hegel calls it. In fact, the Understanding apprehends the General, the Idea—*Cause*, *Substance*, *Quantity*, etc.; but, dealing with them unsystematically, either is satisfied with an arbitrary and superficial juxtaposition, or when unable to conciliate them, it does away with one of them, or forces it, as it were, upon the other. And this fallacious and unscientific proceeding is to be met with in all departments of science,—in Physical and Mathematical, as well as in Metaphysical sciences. For, the geometer and the natural philosopher deal with the principles and materials which form the subject of their investigation, as the moralist and the metaphysician of *Rationalism* deal with theirs. Neither of them attempts to explain the contradiction, or if they make the attempt, they explain it as we have just stated, *i. e.* they do not explain it at all. So, for instance, as the former say that the curve is the straight line with an imperceptible

tible difference—a difference so small that it may not be taken into account; or that cold is only a privation of heat, shade a privation of light (as if a privation or negative principle could be a Non-entity); the latter cut off the effect from the cause, the accidencies from the substance,—holding that cause is perfect without the effect and substance without the accidencies; or, when they inquire into the nature of God they realize him as one and identical, and seem to exert all their ingenuity in divesting him of all difference and opposition, though they describe him, at the same time, as possessing *various* attributes, and amongst these the most antagonistic; for they say that he is the principle of life and the principle of death, merciful and unmerciful, the God of peace and the God of war; that he is the eternal and immutable reason, and at the same time absolutely free; thus curtailing or perverting the nature of things, and throwing all truths and all principles into the most inextricable confusion. This is the general and abstract outline of Hegel's method and conception of science,—a conception he has embodied in one of the most comprehensive and profound systems that ever came out of a man's brain, a system embracing all parts

of knowledge—Logic, Philosophy of Mind,* Philosophy of Nature, Politics,† Philosophy of History,

* These words have in Hegel's system a peculiar meaning, which flows from the view Hegel takes of these sciences. For instance, the Hegelian Logic, besides that it extends over a wider field than that of ordinary Logic, has an *objective* meaning and application, *i. e.* it is not, like ordinary Logic, a science, merely containing the subjective and *formal* laws of Thought, laws which are not connected by any consubstantial relation with the object of Thought, but it contains the principles of Knowing as well as Being, principles which not only apply to man, and to man's mind, but to Nature, and in this sense it may be considered as a part of Metaphysics. Again, the Philosophy of Mind or of Spirit (*Philosophie des Geistes*) must be understood in its largest sense, in the sense of the Science which applies to man considered as a moral, intellectual, social, and religious being. In this sense, Politics, Æsthetics, Religion, and Philosophy itself belong to this province.

† A summary of his 'Philosophy of Right,' by J. C. Sandars, late Fellow of Oriel College, has appeared in a new periodical, the 'Oxford Essays,' published by some members of the University of Oxford. This paper, coming from such a quarter, is doubly interesting, for it not only shows that the Hegelian Philosophy begins to attract in this country the attention of reflective minds, but that a new and more liberal spirit is rising amongst the learned of the celebrated University. The summary is accurate and ably written, but I think the author would have better attained his object had he accompanied it with some critical remarks and introductory explanations. I do not agree with him that the 'Philosophy of Right,' or any other part of Hegel's system, may be, I do not say thoroughly, but sufficiently, understood, without possessing the key of the system; I mean, its leading principles, its method, and above all some notion of the Hegelian

Æsthetics, Religion; nay, strictly speaking, it may be said that in the history of science it is the first and only system, for neither Plato, nor Aristotle, nor any modern philosophers, had taken so large a survey of Science, had so firmly grasped and intimately connected all the links of the golden chain to which the Universe is suspended. And one of the most striking features of this wonderful thinker is, that his highest speculations are stamped with an historical character, or bear upon some actual result and practical application. So powerful and so comprehensive is his genius, so keen is the insight he casts into the nature of things!

Logic; and had I no other argument to substantiate this opinion, I would appeal to the summary itself, where the reader who is not acquainted with Hegel's speculations will find some passages quite unintelligible to him.

THE END.

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