

Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences

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I. Introduction

§1

Philosophy misses an advantage enjoyed by the other sciences. It cannot like them rest the existence of its objects on the natural admissions of consciousness, nor can it assume that its method of cognition, either for starting or for continuing, is one already accepted. The objects of philosophy, it is true, are upon the whole the same as those of religion. In both the object is Truth, in that supreme sense in which God and God only is the Truth. Both in like manner go on to treat of the finite worlds of Nature and the human Mind, with their relation to each other and to their truth in God. Some *acquaintance* with its objects, therefore, philosophy may and even must presume, that and a certain interest in them to boot, were it for no other reason than this: that in point of time the mind makes general *images* of objects, long before it makes *notions* of them, and that it is only through these mental images, and by recourse to them, that the thinking mind rises to know and comprehend *thinkingly*.

But with the rise of this thinking study of things, it soon becomes evident that thought will be satisfied with nothing short of showing the *necessity* of its facts, of demonstrating the existence of its objects, as well as their nature and qualities. Our original acquaintance with them is thus discovered to be inadequate. We can assume nothing and assert nothing dogmatically; nor can we accept the assertions and assumptions of others. And yet we must make a beginning: and a beginning, as primary and undervived, makes an assumption, or rather is an assumption. It seems as if it were impossible to make a beginning at all.

§ 2

This *thinking study of things* may serve, in a general way, as a description of philosophy. But the description is too wide. If it be correct to say, that thought makes the distinction between man and the lower animals, then everything human is human, for the sole and simple reason that it is due to the operation of thought. Philosophy, on the other hand, is a peculiar mode of thinking – a mode in which thinking becomes knowledge, and knowledge through notions. However great therefore may be the identity and essential unity of the two modes of thought, the philosophic mode gets to be different from the more general thought which acts in all that is human, in all that gives humanity its distinctive character. And this difference connects itself with the fact that the strictly human and thought-induced phenomena of consciousness do not originally appear in the form of a thought, but as a feeling, a perception, or mental image – all of which aspects must be distinguished from the form of thought proper.

According to an old preconceived idea, which has passed into a trivial proposition, it is thought which marks the man off from the animals. Yet trivial as this old belief may seem, it must, strangely enough, be recalled to mind in presence of certain preconceived ideas of the present day. These ideas would put feeling and thought so far apart as to make them opposites, and would represent them as so antagonistic, that feeling,

particularly religious feeling, is supposed to be contaminated, perverted, and even annihilated by thought. They also emphatically hold that religion and piety grow out of, and rest upon something else, and not on thought. But those who make this separation forget meanwhile that only man has the capacity for religion, and that animals no more have religion than they have law and morality.

Those who insist on this separation of religion from thinking usually have before their minds the sort of thought that may be styled *after-thought*. They mean 'reflective' thinking, which has to deal with thoughts as thoughts, and brings them into consciousness. Slackness to perceive and keep in view this distinction which philosophy definitely draws in respect of thinking is the source of the crudest objections and reproaches against philosophy. Man – and that just because it is his nature to think – is the only being that possesses law, religion, and morality. In these spheres of human life, therefore, thinking, under the guise of feeling, faith, or generalised image, has not been inactive: its action and its productions are there present and therein contained. But it is one thing to have such feelings and generalised images that have been moulded and permeated by thought, and another thing to have thoughts about them. The thoughts, to which after-thought upon those modes of consciousness gives rise, are what is comprised under reflection, general reasoning, and the like, as well as under philosophy itself.

The neglect of this distinction between thought in general and the reflective thought of philosophy has also led to another and more frequent misunderstanding. Reflection of this kind has been often maintained to be the condition, or even the only way, of attaining a consciousness and certitude of the Eternal and True. The (now somewhat antiquated) metaphysical proofs of God's existence, for example, have been treated, as if a knowledge of them and a conviction of their truth were the only and essential means of producing a belief and conviction that there is a God. Such a doctrine would find its parallel, if we said that eating was impossible before we had acquired a knowledge of the chemical, botanical, and zoological characters of our food; and that we must delay digestion till we had finished the study of anatomy and physiology. Were it so, these sciences in their field, like philosophy in its, would gain greatly in point of utility; in fact, their utility would rise to the height of absolute and universal indispensableness. Or rather, instead of being indispensable, they would not exist at all.

§ 3

The *Content*, of whatever kind it be, with which our consciousness is taken up, is what constitutes the qualitative character of our feelings, perceptions, fancies, and ideas; of our aims and duties; and of our thoughts and notions. From this point of view, feeling, perception, etc., are the *forms* assumed by these contents. The contents remain one and the same, whether they are felt, seen, represented, or willed, and whether they are merely felt, or felt with an admixture of thoughts, or merely and simply thought. In any one of these forms, or in the admixture of several, the contents confront consciousness, or are its *object*. But when they are thus objects of consciousness, the modes of the several forms ally themselves with the contents; and each form of them appears in consequence to give rise to a special object. Thus what is the same at bottom may look like a different sort of fact.

The several modes of feeling, perception, desire, and will, so far as we are *aware* of them, are in general called ideas (mental representations): and it may be roughly said that philosophy puts thoughts, categories, or, in more precise language, adequate *notions*, in

the place of the generalised images we ordinarily call ideas. Mental impressions such as these may be regarded as the metaphors of thoughts and notions. But to have these figurate conceptions does not imply that we appreciate their intellectual significance, the thoughts and rational notions to which they correspond. Conversely, it is one thing to have thoughts and intelligent notions, and another to know what impressions, perceptions, and feelings correspond to them.

This difference will to some extent explain what people call the unintelligibility of philosophy. Their difficulty lies partly in an incapacity – which in itself is nothing but want of habit – for abstract thinking; i.e. in an inability to get hold of pure thoughts and move about in them. In our ordinary state of mind, the thoughts are clothed upon and made one with the sensuous or spiritual material of the hour; and in reflection, meditation, and general reasoning, we introduce a blend of thoughts into feelings, percepts, and mental images. (Thus, in propositions where the subject-matter is due to the senses – e.g. ‘This leaf is green’ – we have such categories introduced, as being and individuality.) But it is a very different thing to make the thoughts pure and simple our object.

But their complaint that philosophy is unintelligible is as much due to another reason; and that is an impatient wish to have before them as a mental picture that which is in the mind as a thought or notion. When people are asked to apprehend some notion, they often complain that they do not know what they have to think. But the fact is that in a notion there is nothing further to be thought than the notion itself. What the phrase reveals is a hankering after an image with which we are already familiar. The mind, denied the use of its familiar ideas, feels the ground where it once stood firm and at home taken away from beneath it, and, when transported into the region of pure thought, cannot tell where in the world it is.

One consequence of this weakness is that authors, preachers, and orators are found most intelligible, when they speak of things which their readers or hearers already know by rote – things which the latter are conversant with, and which require no explanation.

§ 4

The philosopher then has to reckon with popular modes of thought, and with the objects of religion. In dealing with the ordinary modes of mind, he will first of all, as we saw, have to prove and almost to awaken the need for his peculiar method of knowledge. In dealing with the objects of religion, and with truth as a whole, he will have to show that philosophy is capable of apprehending them from its own resources; and should a difference from religious conceptions come to light, he will have to justify the points in which it diverges.

§ 5

To give the reader a preliminary explanation of the distinction thus made, and to let him see at the same moment that the real import of our consciousness is retained, and even for the first time put in its proper light, when translated into the form of thought and the notion of reason, it may be well to recall another of these old unreasoned beliefs. And that is the conviction that to get at the truth of any object or event, even of feelings, perceptions, opinions, and mental ideas, we must think it over. Now in any case to think things over is at least to transform feelings, ordinary ideas, etc. into thoughts.

Nature has given every one a faculty of thought. But thought is all that philosophy claims as the form proper to her business: and thus the inadequate view which ignores the distinction stated in §3 leads to a new delusion, the reverse of the complaint previously mentioned about the unintelligibility of philosophy. In other words, this science must often submit to the slight of hearing even people who have never taken any trouble with it talking as if they thoroughly understood all about it. With no preparation beyond an ordinary education they do not hesitate, especially under the influence of religious sentiment, to philosophise and to criticise philosophy. Everybody allows that to know any other science you must have first studied it, and that you can only claim to express a judgment upon it in virtue of such knowledge. Everybody allows that to make a shoe you must have learned and practised the craft of the shoemaker, though every man has a model in his own foot, and possesses in his hands the natural endowments for the operations required. For philosophy alone, it seems to be imagined, such study, care, and application are not in the least requisite.

This comfortable view of what is required for a philosopher has recently received corroboration through the theory of immediate or intuitive knowledge.

§ 6

So much for the form of philosophical knowledge. It is no less desirable, on the other hand, that philosophy should understand that its content is no other than *actuality*, that core of truth which, originally produced and producing itself within the precincts of the mental life, has become the *world*, the inward and outward world, of consciousness. At first we become aware of these contents in what we call Experience. But even Experience, as it surveys the wide range of inward and outward existence, has sense enough to distinguish the mere appearance, which is transient and meaningless, from what in itself really deserves the name of actuality. As it is only in form that philosophy is distinguished from other modes of attaining an acquaintance with this same sum of being, it must necessarily be in harmony with actuality and experience. In fact, this harmony may be viewed as at least an extrinsic means of testing the truth of a philosophy. Similarly it may be held the highest and final aim of philosophic science to bring about, through the ascertainment of this harmony, a reconciliation of the self-conscious reason with the reason which is in the world – in other words, with actuality.

In the Preface to my *Philosophy of Right*, p. xxvii, are found the propositions:

What is reasonable is actual
and
What is actual is reasonable.

These simple statements have given rise to expressions of surprise and hostility, even in quarters where it would be reckoned an insult to presume absence of philosophy, and still more of religion. Religion at least need not be brought in evidence; its doctrines of the divine governments of the world affirm these propositions too decidedly. For their philosophic sense, we must presuppose intelligence enough to know, not only that God is actual, that He is the supreme actuality, that He alone is truly actual; but also, as regards the logical bearings of the question, that existence is in part mere appearance, and only in part actuality. In common life, any freak of fancy, any error, evil and everything of the nature of evil, as well as every degenerate and transitory existence whatever, gets in a casual way the name of actuality. But even our ordinary feelings are enough to forbid a casual (fortuitous) existence getting the emphatic name of an actual; for by fortuitous we

mean an existence which has no greater value than that of something possible, which may as well not be as be. As for the term Actuality, these critics would have done well to consider the sense in which I employ it. In a detailed Logic I had treated among other things of actuality, and accurately distinguished it not only from the fortuitous, which, after all, has existence, but even from the cognate categories of existence and the other modifications of being.

The actuality of the rational stands opposed by the popular fancy that Ideas and ideals are nothing but chimeras, and philosophy a mere system of such phantasms. It is also opposed by the very different fancy that Ideas and ideals are something far too excellent to have actuality, or something too impotent to procure it for themselves. This divorce between idea and reality is especially dear to the analytic understanding which looks upon its own abstractions, dreams though they are, as something true and real, and prides itself on the imperative 'ought', which it takes especial pleasure in prescribing even on the field of politics. As if the world had waited on it to learn how it ought to be, and was not! For, if it were as it ought to be, what would come of the precocious wisdom of that 'ought'? When understanding turns this 'ought' against trivial external and transitory objects, against social regulations or conditions, which very likely possess a great relative importance for a certain time and special circles, it may often be right. In such a case the intelligent observer may meet much that fails to satisfy the general requirements of right; for who is not acute enough to see a great deal in his own surroundings which is really far from being as it ought to be? But such acuteness is mistaken in the conceit that, when it examines these objects and pronounces what they ought to be, it is dealing with questions of philosophic science. The object of philosophy is the Idea: and the Idea is not so impotent as merely to have a right or an obligation to exist without actually existing. The object of philosophy is an actuality of which those objects, social regulations and conditions, are only the superficial outside.

§ 7

Thus reflection – thinking things over – in a general way involves the principle (which also means the beginning) of philosophy. And when the reflective spirit arose again in its independence in modern times, after the epoch of the Lutheran Reformation, it did not, as in its beginnings among the Greeks, stand merely aloof, in a world of its own, but at once turned its energies also upon the apparently illimitable material of the phenomenal world. In this way the name philosophy came to be applied to all those branches of knowledge, which are engaged in ascertaining the standard and Universal in the ocean of empirical individualities, as well as in ascertaining the Necessary element, or Laws, to be found in the apparent disorder of the endless masses of the fortuitous. It thus appears that modern philosophy derives its materials from our own personal observations and perceptions of the external and internal world, from nature as well as from the mind and heart of man, when both stand in the immediate presence of the observer.

This principle of Experience carries with it the unspeakably important condition that, in order to accept and believe any fact, we must be in contact with it; or, in more exact terms, that we must find the fact united and combined with the certainty of our own selves. We must be in touch with our subject-matter, whether it be by means of our external senses, or, else, by our profounder mind and our intimate self-consciousness. This principle is the same as that which has in the present day been termed faith, immediate knowledge, the revelation in the outward world, and, above all, in our own heart.

Those sciences, which thus got the name of philosophy, we call empirical sciences, for the reason that they take their departure from experience. Still the essential results which they aim at and provide are laws, general propositions, a theory – the thoughts of what is found existing. On this ground the Newtonian physics was called Natural Philosophy. Hugo Grotius, again, by putting together and comparing the behaviour of states towards each other as recorded in history, succeeded, with the help of the ordinary methods of general reasoning, in laying down certain general principles, and establishing a theory which may be termed the Philosophy of International Law. In England this is still the usual signification of the term philosophy. Newton continues to be celebrated as the greatest of philosophers: and the name goes down as far as the price-lists of instrument-makers. All instruments, such as the thermometer and barometer, which do not come under the special head of magnetic or electric apparatus, are styled philosophical instruments. Surely *thought*, and not a mere combination of wood, iron, etc., ought to be called the instrument of philosophy! The recent science of Political Economy in particular, which in Germany is known as Rational Economy of the State, or intelligent national economy, has in England especially appropriated the name of philosophy.

§ 8

In its own field this empirical knowledge may at first give satisfaction; but in two ways it is seen to come short. In the first place there is another circle of objects which it does not embrace. These are Freedom, Spirit, and God. They belong to a different sphere, not because it can be said that they have nothing to do with experience; for though they are certainly not experiences of the senses, it is quite an identical proposition to say that whatever is in consciousness is experienced. The real ground for assigning them to another field of cognition is that in their scope and *content* these objects evidently show themselves as infinite.

There is an old phrase often wrongly attributed to Aristotle, and supposed to express the general tenor of his philosophy. *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*: there is nothing in thought which has not been in sense and experience. If speculative philosophy refused to admit this maxim, it can only have done so from a misunderstanding. It will, however, on the converse side no less assert: *Nihil est in sensu quod non fuerit in intellectu*. And this may be taken in two senses. In the general sense it means that *νοῦς* or spirit (the more profound idea of *νοῦς* in modern thought) is the cause of the world. In its special meaning (see § 2) it asserts that the sentiment of right, morals, and religion is a sentiment (and in that way an experience) of such scope and such character that it can spring from and rest upon thought alone.

§ 9

But in the second place in point of form the subjective reason desires a further satisfaction than empirical knowledge gives; and this form is, in the widest sense of the term, Necessity (§ 1). The method of empirical science exhibits two defects.

The first is that the Universal or general principle contained in it, the genus, or kind, etc., is, on its own account, indeterminate and vague, and therefore not on its own account connected with the Particulars or the details. Either is external and accidental to the other; and it is the same with the particular facts which are brought into union: each is external and accidental to the others.

The second defect is that the beginnings are in every case data and postulates, neither accounted for nor deduced. In both these points the form of necessity fails to get its due. Hence reflection, whenever it sets itself to remedy these defects, becomes speculative thinking, the thinking proper to philosophy. As a species of reflection, therefore, which, though it has a certain community of nature with the reflection already mentioned, is nevertheless different from it, philosophic thought thus possesses, in addition to the common forms, some forms of its own, of which the Notion may be taken as the type.

The relation of speculative science to the other sciences may be stated in the following terms. It does not in the least neglect the empirical facts contained in the several sciences, but recognises and adopts them: it appreciates and applies towards its own structure the universal element in these sciences, their laws and classifications: but besides all this, into the categories of science it introduces, and gives currency to, other categories. The difference, looked at in this way, is only a change of categories. Speculative Logic contains all previous Logic and Metaphysics: it preserves the same forms of thought, the same laws and objects – while at the same time remodelling and expanding them with wider categories.

From *notion* in the speculative sense we should distinguish what is ordinarily called a notion. The phrase, that no notion can ever comprehend the Infinite, a phrase which has been repeated over and over again till it has grown axiomatic, is based upon this narrow estimate of what is meant by notions.

§ 10

This thought, which is proposed as the instrument of philosophic knowledge, itself calls for further explanation. We must understand in what way it possesses necessity or cogency: and when it claims to be equal to the task of apprehending the absolute objects (God, Spirit, Freedom), that claim must be substantiated. Such an explanation, however, is itself a lesson in philosophy, and properly falls within the scope of the science itself. A preliminary attempt to make matters plain would only be unphilosophical, and consist of a tissue of assumptions, assertions, and inferential pros and cons, i.e. of dogmatism without cogency, as against which there would be an equal right of counter-dogmatism.

A main line of argument in the Critical Philosophy bids us pause before proceeding to inquire into God or into the true being of things, and tells us first of all to examine the faculty of cognition and see whether it is equal to such an effort. We ought, says Kant, to become acquainted with the instrument, before we undertake the work for which it is to be employed; for if the instrument be insufficient, all our trouble will be spent in vain. The plausibility of this suggestion has won for it general assent and admiration; the result of which has been to withdraw cognition from an interest in its objects and absorption in the study of them, and to direct it back upon itself; and so turn it to a question of form. Unless we wish to be deceived by words, it is easy to see what this amounts to. In the case of other instruments, we can try and criticise them in other ways than by setting about the special work for which they are destined. But the examination of knowledge can only be carried out by an act of knowledge. To examine this so-called instrument is the same thing as to know it. But to seek to know before we know is as absurd as the wise resolution of Scholasticus, not to venture into the water until he had learned to swim.

Reinhold saw the confusion with which this style of commencement is chargeable, and tried to get out of the difficulty by starting with a hypothetical and problematical stage of philosophising. In this way he supposed that it would be possible, nobody can tell how, to

get along, until we found ourselves, further on, arrived at the primary truth of truths. His method, when closely looked into, will be seen to be identical with a very common practice. It starts from a substratum of experiential fact, or from a provisional assumption which has been brought into a definition; and then proceeds to analyse this starting-point. We can detect in Reinhold's argument a perception of the truth, that the usual course which proceeds by assumptions and anticipations is no better than a hypothetical and problematical mode of procedure. But his perceiving this does not alter the character of this method; it only makes clear its imperfections.

§ 11

The special conditions which call for the existence of philosophy may be thus described. The mind or spirit, when it is sentient or perceptive, finds its object in something sensuous; when it imagines, in a picture or image; when it wills, in an aim or end. But in contrast to, or it may be only in distinction from, these forms of its existence and of its objects, the mind has also to gratify the cravings of its highest and most inward life. That innermost self is thought. Thus the mind renders thought its object. In the best meaning of the phrase, it comes to itself; for thought is its principle, and its very unadulterated self. But while thus occupied, thought entangles itself in contradictions, i.e. loses itself in the hard-and-fast non-identity of its thoughts, and so, instead of reaching itself, is caught and held in its counterpart. This result, to which honest but narrow thinking leads the mere understanding, is resisted by the loftier craving of which we have spoken. That craving expresses the perseverance of thought, which continues true to itself, even in this conscious loss of its native rest and independence, 'that it may overcome' and work out in itself the solution of its own contradictions.

To see that thought in its very nature is dialectical, and that, as understanding, it must fall into contradiction – the negative of itself – will form one of the main lessons of logic. When thought grows hopeless of ever achieving, by its own means, the solution of the contradiction which it has by its own action brought upon itself, it turns back to those solutions of the question with which the mind had learned to pacify itself in some of its other modes and forms. Unfortunately, however, the retreat of thought has led it, as Plato noticed even in his time, to a very uncalled-for hatred of reason (misology); and it then takes up against its own endeavours that hostile attitude of which an example is seen in the doctrine that 'immediate' knowledge, as it is called, is the exclusive form in which we become cognisant of truth.

§ 12

The rise of philosophy is due to these cravings of thought. Its point of departure is Experience; including under that name both our immediate consciousness and the inductions from it. Awakened, as it were, by this stimulus, thought is vitally characterised by raising itself above the natural state of mind, above the senses and inferences from the senses into its own unadulterated element, and by assuming, accordingly, at first a stand-aloo and negative attitude towards the point from which it started. Through this state of antagonism to the phenomena of sense its first satisfaction is found in itself, in the Idea of the universal essence of these phenomena: an Idea (the Absolute, or God) which may be more or less abstract. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the sciences, based on experience, exert upon the mind a stimulus to overcome the form in which their varied contents are presented, and to elevate these contents to the rank of necessary truth. For the facts of science have the aspect of a vast conglomerate, one thing coming side by side with

another, as if they were merely given and presented – as in short devoid of all essential or necessary connection. In consequence of this stimulus, thought is dragged out of its unrealised universality and its fancied or merely possible satisfaction, and impelled onwards to a development from itself. On one hand this development only means that thought incorporates the contents of science, in all their speciality of detail as submitted. On the other it makes these contents imitate the action of the original creative thought, and present the aspect of a free evolution determined by the logic of the fact alone.

On the relation between ‘immediacy’ and ‘mediation’ in consciousness we shall speak later, expressly and with more detail. Here it may be sufficient to premise that, though the two ‘moments’ or factors present themselves as distinct, still neither of them can be absent, nor can one exist apart from the other. Thus the knowledge of God, as of every supersensible reality, is in its true character an exaltation above sensations or perceptions: it consequently involves a negative attitude to the initial data of sense, and to that extent implies mediation. For to mediate is to take something as a beginning and to go onward to a second thing; so that the existence of this second thing depends on our having reached it from something else contradistinguished from it. In spite of this, the knowledge of God is no mere sequel, dependent on the empirical phase of consciousness: in fact, its independence is essentially secured through this negation and exaltation. No doubt, if we attach an unfair prominence to the fact of mediation, and represent it as implying a state of conditionedness, it may be said – not that the remark would mean much – that philosophy is the child of experience, and owes its rise to *a posteriori* fact. (As a matter of fact, thinking is always the negation of what we have immediately before us.) With as much truth however we may be said to owe eating to the means of nourishment, so long as we can have no eating without them. If we take this view, eating is certainly represented as ungrateful: it devours that to which it owes itself. Thinking, upon this view of its action, is equally ungrateful.

But there is also an *a priori* aspect of thought, where by a mediation, not made by anything external but by a reflection into self, we have that immediacy which is universality, the self-complacency of thought which is so much at home with itself that it feels an innate indifference to descend to particulars, and in that way to the development of its own nature. It is thus also with religion, which whether it be rude or elaborate, whether it be invested with scientific precision of detail or confined to the simple faith of the heart, possesses, throughout, the same intensive nature of contentment and felicity. But if thought never gets further than the universality of the Ideas, as was perforce the case in the first philosophies (when the Eleatics never got beyond Being, or Heraclitus beyond Becoming), it is justly open to the charge of formalism. Even in a more advanced phase of philosophy, we may often find a doctrine which has mastered merely certain abstract propositions or formulae, such as, ‘In the absolute all is one’, ‘Subject and object are identical’ – and only repeating the same thing when it comes to particulars. Bearing in mind this first period of thought, the period of mere generality, we may safely say that experience is the real author of *growth* and *advance* in philosophy. For, firstly, the empirical sciences do not stop short at the mere observation of the individual features of a phenomenon. By the aid of thought, they are able to meet philosophy with materials prepared for it, in the shape of general uniformities, i.e. laws, and classifications of the phenomena. When this is done, the particular facts which they contain are ready to be received into philosophy. This, secondly, implies a certain compulsion on thought itself to proceed to these concrete specific truths. The reception into philosophy of these scientific materials, now that thought has removed their immediacy and made them cease

to be mere data, forms at the same time a development of thought out of itself. Philosophy, then, owes its development to the empirical sciences. In return it gives their contents what is so vital to them, the freedom of thought – gives them, in short, an *a priori* character. These contents are now warranted necessary, and no longer depend on the evidence of facts merely, that they were so found and so experienced. The fact as experienced thus becomes an illustration and a copy of the original and completely self-supporting activity of thought.

§ 13

Stated in exact terms, such is the origin and development of philosophy. But the History of Philosophy gives us the same process from a historical and external point of view. The stages in the evolution of the Idea there seem to follow each other by accident, and to present merely a number of different and unconnected principles, which the several systems of philosophy carry out in their own way. But it is not so. For these thousands of years the same Architect has directed the work: and that Architect is the one living Mind whose nature is to think, to bring to self-consciousness what it is, and, with its being thus set as object before it, to be at the same time raised above it, and so to reach a higher stage of its own being. The different systems which the history of philosophy presents are therefore not irreconcilable with unity.

We may either say, that it is one philosophy at different degrees of maturity: or that the particular principle, which is the groundwork of each system, is but a branch of one and the same universe of thought. In philosophy the latest birth of time is the result of all the systems that have preceded it, and must include their principles; and so, if, on other grounds, it deserve the title of philosophy, will be the fullest, most comprehensive, and most adequate system of all.

The spectacle of so many and so various systems of philosophy suggests the necessity of defining more exactly the relation of Universal to Particular. When the universal is made a mere form and co-ordinated with the particular, as if it were on the same level, it sinks into a particular itself. Even common sense in everyday matters is above the absurdity of setting a universal *beside* the particulars. Would any one, who wished for fruit, reject cherries, pears, and grapes, on the ground that they were cherries, pears, or grapes, and not fruit? But when philosophy is in question, the excuse of many is that philosophies are so different, and none of them is the philosophy – that each is only a philosophy. Such a plea is assumed to justify any amount of contempt for philosophy. And yet cherries too are fruit. Often, too, a system, of which the principle is the universal, is put on a level with another of which the principle is a particular, and with theories which deny the existence of philosophy altogether. Such systems are said to be only different views of philosophy. With equal justice, light and darkness might be styled different kinds of light.

§ 14

The same evolution of thought which is exhibited in the history of philosophy is presented in the System of Philosophy itself. Here, instead of surveying the process, as we do in history, from the outside, we see the movement of thought clearly defined in its native medium. The thought, which is genuine and self-supporting, must be intrinsically concrete; it must be an Idea; and when it is viewed in the whole of its universality, it is the Idea, or the Absolute. The science of this Idea must form a system. For the truth is concrete; that is, while it gives a bond and principle of unity, it also possesses an internal source of development. Truth, then, is only possible as a universe or totality of thought;

and the freedom of the whole, as well as the necessity of the several sub-divisions, which it implies, are only possible when these are discriminated and defined.

Unless it is a system, a philosophy is not a scientific production. Unsystematic philosophising can only be expected to give expression to personal peculiarities of mind, and has no principle for the regulation of its contents. Apart from their interdependence and organic union, the truths of philosophy are valueless, and must then be treated as baseless hypotheses, or personal convictions. Yet many philosophical treatises confine themselves to such an exposition of the opinions and sentiments of the author.

The term system is often misunderstood. It does not denote a philosophy, the principle of which is narrow and to be distinguished from others. On the contrary, a genuine philosophy makes it a principle to include every particular principle.

§ 15

Each of the parts of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a circle rounded and complete in itself. In each of these parts, however, the philosophical Idea is found in a particular specificity or medium. The single circle, because it is a real totality, bursts through the limits imposed by its special medium, and gives rise to a wider circle. The whole of philosophy in this way resembles a *circle of circles*. The Idea appears in each single circle, but, at the same time, the whole Idea is constituted by the system of these peculiar phases, and each is a necessary member of the organisation.

§ 16

In the form of an Encyclopaedia, the science has no room for a detailed exposition of particulars, and must be limited to setting forth the commencement of the special sciences and the notions of cardinal importance in them.

How much of the particular parts is requisite to constitute a particular branch of knowledge is so far indeterminate, that the part, if it is to be something true, must be not an isolated member merely, but itself an organic whole. The entire field of philosophy therefore really forms a single science; but it may also be viewed as a total, composed of several particular sciences.

The encyclopaedia of philosophy must not be confounded with ordinary encyclopaedias. An ordinary encyclopaedia does not pretend to be more than an aggregation of sciences, regulated by no principle, and merely as experience offers them. Sometimes it even includes what merely bear the name of sciences, while they are nothing more than a collection of bits of information. In an aggregate like this, the several branches of knowledge owe their place in the encyclopaedia to extrinsic reasons, and their unity is therefore artificial: they are *arranged*, but we cannot say they form a *system*. For the same reason, especially as the materials to be combined also depend upon no one rule or principle, the arrangement is at best an experiment, and will always exhibit inequalities.

An encyclopaedia of philosophy excludes three kinds of partial science. **I.** It excludes mere aggregates of bits of information. Philology in its *prima facie* aspect belongs to this class. **II.** It rejects the quasi-sciences, which are founded on an act of arbitrary will alone, such as Heraldry. Sciences of this class are positive from beginning to end. **III.** In another class of sciences, also styled positive, but which have a rational basis and a rational beginning, philosophy claims that constituent as its own. The positive features remain the property of the sciences themselves.

The positive element in the last class of sciences is of different sorts. **(i)** Their commencement, though rational at bottom, yields to the influence of fortuitousness, when they have to bring their universal truth into contact with actual facts and the single phenomena of experience. In this region of chance and change, the adequate notion of science must yield its place to reasons or grounds of explanation. Thus, e.g. in the science of jurisprudence, or in the system of direct and indirect taxation, it is necessary to have certain points precisely and definitively settled which lie beyond the competence of the absolute lines laid down by the pure notion. A certain latitude of settlement accordingly is left; and each point may be determined in one way on one principle, in another way on another, and admits of no definitive certainty. Similarly the Idea of Nature, when parcelled out in detail, is dissipated into contingencies. Natural history, geography, and medicine stumble upon descriptions of existence, upon kinds and distinctions, which are not determined by reason, but by sport and adventitious incidents. Even history comes under the same category. The Idea is its essence and inner nature; but, as it appears, everything is under contingency and in the field of voluntary action. **(ii)** These sciences are positive also in failing to recognise the finite nature of what they predicate, and to point out how these categories and their whole sphere pass into a higher. They assume their statements to possess an authority beyond appeal. Here the fault lies in the finitude of the form, as in the previous instance it lay in the matter. **(iii)** In close sequel to this, sciences are positive in consequence of the inadequate grounds on which their conclusions rest: based as these are on detached and casual inference, upon feeling, faith, and authority, and, generally speaking, upon the deliverances of inward and outward perception. Under this head we must also class the philosophy which proposes to build upon ‘anthropology’, facts of consciousness, inward sense, or outward experience. It may happen, however, that empirical is an epithet applicable only to the form of scientific exposition, while intuitive sagacity has arranged what are mere phenomena, according to the essential sequence of the notion. In such a case the contrasts between the varied and numerous phenomena brought together serve to eliminate the external and accidental circumstances of their conditions, and the universal thus comes clearly into view. Guided by such an intuition, experimental physics will present the rational science of Nature – as history will present the science of human affairs and actions – in an external picture, which mirrors the philosophic notion.

§ 17

It may seem as if philosophy, in order to start on its course, had, like the rest of the sciences, to begin with a subjective presupposition. The sciences postulate their respective objects, such as space, number, or whatever it be; and it might be supposed that philosophy had also to postulate the existence of thought. But the two cases are not exactly parallel. It is by the free act of thought that it occupies a point of view, in which it is for its own self, and thus gives itself an object of its own production. Nor is this all. The very point of view, which originally is taken on its own evidence only, must in the course of the science be converted to a result – the ultimate result in which philosophy returns into itself and reaches the point with which it began. In this manner philosophy exhibits the appearance of a circle which closes with itself, and has no beginning in the same way as the other sciences have. To speak of a beginning of philosophy has a meaning only in relation to a person who proposes to commence the study, and not in relation to the science as science. The same thing may be thus expressed. The notion of science – the notion therefore with which we start – which, for the very reason that it is

initial, implies a separation between the thought which is our object, and the subject philosophising which is, as it were, external to the former, must be grasped and comprehended by the science itself. This is in short, the one single aim, action, and goal of philosophy – to arrive at the notion of its notion, and thus secure its return and its satisfaction.

§ 18

As the whole science, and only the whole, can exhibit what the Idea or system of reason is, it is impossible to give in a preliminary way a general impression of a philosophy. Nor can a division of philosophy into its parts be intelligible, except in connection with the system. A preliminary division, like the limited conception from which it comes, can only be an anticipation. Here however it is premised that the Idea turns out to be the thought which is completely identical with itself, and not identical simply in the abstract, but also in its action of setting itself over against itself, so as to gain a being of its own, and yet of being in full possession of itself while it is in this other. Thus philosophy is subdivided into three parts:

I. Logic: the science of the Idea in and for itself.

II. The Philosophy of Nature: the science of the Idea in its otherness.

III. The Philosophy of Mind: the science of the Idea come back to itself out of that otherness.

As observed in §15, the differences between the several philosophical sciences are only aspects or specialisations of the one Idea or system of reason, which and which alone is alike exhibited in these different media. In Nature nothing else would have to be discerned, except the Idea; but the Idea has here divested itself of its proper being. In Mind, again, the Idea has asserted a being of its own, and is on the way to become absolute. Every such form in which the Idea is expressed is at the same time a passing or fleeting stage; and hence each of these subdivisions has not only to know its contents as an object which has being for the time, but also in the same act to expound how these contents pass into their higher circle. To represent the relation between them as a division, therefore, leads to misconception; for it co-ordinates the several parts or sciences one beside another, as if they had no innate development, but were, like so many species, really and radically distinct.

II: Preliminary Notion

Logic derived from a survey of the whole system

§ 19

Logic is the science of the pure Idea; pure, that is, because the Idea is in the abstract medium of Thought.

This definition, and the others which occur in these introductory outlines, are derived from a survey of the whole system, to which accordingly they are subsequent. The same remark applies to all prefatory notions whatever about philosophy.

Logic might have been defined as the science of thought, and of its laws and characteristic forms. But thought, as thought, constitutes only the general medium, or qualifying circumstance, which renders the Idea distinctively logical. If we identify the Idea with thought, thought must not be taken in the sense of a method or form, but in the

sense of the self-developing totality of its laws and peculiar terms. These laws are the work of thought itself, and not a fact which it finds and must submit to.

From different points of view, Logic is either the hardest or the easiest of the sciences. Logic is hard, because it has to deal not with perceptions, nor, like geometry, with abstract representations of the senses, but with the pure abstractions; and because it demands a force and facility of withdrawing into pure thought, of keeping firm hold on it, and of moving in such an element. Logic is easy, because its facts are nothing but our own thought and its familiar forms or terms: and these are the acme of simplicity, the ABC of everything else. They are also what we are best acquainted with: such as 'is' and 'is not'; quality and magnitude; being potential and being actual; one, many, and so on. But such an acquaintance only adds to the difficulties of the study; for while, on the one hand, we naturally think it is not worth our trouble to occupy ourselves any longer with things so familiar, on the other hand, the problem is to become acquainted with them in a new way, quite opposite to that in which we know them already.

The utility of Logic is a matter which concerns its bearings upon the student, and the training it may give for other purposes. This logical training consists in the exercise in thinking which the student has to go through (this science is the thinking of thinking): and in the fact that he stores his head with thoughts, in their native unalloyed character. It is true that Logic, being the absolute form of truth, and another name for the very truth itself, is something more than merely useful. Yet if what is noblest, most liberal, and most independent is also most useful, Logic has some claim to the latter character. Its utility must then be estimated at another rate than exercise in thought for the sake of the exercise.

§ 19n

(1) The first question is: What is the object of our science? The simplest and most intelligible answer to this question is that Truth is the object of Logic. Truth is a noble word, and the thing is nobler still. So long as man is sound at heart and in spirit, the search for truth must awake all the enthusiasm of his nature. But immediately there steps in the objection – are we able to know truth? There seems to be a disproportion between finite beings like ourselves and the truth which is absolute, and doubts suggest themselves whether there is any bridge between the finite and the infinite. God is truth: how shall we know Him? Such an undertaking appears to stand in contradiction with the graces of lowliness and humility. Others who ask whether we can know the truth have a different purpose. They want to justify themselves in living on contented with their petty, finite aims. And humility of this stamp is a poor thing.

But the time is past when people asked: How shall I, a poor worm of the dust, be able to know the truth? And in its stead we find vanity and conceit: people claim, without any trouble on their part, to breathe the very atmosphere of truth. The young have been flattered into the belief that they possess a natural birthright of moral and religious truth. And in the same strain, those of riper years are declared to be sunk, petrified ossified in falsehood. Youth, say these teachers, sees the bright light of dawn: but the older generation lies in the slough and mire of the common day. They admit that the special sciences are something that certainly ought to be cultivated, but merely as the means to satisfy the needs of outer life. In all this it is not humility which holds back from the knowledge and study of the truth, but a conviction that we are already in full possession of it. And no doubt the young carry with them the hopes of their elder compeers; on them rests the advance of the world and science. But these hopes are set upon the young, only on the condition that, instead of remaining as they are, they undertake the stern labour of mind.

This modesty in truth-seeking has still another phase: and that is the genteel indifference to truth, as we see it in Pilate's conversation with Christ. Pilate asked 'What is truth?' with the air of a man who had settled accounts with everything long ago, and concluded that nothing particularly matters – he meant much the same as Solomon when he says: 'All is vanity'. When it comes to this, nothing is left but self-conceit.

The knowledge of the truth meets an additional obstacle in timidity. A slothful mind finds it natural to say: 'Don't let it be supposed that we mean to be in earnest with our philosophy. We shall be glad *inter alia* to study Logic: but Logic must be sure to leave us as we were before.' People have a feeling that, if thinking passes the ordinary range of our ideas and impressions, it cannot but be on the evil road. They seem to be trusting themselves to a sea on which they will be tossed to and fro by the waves of thought, till at length they again reach the sandbank of this temporal scene, as utterly poor as when they left it. What comes of such a view, we see in the world. It is possible within these limits to gain varied information and many accomplishments, to become a master of official routine, and to be trained for special purposes. But it is quite another thing to educate the spirit for the higher life and to devote our energies to its service. In our own day it may be hoped a longing for something better has sprung up among the young, so that they will not be contented with the mere straw of outer knowledge.

(2) It is universally agreed that thought is the object of Logic. But of thought our estimate may be very mean, or it may be very high. On one hand, people say: 'It is only a thought.' In their view thought is subjective, arbitrary and accidental – distinguished from the thing itself, from the true and the real. On the other hand, a very high estimate may be formed of thought; when thought alone is held adequate to attain the highest of all things, the nature of God, of which the senses can tell us nothing. God is a spirit, it is said, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But the merely felt and sensible, we admit, is not the spiritual; its heart of hearts is in thought; and only spirit can know spirit. And though it is true that spirit can demean itself as feeling and sense – as is the case in religion, the mere feeling, as a mode of consciousness, is one thing, and its contents another. Feeling, as feeling, is the general form of the sensuous nature which we have in common with the brutes. This form, viz. feeling, may possibly seize and appropriate the full organic truth: but the form has no real congruity with its contents. The form of feeling is the lowest in which spiritual truth can be expressed. The world of spiritual existences, God himself, exists in proper truth, only in thought and as thought. If this be so, therefore, thought, far from being a mere thought, is the highest and, in strict accuracy, the sole mode of apprehending the eternal and absolute.

As of thought, so also of the science of thought, a very high or a very low opinion may be formed. Any man, it is supposed, can think without Logic, as he can digest without studying physiology. If he have studied Logic, he thinks afterwards as he did before, perhaps more methodically, but with little alteration. If this were all, and if Logic did no more than make men acquainted with the action of thought as the faculty of comparison and classification, it would produce nothing which had not been done quite as well before. And in point of fact Logic hitherto had no other idea of its duty than this. Yet to be well informed about thought, even as a mere activity of the subject-mind, is honourable and interesting for man. It is in knowing what he is and what he does that man is distinguished from the brutes. But we may take the higher estimate of thought – as what alone can get really in touch with the supreme and true. In that case, Logic as the science of thought occupies a high ground. If the science of Logic then considers thought in its action and its productions (and thought being no resultless energy produces thoughts and the particular thought required), the theme of Logic is in general the supersensible world, and to deal with that theme is to dwell for a while in that world. Mathematics is concerned with the abstractions of time and space. But these are still the object of sense, although the sensible is abstract and idealised. Thought bids *adieu* even to this last and abstract sensible: it asserts its own native independence, renounces the field of the external and internal sense, and puts away the interests and inclinations of the individual. When Logic takes this ground, it is a higher science than we are in the habit of supposing.

(3) The necessity of understanding Logic in a deeper sense than as the science of the mere form of thought is enforced by the interests of religion and politics, of law and morality. In earlier days men meant no harm by thinking: they thought away freely and fearlessly. They thought about God, about Nature, and the State; and they felt sure that a knowledge of the truth was obtainable through thought only, and not through the senses or any random ideas or opinions. But while they so thought, the principal ordinances of life began to be seriously affected by their conclusions. Thought deprived existing institutions of their force. Constitutions fell a victim to thought: religion was assailed by thought: firm religious beliefs which had been always looked upon as revelations were undermined, and in many minds the old faith was upset. The Greek philosophers, for example, became antagonists of the old religion, and destroyed its beliefs. Philosophers were accordingly banished or put to death, as revolutionists who had subverted religion and the state,

two things which were inseparable. Thought, in short, made itself a power in the real world, and exercised enormous influence. The matter ended by drawing attention to the influence of thought, and its claims were submitted to a more rigorous scrutiny, by which the world professed to find that thought arrogated too much and was unable to perform what it had undertaken. It had not – people said – learned the real being of God, of Nature and Mind. It had not learned what the truth was. What it had done was to overthrow religion and the state. It became urgent therefore to justify thought, with reference to the results it had produced: and it is this examination into the nature of thought and this justification which in recent times has constituted one of the main problems of philosophy.

Thought regarded as an activity

§20

If we take our *prima facie* impression of thought, we find on examination first **(a)** that, in its usual subjective acceptation, thought is one out of many activities or faculties of the mind, coordinate with such others as sensation, perception, imagination, desire, volition, and the like. The product of this activity, the form or character peculiar to thought, is the UNIVERSAL, or, in general, the abstract. Thought, regarded as an *activity*, may be accordingly described as the *active* universal, and, since the deed, its product, is the universal once more, may be called the self-actualising universal. Thought conceived as a *subject* (agent) is a thinker, and the subject existing as a thinker is simply denoted by the term 'I'.

The distinction between Sense, Conception, and Thought.

The propositions giving an account of thought in this and the following sections are not offered as assertions or opinions of mine on the matter. But in these preliminary chapters any deduction or proof would be impossible, and the statements may be taken as matters in evidence. In other words, every man, when he thinks and considers his thoughts, will discover by the experience of his consciousness that they possess the character of universality as well as the other aspects of thought to be afterwards enumerated. We assume of course that his powers of attention and abstraction have undergone a previous training, enabling him to observe correctly the evidence of his consciousness and his conceptions.

This introductory exposition has already alluded to the distinction between Sense, Conception, and Thought. As the distinction is of capital importance for understanding the nature and kinds of knowledge, it will help to explain matters if we here call attention to it. For the explanation of *Sense*, the readiest method certainly is to refer to its external source – the organs of sense. But to name the organ does not help much to explain what is apprehended by it. The real distinction between sense and thought lies in this – that the essential feature of the sensible is individuality, and as the individual (which, reduced to its simplest terms, is the atom) is also a member of a group, sensible existence presents a number of mutually exclusive units – of units, to speak in more definite and abstract formulae, which exist side by side with, and after, one another. *Conception* or picture-thinking works with materials from the same sensuous source. But these materials when *conceived* are expressly characterised as in me and therefore mine; and secondly, as universal, or simple, because only referred to self. Nor is sense the only source of materialised conception. There are conceptions constituted by materials emanating from self-conscious thought, such as those of law, morality, religion, and even of thought itself, and it requires some effort to detect wherein lies the difference between such conceptions and thoughts having the same import. For it is a thought of which such

conception is the vehicle, and there is no want of the form of universality, without which no content could be in me, or be a conception at all. Yet here also the peculiarity of conception is, generally speaking, to be sought in the individualism or isolation of its contents. True it is that, for example, law and legal provisions do not exist in a sensible space, mutually excluding one another. Nor as regards time, though they appear to some extent in succession, are their contents themselves conceived as affected by time, or as transient and changeable in it. The fault in conception lies deeper. These ideas, though implicitly possessing the organic unity of mind, stand isolated here and there on the broad ground of conception, with its inward and abstract generality. Thus cut adrift, each is simple, unrelated: Right, Duty, God. Conception in these circumstances either rests satisfied with declaring that Right is Right, God is God; or in a higher grade of culture it proceeds to enunciate the attributes: as, for instance, God is the Creator of the world, omniscient, almighty, etc. In this way several isolated, simple predicates are strung together: but in spite of the link supplied by their subject, the predicates never get beyond mere contiguity. In this point Conception coincides with Understanding: the only distinction being that the latter introduces relations of universal and particular, of cause and effect, etc., and in this way supplies a necessary connection to the isolated ideas of conception; which last has left them side by side in its vague mental spaces, connected only by a bare 'and'.

The difference between conception and thought is of special importance: because philosophy may be said to do nothing but transform conceptions into thoughts – though it works the further transformation of a mere thought into a notion. Sensible existence has been characterized by the attributes of individuality and mutual exclusion of the members. It is well to remember that these very attributes of sense are thoughts and general terms. It will be shown in the Logic that thought (and the universal) is not a mere opposite of sense: it lets nothing escape it, but, outflanking its other, is at once that other and itself. Now language is the work of thought: and hence all that is expressed in language must be universal. What I only mean or suppose is mine: it belongs to me – this particular individual. But language expresses nothing but universality; and so I cannot say what I merely *mean*. And the unutterable – feeling or sensation – far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant and untrue. If I say 'the individual', 'this individual', 'here', 'now', all these are universal terms. Everything and anything is an individual, a 'this', and if it be sensible, is here and now. Similarly when I say 'I', I *mean* my single self to the exclusion of all others; but what I *say*, viz. 'I', is just every 'I', which in like manner excludes all others from itself. In an awkward expression which Kant used, he said that I *accompany* all my conceptions – sensations, too, desires, actions, etc. 'I' is in essence and act the universal: and such partnership is a form, though an external form, of universality. All other men have it in common with me to be 'I'; just as it is common to all my sensations and conceptions to be mine. But 'I', in the abstract, as such, is the mere act of self-concentration or self-relation, in which we make abstraction from all conception and feeling, from every state of mind and every peculiarity of nature, talent, and experience. To this extent, 'I' is the existence of a wholly *abstract* universality, a principle of abstract freedom. Hence thought, viewed as a subject, is what is expressed by the word 'I'; and since I am at the same time in all my sensations, conceptions, and states of consciousness, thought is everywhere present, and is a category that runs through all these modifications.

§20n

Our first impression when we use the term ‘thought’ is of a subjective activity – one among many similar faculties, such as memory, imagination, and will. Were thought merely an activity of the subject-mind and treated under that aspect by Logic, Logic would resemble the other sciences in possessing a well-marked object. It might in that case seem arbitrary to devote a special science to thought, while will, imagination, and the rest were denied the same privilege. The selection of one faculty however might even in this view be very well grounded on a certain authority acknowledged to belong to thought, and on its claim to be regarded as the true nature of man, in which consists his distinction from the brutes. Nor is it unimportant to study thought even as a subjective energy. A detailed analysis of its nature would exhibit rules and laws, a knowledge of which is derived from experience. A treatment of the laws of thought, from this point of view, used once to form the body of logical science. Of that science Aristotle was the founder. He succeeded in assigning to thought what properly belongs to it. Our thought is extremely concrete; but in its composite contents we must distinguish the part that properly belongs to thought, or to the abstract mode of its action. A subtle spiritual bond, consisting in the agency of thought, is what gives unity to all these contents, and it was this bond, the form as form, that Aristotle noted and described. Up to the present day, the logic of Aristotle continues to be the received system. It has indeed been spun out to greater length, especially by the labours of the medieval Schoolmen who, without making any material additions, merely refined in details. The moderns also have left their mark upon this logic, partly by omitting many points of logical doctrine due to Aristotle and the Schoolmen, and partly by foisting in a quantity of psychological matter. The purport of the science is to become acquainted with the procedure of finite thought: and, if it is adapted to its presupposed object, the science is entitled to be styled correct. The study of this formal logic undoubtedly has its uses. It sharpens the wits, as the phrase goes, and teaches us to collect our thoughts and to abstract – whereas in common consciousness we have to deal with sensuous conceptions which cross and perplex one another. Abstraction moreover implies the concentration of the mind on a single point, and thus induces the habit of attending to our inward selves. An acquaintance with the forms of finite thought may be made a means of training the mind for the empirical sciences, since their method is regulated by these forms: and in this sense logic has been designated Instrumental. It is true, we may be still more liberal, and say: Logic is to be studied not for its utility, but for its own sake; the superexcellent is not to be sought for the sake of mere utility. In one sense this is quite correct; but it may be replied that the superexcellent is also the most useful, because it is the all-sustaining principle which, having a subsistence of its own, may therefore serve as the vehicle of special ends which it furthers and secures. And thus, special ends, though they have no right to be set first, are still fostered by the presence of the highest good. Religion, for instance, has an absolute value of its own; yet at the same time other ends flourish and succeed in its train. As Christ says: ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.’ Particular ends can be attained only in the attainment of what absolutely is and exists in its own right.

Thought in its bearings upon objects

§ 21

(b) Thought was described as active. We now, in the second place, consider this action in its bearings upon objects, or as reflection upon something. In this case the universal or product of its operation contains the value of the thing – is the essential, inward, and true. In § 5 the old belief was quoted that the reality in object, circumstance, or event, the intrinsic worth or essence, the thing on which everything depends, is not a self-evident datum of consciousness, or coincident with the first appearance and impression of the object; that, on the contrary, Reflection is required in order to discover the real constitution of the object – and that by such reflection it will be ascertained.

Universals apprehended in Reflection

§ 21n

To reflect is a lesson which even the child has to learn. One of his first lessons is to join adjectives with substantives. This obliges him to attend and distinguish: he has to remember a rule and apply it to the particular case. This rule is nothing but a universal: and the child must see that the particular adapts itself to this universal. In life, again, we have ends to attain. And with regard to these we ponder which is the best way to secure them. The end here represents the universal or governing principle and we have means and instruments whose action we regulate in conformity to the end. In the same way reflection is active in questions of conduct. To reflect here means to recollect the right, the duty – the universal which serves as a fixed rule to guide our behaviour in the given case. Our particular act must imply and recognise the universal law. We find the same thing exhibited in our study of natural phenomena. For instance, we observe thunder and lightning. The phenomenon is a familiar one, and we often perceive it. But man is not content with a bare acquaintance, or with the fact as it appears to the senses; he would like to get behind the surface, to know what it is, and to comprehend it. This leads him to reflect: he seeks to find out the cause as something distinct from the mere phenomenon: he tries to know the inside in its distinction from the outside. Hence the phenomenon becomes double, it splits into inside and outside, into force and its manifestation, into cause and effect. Once more we find the inside or the force identified with the universal and permanent: not this or that flash of lightning, this or that plant – but that which continues the same in them all. The sensible appearance is individual and evanescent: the permanent in it is discovered by reflection.

Nature shows us a countless number of individual forms and phenomena. Into this variety we feel a need of introducing unity: we compare, consequently, and try to find the universal of each single case. Individuals are born and perish: the species abides and recurs in them all: and its existence is only visible to reflection. Under the same head fall such laws as those regulating the motion of the heavenly bodies. To-day we see the stars here, and tomorrow there; and our mind finds something incongruous in this chaos – something in which it can put no faith, because it believes in order and in a simple, constant, and universal law. Inspired by this belief, the mind has directed its reflection towards the phenomena, and learnt their laws. In other words, it has established the movement of the heavenly bodies to be in accordance with a universal law from which every change of position may be known and predicted. The case is the same with the influences which make themselves felt in the infinite complexity of human conduct. There, too, man has the belief in the sway of a general principle. From all these examples it may be gathered how reflection is always seeking for something fixed and permanent, definite in itself and governing the particulars. This universal which cannot be apprehended by the senses counts as the true and essential. Thus, duties and rights are all-important in the matter of conduct; and an action is true when it conforms to those universal formulae.

In thus characterising the universal, we become aware of its antithesis to something else. This something else is the merely immediate, outward and individual, as opposed to the mediate, inward, and universal. The universal does not exist externally to the outward eye as a universal. The kind as kind cannot be perceived: the laws of the celestial motions are not written on the sky. The universal is neither seen nor heard, its existence is only for the mind. Religion leads us to a universal, which embraces all else within itself, to an Absolute by which all else is brought into being: and this Absolute is an object not of the senses but of the mind and of thought.

The Subject-Object Relation

§ 22

(c) By the act of reflection something is *altered* in the way in which the fact was originally presented in sensation, perception, or conception. Thus, as it appears, an alteration must be interposed before the true nature of the object can be discovered.

What reflection elicits is a product of our thought. Solon, for instance, produced out of his head the laws he gave to the Athenians. This is half of the truth: but we must not on that account forget that the universal (in Solon's case, the laws) is the very reverse of merely subjective, or fail to note that it is the essential, true, and objective being of things. To discover the truth in things, mere attention is not enough; we must call in the action of our own faculties to transform what is immediately

before us. Now, at first sight, this seems an inversion of the natural order, calculated to thwart the very purpose on which knowledge is bent. But the method is not so irrational as it seems. It has been the conviction of every age that the only way of reaching the permanent substratum was to transmute the given phenomenon by means of reflection. In modern times a doubt has for the first time been raised on this point in connection with the difference alleged to exist between the products of our thought and the things in their own nature. This real nature of things, it is said, is very different from what we make out of them.

Kantian Scepticism

The divorce between thought and thing is mainly the work of the Critical Philosophy, and runs counter to the conviction of all previous ages, that their agreement was a matter of course. The antithesis between them is the hinge on which modern philosophy turns. Meanwhile the natural belief of men gives the lie to it. In common life we reflect, without particularly reminding ourselves that this is the process of arriving at the truth, and we think without hesitation, and in the firm belief that thought coincides with thing. And this belief is of the greatest importance. It marks the diseased state of the age when we see it adopt the despairing creed that our knowledge is only subjective, and that beyond this subjective we cannot go. Whereas, rightly understood, truth is objective, and ought so to regulate the conviction of every one, that the conviction of the individual is stamped as wrong when it does not agree with this rule. Modern views, on the contrary, put great value on the mere fact of conviction, and hold that to be convinced is good for its own sake, whatever be the burden of our conviction – there being no standard by which we can measure its truth.

We said above that, according to the old belief, it was the characteristic right of the mind to know the truth. If this be so, it also implies that everything we know both of outward and inward nature, in one word, the objective world, is in its own self the same as it is in thought, and that to think is to bring out the truth of our object, be it what it may. The business of philosophy is only to bring into explicit consciousness what the world in all ages has believed about thought. Philosophy therefore advances nothing new; and our present discussion has led us to a conclusion which agrees with the natural belief of mankind.

“Think for Yourself”

§ 23

(d) The real nature of the object is brought to light in reflection; but it is no less true that this exertion of thought is *my* act. If this be so, the real nature is a *product* of *my* mind, in its character of thinking subject – generated by me my simple universality, self-collected and removed from extraneous influences – in one word, in my Freedom.

‘Think for yourself’ is a phrase which people often use as if it had some special significance. The fact is, no man can think for another, any more than he can eat or drink for him and the expression is a pleonasm. To think is in fact *ipso facto* to be free, for thought as the action of the universal is an abstract relating of self to self, where, being at home with ourselves, and as regards our subjectivity utterly blank, our consciousness is, in the matter of its contents, only in the fact and its characteristics. If this be admitted, and if we apply the term humility or modesty to an attitude where our subjectivity is not allowed to interfere by act or quality, it is easy to appreciate the question touching the humility or modesty and pride of philosophy. For in point of contents, thought is only true in proportion as it sinks itself in the facts; and in point of form it is no private or particular state or act of the subject, but rather that attitude of consciousness where the abstract self, freed from all the special limitations to which its ordinary states or qualities are liable, restricts itself to that universal action in which it is identical with all individuals. In these circumstances philosophy may be acquitted of the charge of pride. And when Aristotle summons the mind to rise to the dignity of that attitude, the dignity

he seeks is won by letting slip all our individual opinions and prejudices, and submitting to the sway of the fact.

The Objectivity of Thought

§ 24

With these explanations and qualifications, thoughts may be termed Objective Thoughts – among which are also to be included the forms which are more especially discussed in the common logic, where they are usually treated as forms of conscious thought only. *Logic therefore coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and held in thoughts* – thoughts accredited able to express the essential reality of things.

An exposition of the relation in which such forms as notion, judgment, and syllogism stand to others, such as causality, is a matter for the science itself. But this much is evident beforehand. If thought tries to form a notion of things, this notion (as well as its proximate phases, the judgment and syllogism) cannot be composed of articles and relations which are alien and irrelevant to the things. Reflection, it was said above, conducts to the universal of things: which universal is itself one of the constituent factors of a notion. To say that Reason or Understanding is in the world, is equivalent in its import to the phrase ‘Objective Thought’. The latter phrase however has the inconvenience that thought is usually confined to express what belongs to the mind or consciousness only, while objective is a term applied, at least primarily, only to the non-mental.

§24n

(1) To speak of thought or objective thought as the heart and soul of the world, may seem to be ascribing consciousness to the things of nature. We feel a certain repugnance against making thought the inward function of things, especially as we speak of thought as marking the divergence of man from nature. It would be necessary, therefore, if we use the term thought at all, to speak of nature as the system of unconscious thought, or, to use Schelling’s expression, a petrified intelligence. And in order to prevent misconception, ‘thought-form’ or ‘thought-type’ should be substituted for the ambiguous term thought.

From what has been said the principles of logic are to be sought in a system of thought-types or fundamental categories, in which the opposition between subjective and objective, in its usual sense vanishes. The signification thus attached to thought and its characteristic forms may be illustrated by the ancient saying that ‘ $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ governs the world’, or by our own phrase that ‘Reason is in the world’; which means that Reason is the soul of the world it inhabits, its immanent principle, its most proper and inward nature, its universal. Another illustration is offered by the circumstance that in speaking of some definite animal we say it is (an) animal. Now, the animal, qua animal, cannot be shown; nothing can be pointed out excepting some special animal. Animal, qua animal, does not exist: it is merely the universal nature of the individual animals, while each existing animal is a more concretely defined and particularised thing. But to be an animal – the law of kind which is the universal in this case – is the property of the particular animal, and constitutes its definite essence. Take away from the dog its animality, and it becomes impossible to say what it is. All things have a permanent inward nature, as well as an outward existence. They live and die, arise and pass away; but their essential and universal part is the kind; and this means much more than something common to them all.

If thought is the constitutive substance of external things, it is also the universal substance of what is spiritual. In all human perception thought is present; so too thought is the universal in all the acts of conception and recollection; in short, in every mental activity, in willing, wishing, and the like. All these faculties are only further specialisations of thought. When it is presented in this light, thought has a different part to play from what it has if we speak of a faculty of thought, one among a crowd of other faculties, such as perception, conception, and will, with which it stands on the same level. When it is seen to be the true universal of all that nature and mind contain, it extends

its scope far beyond all these, and becomes the basis of everything. From this view of thought, in its objective meaning as *νοῦς*, we may next pass to consider the subjective sense of the term. We say first, Man is a being that thinks; but we also say at the same time, Man is a being that perceives and wills. Man is a thinker, and is universal; but he is a thinker only because he feels his own universality. The animal too is by implication universal, but the universal is not consciously felt by it to be universal: it feels only the individual. The animal sees a singular object, for instance, its food, or a man. For the animal all this never goes beyond an individual thing. Similarly, sensation has to do with nothing but singulars, such as this pain or this sweet taste. Nature does not bring its *νοῦς* into consciousness: it is man who first makes himself double so as to be a universal for a universal. This first happens when man knows that he is 'I'. By the term 'I' I mean myself, a single and altogether determinate person. And yet I really utter nothing peculiar to myself, for every one else is an 'I' or 'Ego', and when I call myself 'I', though I indubitably mean the single person myself, I express a thorough universal. 'I', therefore, is mere being-for-self, in which everything peculiar or marked is renounced and buried out of sight; it is as it were the ultimate and unanalysable point of consciousness. We may say 'I' and thought are the same, or, more definitely, 'I' is thought as a thinker. What I have in my consciousness is for me. 'I' is the vacuum or receptacle for anything and everything: for which everything is and which stores up everything in itself. Every man is a whole world of conceptions, that lie buried in the night of the 'Ego'. It follows that the 'Ego' is the universal in which we leave aside all that is particular, and in which at the same time all the particulars have a latent existence. In other words, it is not a mere universality and nothing more, but the universality which includes in it everything. Commonly we use the word 'I' without attaching much importance to it, nor is it an object of study except to philosophical analysis. In the 'Ego', we have thought before us in its utter purity. While the brute cannot say 'I', man can, because it is his nature to think. Now in the 'Ego' there are a variety of contents, derived both from within and from without, and according to the nature of these contents our state may be described as perception, or conception, or reminiscence. But in all of them the 'I' is found: or in them all thought is present. Man, therefore, is always thinking, even in his perceptions: if he observes anything, he always observes it as a universal, fixes on a single point which he places in relief, thus withdrawing his attention from other points, and takes it as abstract and universal, even if the universality be only in form.

In the case of our ordinary conceptions, two things may happen. Either the contents are moulded by thought, but not the form; or, the form belongs to thought and not the contents. In using such terms, for instance, as anger, rose, hope, I am speaking of things which I have learnt in the way of sensation, but I express these contents in a universal mode, that is, in the form of thought. I have left out much that is particular and given the contents in their generality: but still the contents remain sense-derived. On the other hand, when I represent God, the content is undeniably a product of pure thought, but the form still retains the sensuous limitations which it has as I find it immediately present in myself. In these generalised images the content is not merely and simply sensible, as it is in a visual inspection; but either the content is sensuous and the form appertains to thought, or vice versa. In the first case the material is given to us, and our thought supplies the form: in the second case the content which has its source in thought is by means of the form turned into a something given, which accordingly reaches the mind from without.

(2) Logic is the study of thought pure and simple, or of the pure thought-forms. In the ordinary sense of the term, by thought we generally represent to ourselves something more than simple and unmixed thought; we mean some thought, the material of which is from experience. Whereas in logic a thought is understood to include nothing else but what depends on thinking and what thinking has brought into existence. It is in these circumstances that thoughts are pure thoughts. The mind is then in its own home-element and therefore free; for freedom means that the other thing with which you deal is a second self – so that you never leave your own ground but give the law to yourself. In the impulses or appetites the beginning is from something else, from something which we feel to be external. In this case then we speak of dependence. For freedom it is necessary that we should feel no presence of something else which is not ourselves. The natural man, whose motions follow the rule only of his appetites, is not his own master. Be he as self-willed as he may, the constituents of his will and opinion are not his own, and his freedom is merely formal. But when we think, we renounce our selfish and particular being, sink ourselves in the thing, allow thought to follow its own course, and if we add anything of our own, we think ill.

If in pursuance of the foregoing remarks we consider Logic to be the system of the pure types of thought, we find that the other philosophical sciences, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Mind, take the place, as it were, of an Applied Logic, and that Logic is the soul which animates them both. Their problem in that case is only to recognise the logical forms under the shapes they assume in Nature and Mind – shapes which are only a particular mode of expression for the forms of pure thought. If for instance we take the syllogism (not as it was understood in the old formal logic, but as its real value), we shall find it gives expression to the law that the particular is the middle term which fuses together the extremes of the universal and the singular.

The syllogistic form is a universal form of all things. Everything that exists is a particular, which couples together the universal and the singular. But Nature is weak and fails to exhibit the logical forms in their purity. Such a feeble exemplification of the syllogism may be seen in the magnet. In the middle or point of indifference of a magnet, its two poles, however they may be distinguished, are brought into one. Physics also teaches us to see the universal or essence in Nature: and the only difference between it and the Philosophy of Nature is that the latter brings before our mind the adequate forms of the notion in the physical world.

It will now be understood that Logic is the all-animating spirit of all the sciences, and its categories the spiritual hierarchy. They are the heart and centre of things: and yet at the same time they are always on our lips, and, apparently at least, perfectly familiar objects. But things thus familiar are usually the greatest strangers. Being, for example, is a category of pure thought: but to make 'is' an object of investigation never occurs to us. Common fancy puts the Absolute far away in a world beyond. The Absolute is rather directly before us, so present that so long as we think, we must, though without express consciousness of it, always carry it with us and always use it. Language is the main depository of these types of thought; and one use of the grammatical instruction which children receive is unconsciously to turn their attention to distinctions of thought.

Logic is usually said to be concerned with forms only and to derive the material for them from elsewhere. But this 'only', which assumes that the logical thoughts are nothing in comparison with the rest of the contents, is not the word to use about forms which are the absolutely real ground of everything. Everything else rather is an 'only' compared with these thoughts. To make such abstract forms a problem presupposes in the inquirer a higher level of culture than ordinary; and to study them in themselves and for their own sake signifies in addition that these thought-types must be deduced out of thought itself, and their truth or reality examined by the light of their own laws. We do not assume them as data from without, and then define them or exhibit their value and authority by comparing them with the shape they take in our minds. If we thus acted, we should proceed from observation and experience, and should, for instance, say we habitually employ the term 'force' in such a case, and such a meaning. A definition like that would be called correct, if it agreed with the conception of its object present in our ordinary state of mind. The defect of this empirical method is that a notion is not defined as it is in and for itself, but in terms of something assumed, which is then used as a criterion and standard of correctness. No such test need be applied: we have merely to let the thought-forms follow the impulse of their own organic life.

To ask if a category is true or not, must sound strange to the ordinary mind: for a category apparently becomes true only when it is applied to a given object, and apart from this application it would seem meaningless to inquire into the truth. But this is the very question on which every thing turns. We must however in the first place understand clearly what we mean by Truth. In common life truth means the agreement of an object with our conception of it. We thus presuppose an object to which our conception must conform. In the philosophical sense of the word, on the other hand, truth may be described, in general abstract terms, as the agreement of a thought-content with itself. This meaning is quite different from the one given above. At the same time the deeper and philosophical meaning of truth can be partially traced even in the ordinary usage of language. Thus we speak of a true friend; by which we mean a friend whose manner of conduct accords with the notion of friendship. In the same way we speak of a true work of Art. Untrue in this sense means the same as bad, or self-discordant. In this sense a bad state is an untrue state; and evil and untruth may be said to consist in the contradiction subsisting between the function or notion and the existence of the object. Of such a bad object we may form a correct representation, but the import of such representation is inherently false. Of these correctnesses, which are at the same time untruths, we may have many in our heads. God alone is the thorough harmony of notion

and reality. All finite things involve an untruth: they have a notion and an existence, but their existence does not meet the requirements of the notion. For this reason they must perish, and then the incompatibility between their notion and their existence becomes manifest. It is in the kind that the individual animal has its notion; and the kind liberates itself from this individuality by death.

The study of truth, or, as it is here explained to mean, consistency, constitutes the proper problem of logic. In our everyday mind we are never troubled with questions about the truth of the forms of thought. We may also express the problem of logic by saying that it examines the forms of thought touching their capability to hold truth. And the question comes to this: What are the forms of the infinite, and what are the forms of the finite? Usually no suspicion attaches to the finite forms of thought; they are allowed to pass unquestioned. But it is from conforming to finite categories in thought and action that all deception originates.

(3) Truth may be ascertained by several methods, each of which however is no more than a form. Experience is the first of these methods. But the method is only a form: it has no intrinsic value of its own. For in experience everything depends upon the mind we bring to bear upon actuality. A great mind is great in its experience; and in the motley play of phenomena at once perceives the point of real significance. The idea is present, in actual shape, not something, as it were, over the hill and far away. The genius of a Goethe, for example, looking into nature or history, has great experiences, catches sight of the living principle, and gives expression to it.

A second method of apprehending the truth is Reflection, which defines it by intellectual relations of condition and conditioned. But in these two modes the absolute truth has not yet found its appropriate form. The most perfect method of knowledge proceeds in the pure form of thought: and here the attitude of man is one of entire freedom.

That the form of thought is the perfect form, and that it presents the truth as it intrinsically and actually is, is the general dogma of all philosophy. To give a proof of the dogma there is, in the first instance, nothing to do but show that these other forms of knowledge are finite. The grand Scepticism of antiquity accomplished this task when it exhibited the contradictions contained in every one of these forms. That Scepticism indeed went further: but when it ventured to assail the forms of reason, it began by insinuating under them something finite upon which it might fasten. All the forms of finite thought will make their appearance in the course of logical development, the order in which they present themselves being determined by necessary laws. Here in the introduction they could only be unscientifically assumed as something given. In the theory of logic itself these forms will be exhibited, not only on their negative, but also on their positive side.

When we compare the different forms of ascertaining truth with one another, the first of them, immediate knowledge, may perhaps seem the finest, noblest, and most appropriate. It includes everything which the moralists term innocence as well as religious feeling, simple trust, love, fidelity, and natural faith. The two other forms, first reflective, and secondly philosophical cognition, must leave that unsought natural harmony behind. And so far as they have this in common, the methods which claim to apprehend the truth by thought may naturally be regarded as part and parcel of the pride which leads man to trust to his own powers for a knowledge of the truth. Such a position involves a thorough-going disruption, and, viewed in that light, might be regarded as the source of all evil and wickedness – the original transgression. Apparently therefore the only way of being reconciled and restored to peace is to surrender all claims to think or know.

This lapse from natural unity has not escaped notice, and nations from the earliest times have asked the meaning of the wonderful division of the spirit against itself. No such inward disunion is found in nature: natural things do nothing wicked.

The tales and allegories of religion

This lapse from natural unity has not escaped notice, and nations from the earliest times have asked the meaning of the wonderful division of the spirit against itself. No such inward disunion is found in nature: natural things do nothing wicked.

The Mosaic legend of the Fall of Man has preserved an ancient picture representing the origin and consequences of this disunion. The incidents of the legend form the basis of an essential article of the creed, the doctrine of original sin in man and his consequent need of succour. It may be well at the commencement of logic to examine the story which treats of the origin and the bearings of the very knowledge which logic has to discuss. For, though philosophy must not allow herself to be overawed by religion, or accept the position of existence on sufferance, she cannot afford to

neglect these popular conceptions. The tales and allegories of religion, which have enjoyed for thousands of years the veneration of nations, are not to be set aside as antiquated even now.

Upon a closer inspection of the story of the Fall we find, as was already said, that it exemplifies the universal bearings of knowledge upon the spiritual life. In its instinctive and natural stage, spiritual life wears the garb of innocence and confiding simplicity; but the very essence of spirit implies the absorption of this immediate condition in something higher. The spiritual is distinguished from the natural, and more especially from the animal, life, in the circumstance that it does not continue a mere stream of tendency, but sunders itself to self-realisation. But this position of severed life has in its turn to be suppressed, and the spirit has by its own act to win its way to concord again. The final concord then is spiritual; that is, the principle of restoration is found in thought, and thought only. The hand that inflicts the wound is also the hand which heals it.

We are told in our story that Adam and Eve, the first human beings, the types of humanity, were placed in a garden, where grew a tree of life and a tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God, it is said, had forbidden them to eat of the fruit of this latter tree: of the tree of life for the present nothing further is said. These words evidently assume that man is not intended to seek knowledge, and ought to remain in the state of innocence. Other meditative races, it may be remarked, have held the same belief that the primitive state of mankind was one of innocence and harmony. Now all this is to a certain extent correct. The disunion that appears throughout humanity is not a condition to rest in. But it is a mistake to regard the natural and immediate harmony as the right state. The mind is not mere instinct: on the contrary, it essentially involves the tendency to reasoning and meditation. Childlike innocence no doubt has in it something fascinating and attractive: but only because it reminds us of what the spirit must win for itself. The harmoniousness of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature: the second harmony must spring from the labour and culture of the spirit. And so the words of Christ, 'Except ye become as little children', etc., are very far from telling us that we must always remain children.

Again, we find in the narrative of Moses that the occasion which led man to leave his natural unity is attributed to solicitation from without. The serpent was the tempter. But the truth is, that the step into opposition, the awakening of consciousness, follows from the very nature of man; and the same history repeats itself in every son of Adam. The serpent represents likeness to God as consisting in the knowledge of good and evil: and it is just this knowledge in which man participates when he breaks with the unity of his instinctive being and eats of the forbidden fruit. The first reflection of awakened consciousness in men told them that they were naked. This is a naive and profound trait. For the sense of shame bears evidence to the separation of man from his natural and sensuous life. The beasts never get so far as this separation, and they feel no shame. And it is in the human feeling of shame that we are to seek the spiritual and moral origin of dress, compared with which the merely physical need is a secondary matter.

Next comes the Curse, as it is called, which God pronounced upon man. The prominent point in that curse turns chiefly on the contrast between man and nature. Man must work in the sweat of his brow: and woman bring forth in sorrow. As to work, if it is the result of the disunion, it is also the victory over it. The beasts have nothing more to do but to pick up the materials required to satisfy their wants: man on the contrary can only satisfy his wants by himself producing and transforming the necessary means. Thus even in these outside things man is dealing with himself.

The story does not close with the expulsion from Paradise. We are further told, God said, 'Behold Adam is become as one of us, to know good and evil.' Knowledge is now spoken of as divine, and not, as before, as something wrong and forbidden. Such words contain a confutation of the idle talk that philosophy pertains only to the finitude of the mind. Philosophy is knowledge, and it is through knowledge that man first realises his original vocation, to be the image of God. When the record adds that God drove men out of the garden of Eden to prevent their eating of the tree of life, it only means that on his natural side certainly man is finite and mortal, but in knowledge infinite.

We all know the theological dogma that man's nature is evil, tainted with what is called Original Sin. Now while we accept the dogma, we must give up the setting of incident which represents original sin as consequent upon an accidental act of the first man. For the very notion of spirit is enough to show that man is evil by nature, and it is an error to imagine that he could ever be otherwise. To such extent as man is and acts like a creature of nature, his whole behaviour is what it ought not to be. For the spirit it is a duty to be free, and to realise itself by its own act. Nature is

for man only the starting-point which he has to transform. The theological doctrine of original sin is a profound truth; but modern enlightenment prefers to believe that man is naturally good, and that he acts right so long as he continues true to nature.

The hour when man leaves the path of mere natural being marks the difference between him, a self-conscious agent, and the natural world. But this schism, though it forms a necessary element in the very notion of spirit, is not the final goal of man. It is to this state of inward breach that the whole finite action of thought and will belongs. In that finite sphere man pursues ends of his own and draws from himself the material of his conduct. While he pursues these aims to the uttermost, while his knowledge and his will seek himself, his own narrow self apart from the universal, he is evil; and his evil is to be subjective.

We seem at first to have a double evil here: but both are really the same. Man in so far as he is spirit is not the creature of nature: and when he behaves as such, and follows the cravings of appetite, he wills to be so. The natural wickedness of man is therefore unlike the natural life of animals. A mere natural life may be more exactly defined by saying that the natural man as such is an individual: for nature in every part is in the bonds of individualism. Thus when man wills to be a creature of nature, he wills in the same degree to be an individual simply. Yet against such impulsive and appetitive action, due to the individualism of nature, there also steps in the law or general principle. This law may either be an external force, or have the form of divine authority. So long as he continues in his natural state, man is in bondage to the law. It is true that among the instincts and affections of man, there are social or benevolent inclinations, love, sympathy, and others, reaching beyond his selfish isolation. But so long as these tendencies are instinctive, their virtual universality of scope and purport is vitiated by the subjective form which always allows free play to self-seeking and random action.

The concrete formations of consciousness

§ 25

The term 'Objective Thoughts' indicates the truth – the truth which is to be the absolute *object* of philosophy, and not merely the goal at which it aims. But the very expression cannot fail to suggest an opposition, to characterise and appreciate which is the main motive of the philosophical attitude of the present time, and which forms the real problem of the question about truth and our means of ascertaining it. If the thought-forms are vitiated by a fixed antithesis, i.e. if they are only of a finite character, they are unsuitable for the self-centred universe of truth, and truth can find no adequate receptacle in thought. Such thought, which can produce only limited and partial categories and proceed by their means, is what in the stricter sense of the word is termed Understanding. The finitude, further, of these categories lies in two points. Firstly, they are only subjective, and the antithesis of an objective permanently clings to them. Secondly, they are always of restricted content, and so persist in antithesis to one another and still more to the Absolute. In order more fully to explain the position and import here attributed to logic, the attitudes in which thought is supposed to stand to objectivity will next be examined by way of further introduction.

In my *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, which on that account was at its publication described as the first part of the System of Philosophy, the method adopted was to begin with the first and simplest phase of mind, immediate consciousness, and to show how that stage gradually of necessity worked onward to the philosophical point of view, the necessity of that view being proved by the process. But in these circumstances it was impossible to restrict the quest to the mere form of consciousness. For the stage of philosophical knowledge is the richest in material and organisation, and therefore, as it came before us in the shape of a result, it presupposed the existence of the concrete formations of consciousness, such as individual and social morality, art and religion. In the development of consciousness, which at first sight appears limited to the point of

form merely, there is thus at the same time included the development of the matter or of the objects discussed in the special branches of philosophy. But the latter process must, so to speak, go on behind consciousness, since those facts are the essential nucleus which is raised into consciousness. The exposition accordingly is rendered more intricate, because so much that properly belongs to the concrete branches is prematurely dragged into the introduction. The survey which follows in the present work has even more the inconvenience of being only historical and inferential in its method. But it tries especially to show how the questions men have proposed, outside the school, on the nature of Knowledge, Faith, and the like – questions which they imagine to have no connection with abstract thoughts – are really reducible to the simple categories, which first get cleared up in Logic.

III. First Attitude of Thought to Objectivity

§26

The first of these attitudes of thought is seen in the method which has no doubts and no sense of the contradiction in thought, or of the hostility of thought against itself. It entertains an unquestioning belief that reflection is the means of ascertaining the truth, and of bringing the objects before the mind as they really are. And in this belief it advances straight upon its objects, takes the materials furnished by sense and perception, and reproduces them from itself as facts of thought; and then, believing this result to be the truth, the method is content. Philosophy in its earliest stages, all the sciences, and even the daily action and movement of consciousness, live in this faith.

§ 27

This method of thought has never become aware of the antithesis of subjective and objective: and to that extent there is nothing to prevent its statements from possessing a genuinely philosophical and speculative character, though it is just as possible that they may never get beyond finite categories, or the stage where the antithesis is still unresolved. In the present introduction the main question for us is to observe this attitude of thought in its extreme form; and we shall accordingly first of all examine its second and inferior aspect as a philosophic system. One of the clearest instances of it, and one lying nearest to ourselves, may be found in the Metaphysic of the Past as it subsisted among us previous to the philosophy of Kant. It is however only in reference to the history of philosophy that this Metaphysic can be said to belong to the past: the thing is always and at all places to be found, as the view which the abstract understanding takes of the objects of reason. And it is in this point that the real and immediate good lies in a closer examination of its main scope and its *modus operandi*.

§ 28

This metaphysical system took the laws and forms of thought to be the fundamental laws and forms of things. It assumed that to think a thing was the means of finding its very self and nature: and to that extent it occupied higher ground than the Critical Philosophy which succeeded it. But in the first instance (1) *these terms of thought were cut off from their connection*, their solidarity; each was believed valid by itself and capable of serving as a predicate of the truth. It was the general assumption of this metaphysic that a knowledge of the Absolute was gained by assigning predicates to it. It neither inquired

what the terms of the understanding specially meant or what they were worth, nor did it test the method which characterises the Absolute by the assignment of predicates.

As an example of such predicates may be taken: Existence, in the proposition, 'God has existence'; Finitude or Infinity, as in the question, 'Is the world finite or infinite?'; Simple and Complex, in the proposition, 'The Soul is simple' or again, 'The thing is a unity, a whole', etc. Nobody asked whether such predicates had any intrinsic and independent truth, or if the propositional form could be a form of truth.

The Metaphysic of the past assumed, as unsophisticated belief always does, that thought apprehends the very self of things, and that things, to become what they truly are, require to be thought. For Nature and the human soul are a very Proteus in their perpetual transformations; and it soon occurs to the observer that the first crude impression of things is not their essential being. This is a point of view the very reverse of the result arrived at by the Critical Philosophy; a result, of which it may be said, that it bade man go and feed on mere husks and chaff.

We must look more closely into the procedure of that old metaphysic. In the first place it never went beyond the province of the analytic understanding. Without preliminary inquiry it adopted the abstract categories of thought and let them rank as predicates of truth. But in using the term thought we must not forget the difference between finite or discursive thinking and the thinking which is infinite and rational. The categories, as they meet us *prima facie* and in isolation, are finite forms. But truth is always infinite, and cannot be expressed or presented to consciousness in finite terms. The phrase *infinite thought* may excite surprise, if we adhere to the modern conception that thought is always limited. But it is, speaking rightly, the very essence of thought to be infinite. The nominal explanation of calling a thing finite is that it has an end, that it exists up to a certain point only, where it comes into contact with, and is limited by, its other. The finite therefore subsists in reference to its other, which is its negation and presents itself as its limit. Now thought is always in its own sphere its relations are with itself, and it is its own object. In having a thought for object, I am at home with myself. The thinking power, the 'I', is therefore infinite, because, when it thinks, it is in relation to an object which is itself. Generally speaking, an object means a something else, a negative confronting me. But in the case where thought thinks itself, it has an object which is at the same time no object: in other words, its objectivity is suppressed and transformed into an idea. Thought, as thought, therefore in its unmixed nature involves no limits; it is finite only when it keeps to limited categories, which it believes to be ultimate. Infinite or speculative thought, on the contrary, while it no less defines, does in the very act of limiting and defining make that defect vanish. And so infinity is not, as most frequently happens, to be conceived as an abstract away and away for ever and ever, but in the simple manner previously indicated.

The thinking of the old metaphysical system was finite. Its whole mode of action was regulated by categories, the limits of which it believed to be permanently fixed and not subject to any further negation. Thus, one of its questions was: Has God existence? The question supposes that existence is an altogether positive term, a sort of *ne plus ultra*. We shall see however at a later point that existence is by no means a merely positive term, but one which is too low for the Absolute Idea, and unworthy of God. A second question in these metaphysical systems was: Is the world finite or infinite? The very terms of the question assume that the finite is a permanent contradictory to the infinite: and one can easily see that, when they are so opposed, the infinite, which of course ought to be the whole, only appears as a single aspect and suffers restriction from the finite. But a restricted infinity is itself only a finite. In the same way it was asked whether the soul was simple or composite. Simpleness was, in other words, taken to be an ultimate characteristic, giving expression to a whole truth. Far from being so, simpleness is the expression of a half-truth, as one-sided and abstract as existence – a term of thought, which, as we shall hereafter see, is itself untrue and hence unable to hold truth. If the soul be viewed as merely and abstractly simple, it is characterised in an inadequate and finite way.

It was therefore the main question of the pre-Kantian metaphysic to discover whether predicates of the kind mentioned were to be ascribed to its objects. Now these predicates are after all only limited formulae of the understanding which, instead of expressing the truth, merely impose a limit. More than this, it should be noted that the chief feature of the method lay in 'assigning' or 'attributing' predicates to the object that was to be cognised, for example, to God. But attribution

is no more than an external reflection about the object: the predicates by which the object is to be determined are supplied from the resources of picture-thought, and are applied in a mechanical way. Whereas, if we are to have genuine cognition, the object must characterise its own self and not derive its predicates from without. Even supposing we follow the method of predicating, the mind cannot help feeling that predicates of this sort fail to exhaust the object. From the same point of view the Orientals are quite correct in calling God the many-named or the myriad-named One. One after another of these finite categories leaves the soul unsatisfied, and the Oriental sage is compelled unceasingly to seek for more and more of such predicates. In finite things it is no doubt the case that they have to be characterised through finite predicates: and with these things the understanding finds proper scope for its special action. Itself finite, it knows only the nature of the finite. Thus, when I call some action a theft, I have characterised the action in its essential facts; and such a knowledge is sufficient for the judge. Similarly, finite things stand to each other as cause and effect, force and exercise, and when they are apprehended in these categories, they are known in their finitude. But the objects of reason cannot be defined by these finite predicates. To try to do so was the defect of the old metaphysic.

§ 29

Predicates of this kind, taken individually, have but a limited range of meaning, and no one can fail to perceive how inadequate they are, and how far they fall below the fullness of detail which our imaginative thought gives, in the case, for example, of God, Mind, or Nature. Besides, though the fact of their being all predicates of one subject supplies them with a certain connection, their several meanings keep them apart: and consequently each is brought in as a stranger in relation to the others.

The first of these defects the Orientals sought to remedy, when, for example, they defined God by attributing to Him many names; but still they felt that the number of names would have had to be infinite.

§ 30

(2) In the second place, *the metaphysical systems adopted a wrong criterion*. Their objects were no doubt totalities which in their own proper selves belong to reason that is, to the organised and systematically developed universe of thought. But these totalities – God, the Soul, the World – were taken by the metaphysician as subjects made and ready, to form the basis for an application of the categories of the understanding. They were assumed from popular conception. Accordingly popular conception was the only canon for settling whether or not the predicates were suitable and sufficient.

§ 31

The common conceptions of God, the Soul, the World, may be supposed to afford thought a firm and fast footing. They do not really do so. Besides having a particular and subjective character clinging to them, and thus leaving room for great variety of interpretation, they themselves first of all require a firm and fast definition by thought. This may be seen in any of these propositions where the predicate, or in philosophy the category, is needed to indicate what the subject, or the conception we start with, is.

In such a sentence as ‘God is eternal’, we begin with the conception of God, not knowing as yet what he is: to tell us that, is the business of the predicate. In the principles of logic, accordingly, where the terms formulating the subject-matter are those of thought only, it is not merely superfluous to make these categories predicates to propositions in which God, or, still vaguer, the Absolute, is the subject, but it would also have the disadvantage of suggesting another canon than the nature of thought. Besides, the propositional form (and for proposition, it would be more correct to substitute judgment) is not suited to

express the concrete – and the true is always concrete – or the speculative. Every judgment is by its form one-sided and, to that extent, false.

This metaphysic was not free or objective thinking. Instead of letting the object freely and spontaneously expound its own characteristics, metaphysic presupposed it ready-made. If anyone wishes to know what free thought means, he must go to Greek philosophy: for Scholasticism, like these metaphysical systems, accepted its facts, and accepted them as a dogma from the authority of the Church. We moderns, too, by our whole upbringing, have been initiated into ideas which it is extremely difficult to overstep, on account of their far-reaching significance. But the ancient philosophers were in a different position. They were men who lived wholly in the perceptions of the senses, and who, after their rejection of mythology and its fancies, presupposed nothing but the heaven above and the earth around. In these material, non-metaphysical surroundings, thought is free and enjoys its own privacy – cleared of everything material and thoroughly at home. This feeling that we are all our own is characteristic of free thought – of that voyage into the open, where nothing is below us or above us, and we stand in solitude with ourselves alone.

§ 32

(3) In the third place, *this system of metaphysic turned into Dogmatism*. When our thoughts never ranges beyond narrow and rigid terms, we are forced to assume that of two opposite assertions, such as were the above propositions, the one must be true and the other false.

Dogmatism may be most simply described as the contrary of Scepticism. The ancient Sceptics gave the name of Dogmatism to every philosophy whatever holding a system of definite doctrine. In this large sense Scepticism may apply the name even to philosophy which is properly Speculative. But in the narrower sense, Dogmatism consists in the tenacity which draws a hard and fast line between certain terms and others opposite to them. We may see this clearly in the strict ‘either – or’: for instance, The world is either finite or infinite; but one of these two it must be. The contrary of this rigidity is the characteristic of all Speculative truth. There no such inadequate formulae are allowed, nor can they possibly exhaust it. These formulae Speculative truth holds in union as a totality, whereas Dogmatism invests them in their isolation with a title to fixity and truth.

It often happens in philosophy that the half-truth takes its place beside the whole truth and assumes on its own account the position of something permanent. But the fact is that the half-truth, instead of being a fixed or self-subsistent principle, is a mere element absolved and included in the whole. The metaphysic of understanding is dogmatic, because it maintains half-truths in their isolation: whereas the idealism of speculative philosophy carries out the principle of totality and shows that it can reach beyond the inadequate formularies of abstract thought. Thus idealism would say: The soul is neither finite only, nor infinite only; it is really the one just as much as the other, and in that way neither the one nor the other. In other words, such formularies in their isolation are inadmissible, and only come into account as formative elements in a larger notion. Such idealism we see even in the ordinary phases of consciousness. Thus we say of sensible things, that they are changeable: that is, they *are*, but it is equally true that they are not. We show more obstinacy in dealing with the categories of the understanding. These are terms which we believe to be somewhat firmer – or even absolutely firm and fast. We look upon them as separated from each other by an infinite chasm, so that opposite categories can never get at each other. The battle of reason is the struggle to break up the rigidity to which the understanding has reduced everything.

§ 33

The *first* part of this metaphysic in its systematic form is Ontology, or the doctrine of the abstract characteristics of Being. The multitude of these characteristics, and the limits set to their applicability, are not founded upon any principle. They have in consequence to be enumerated as experience and circumstances direct, and the import ascribed to them is founded only upon common sensualised conceptions, upon assertions that particular words are used in a particular sense, and even perhaps upon etymology. If experience pronounces the list to be complete, and if the usage of language, by its agreement, shows

the analysis to be correct, the metaphysician is satisfied; and the intrinsic and independent truth and necessity of such characteristics is never made a matter of investigation at all.

To ask if being, existence, finitude, simplicity, complexity, etc. are notions intrinsically and independently true, must surprise those who believe that a question about truth can only concern propositions (as to whether a notion is or is not with truth to be attributed, as the phrase is, to a subject), and that falsehood lies in the contradiction existing between the subject in our ideas, and the notion to be predicated of it. Now as the notion is concrete, it and every character of it in general is essentially a self-contained unity of distinct characteristics. If truth then were nothing more than the absence of contradiction, it would be first of all necessary in the case of every notion to examine whether it, taken individually, did not contain this sort of intrinsic contradiction.

§ 34

The *second* branch of the metaphysical system was Rational Psychology or Pneumatology. It dealt with the metaphysical nature of the soul – that is, of the Mind regarded as a thing. It expected to find immortality in a sphere dominated by the laws of composition, time, qualitative change, and quantitative increase or decrease.

The name ‘rational’, given to this species of psychology, served to contrast it with empirical modes of observing the phenomena of the soul. Rational psychology viewed the soul in its metaphysical nature, and through the categories supplied by abstract thought. The rationalists endeavoured to ascertain the inner nature of the soul as it is in itself and as it is for thought. In philosophy at present we hear little of the soul (*Seele*): the favourite term is now mind (spirit, *Geist*). The two are distinct, soul being as it were the middle term between body and spirit, or the bond between the two. The mind, as soul, is immersed in corporeity, and the soul is the animating principle of the body.

The pre-Kantian metaphysic, we say, viewed the soul as a thing. ‘Thing’ is a very ambiguous word. By a thing, we mean, firstly, an immediate existence, something we represent in sensuous form: and in this meaning the term has been applied to the soul. Hence the question regarding the seat of the soul. Of course, if the soul have a seat, it is in space and sensuously envisaged. So, too, if the soul be viewed as a thing we can ask whether the soul is simple or composite. The question is important as bearing on the immortality of the soul, which is supposed to depend on the absence of composition. But the fact is, that in abstract simplicity we have a category, which as little corresponds to the nature of the soul, as that of compositeness.

One word on the relation of rational to empirical psychology. The former, because it sets itself to apply thought to cognise mind and even to demonstrate the result of such thinking, is the higher; whereas empirical psychology starts from perception, and only recounts and describes what perception supplies. But if we propose to think the mind, we must not be quite so shy of its special phenomena. Mind is essentially active in the same sense as the Schoolmen [Scholastics] said that God is ‘absolute actus’. But if the mind is active it must as it were utter itself. It is wrong therefore to take the mind for a processless *ens*, as did the old metaphysic which divided the processless inward life of the mind from its outward life. The mind, of all things, must be looked at in its concrete actuality, in its energy; and in such a way that its manifestations are seen to be determined by its inward force.

§ 35

The *third* branch of metaphysics was Cosmology. The topics it embraced were the world, its contingency, necessity, eternity, limitation in time and space: the laws (only formal) of its changes: the freedom of man and the origin of evil.

To these topics it applied what were believed to be thoroughgoing contrasts: such as contingency and necessity; eternal and internal necessity; efficient and final cause, or

causality in general and design; essence or substance and phenomenon; form and matter; freedom and necessity; happiness and pain; good and evil.

The object of Cosmology comprised not merely Nature, but Mind too, in its external complicating in its phenomenon – in fact, existence in general, or the sum of finite things. This object however it viewed not as a concrete whole, but only under certain abstract points of view. Thus the questions Cosmology attempted to solve were such as these: Is accident or necessity dominant in the world? Is the world eternal or created? It was therefore a chief concern of this study to lay down what were called general cosmological laws: for instance, that Nature does not act by fits and starts. And by fits and starts (*saltus*) they meant a qualitative difference or qualitative alteration showing itself without any antecedent determining mean: whereas, on the contrary, a gradual change (of quantity) is obviously not without intermediation.

In regard to Mind as it makes itself felt in the world, the questions which Cosmology chiefly discussed turned upon the freedom of man and the origin of evil. Nobody can deny that these are questions of the highest importance. But to give them a satisfactory answer, it is above all things necessary not to claim finality for the abstract formulae of understanding, or to suppose that each of the two terms in an antithesis has an independent subsistence or can be treated in its isolation as a complete and self-centred truth. This however is the general position taken by the metaphysicians before Kant, and appears in their cosmological discussions, which for that reason were incapable of compassing their purpose, to understand the phenomena of the world. Observe how they proceed with the distinction between freedom and necessity, in their application of these categories to Nature and Mind. Nature they regard as subject in its workings to necessity; Mind they hold to be free. No doubt there is a real foundation for this distinction in the very core of the Mind itself: but freedom and necessity, when thus abstractly opposed, are terms applicable only in the finite world to which, as such, they belong. A freedom involving no necessity, and mere necessity without freedom, are abstract and in this way untrue formulae of thought. Freedom is no blank indeterminateness: essentially concrete, and unvaryingly self-determinate, it is so far at the same time necessary. Necessity, again, in the ordinary acceptance of the term in popular philosophy, means determination from without only – as in finite mechanics, where a body moves only when it is struck by another body, and moves in the direction communicated to it by the impact. This however is a merely external necessity, not the real inward necessity which is identical with freedom.

The case is similar with the contrast of Good and Evil – the favourite contrast of the introspective modern world. If we regard Evil as possessing a fixity of its own, apart and distinct from Good, we are to a certain extent right: there is an opposition between them; nor do those who maintain the apparent and relative character of the opposition mean that Evil and Good in the Absolute are one, or, in accordance with the modern phrase, that a thing first becomes evil from our way of looking at it. The error arises when we take Evil as a permanent positive, instead of – what it really is – a negative which, though it would fain assert itself, has no real persistence, and is, in fact, only the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself.

§ 36

The *fourth* branch of metaphysics is Natural or Rational Theology. The notion of God, or God as a possible being, the proofs, of his existence, and his properties, formed the study of this branch.

(a) When understanding thus discusses the Deity, its main purpose is to find what predicates correspond or not to the fact we have in our imagination as God. And in doing it assumes the contrast between positive and negative to be absolute; and hence, in the long run, nothing is left for the notion as understanding takes it, but the empty abstraction of indeterminate Being, of mere reality or positivity, the lifeless product of modern 'Deism'.

(b) The method of demonstration employed in finite knowledge must always lead to an inversion of the true order. For it requires the statement of some objective ground for God's being, which thus acquires the appearance of being derived from something else.

This mode of proof, guided as it is by the canon of mere analytical identity, is embarrassed by the difficulty of passing from the finite to the infinite. Either the finitude of the existing world, which is left as much a fact as it was before, clings to the notion of Deity, and God has to be defined as the immediate substance of that world – which is Pantheism: or he remains an object set over against the subject, and in this way, finite – which is Dualism.

(c) The attributes of God which ought to be various and precise had, properly speaking, sunk and disappeared in the abstract notion of pure reality, of indeterminate Being. Yet in our material thought, the finite world continues, meanwhile, to have a real being, with God as a sort of antithesis: and thus arises the further picture of different relations of God to the world. These, formulated as properties, must, on the one hand, as relations to finite circumstances, themselves possess a finite character (giving us such properties as just, gracious, mighty, wise, etc.); on the other hand they must be infinite. Now on this level of thought the only means, and a hazy one, of reconciling these opposing requirements was quantitative exaltation of the properties, forming them into indeterminateness – into *the sensus eminentior*. But it was an expedient which really destroyed the property and left a mere name.

The object of the old metaphysical theology was to see how far unassisted reason could go in the knowledge of God. Certainly a reason derived knowledge of God is the highest problem of philosophy. The earliest teachings of religion are figurate conceptions of God. These conceptions, as the Creed arranges them, are imparted to us in youth. They are the doctrines of our religion, and in so far as the individual rests his faith on these doctrines and feels them to be the truth, he has all he needs as a Christian. Such is faith: and the science of this faith is Theology. But until Theology is something more than a bare enumeration and compilation of these doctrines *ab extra*, it has no right to the title of science. Even the method so much in vogue at present – the purely historical mode of treatment – which for example reports what has been said by this or the other Father of the Church – does not invest theology with a scientific character. To get that, we must go on to comprehend the facts by thought – which is the business of philosophy. Genuine theology is thus at the same time a real philosophy of religion, as it was, we may add, in the Middle Ages.

And now let us examine this rational theology more narrowly. It was a science which approached God not by reason but by understanding, and, in its mode of thought, employed the terms without any sense of their mutual limitations and connections. The notion of God formed the subject of discussion; and yet the criterion of our knowledge was derived from such an extraneous source as the materialised conception of God. Now thought must be free in its movements. It is no doubt to be remembered that the result of independent thought harmonises with the import of the Christian religion: for the Christian religion is a revelation of reason. But such a harmony surpassed the efforts of rational theology. It proposed to define the figurate conception of God in terms of thought; but it resulted in a notion of God which was what we may call the abstract of positivity or reality, to the exclusion of all negation. God was accordingly defined to be the most real of all beings. Anyone can see however that this most real of beings, in which negation forms no part, is the very opposite of what it ought to be and of what understanding supposes it to be. Instead of being rich and full above all measure, it is so narrowly conceived that it is, on the contrary, extremely poor and altogether empty. It is with reason that the heart craves a concrete body of truth; but without definite feature, that is, without negation, contained in the notion, there can only be an abstraction. When the notion of God is apprehended only as that of the abstract or most real being, God is, as it were, relegated to another world beyond: and to speak of a knowledge of him would be meaningless. Where there is no definite quality, knowledge is impossible. Mere light is mere darkness.

The second problem of rational theology was to prove the existence of God. Now, in this matter, the main point to be noted is that demonstration, as the understanding employs it, means the dependence of one truth on another. In such proofs we have a presupposition-something firm and fast, from which something else follows; we exhibit the dependence of some truth from an assumed starting-point. Hence, if this mode of demonstration is applied to the existence of God, it

can only mean that the being of God is to depend on other terms, which will then constitute the ground of his being. It is at once evident that this will lead to some mistake: for God must be simply and solely the ground of everything, and in so far not dependent upon anything else. And a perception of this danger has in modern times led some to say that God's existence is not capable of proof, but must be immediately or intuitively apprehended. Reason, however, and even sound common sense give demonstration a meaning quite different from that of the understanding. The demonstration of reason no doubt starts from something which is not God. But, as it advances, it does not leave the starting-point a mere unexplained fact, which is what it was. On the contrary it exhibits that point as derivative and called into being, and then God is seen to be primary, truly immediate, and self-subsisting, with the means of derivation wrapped up and absorbed in himself. Those who say: 'Consider Nature, and Nature will lead you to God; you will find an absolute final cause' do not mean that God is something derivative: they mean that it is we who proceed to God himself from another; and in this way God, though the consequence, is also the absolute ground of the initial step. The relation of the two things is reversed; and what came as a consequence being shown to be an antecedent, the original antecedent is reduced to a consequence. This is always the way, moreover, whenever reason demonstrates.

If in the light of the present discussion we cast one glance more on the metaphysical method as a whole, we find its main characteristic was to make abstract identity its principle and to try to apprehend the objects of reason by the abstract and finite categories of the understanding. But this infinite of the understanding, this pure essence, is still finite: it has excluded all the variety of particular things, which thus limit and deny it. Instead of winning a concrete, this metaphysic stuck fast on an abstract, identity. Its good point was the perception that thought alone constitutes the essence of all that is. It derived its materials from earlier philosophers, particularly the Schoolmen. In speculative philosophy the understanding undoubtedly forms a stage, but not a stage at which we should keep for ever standing. Plato is no metaphysician of this imperfect type, still less Aristotle, although the contrary is generally believed.

IV. Second Attitude of Thought to Objectivity One. Empiricism

§ 37

Under these circumstances a double want began to be felt. Partly it was the need of a concrete subject-matter, as a counterpoise to the abstract theories of the understanding, which is unable to advance unaided from its generalities to specialisation and determination. Partly, too, it was the demand for something fixed and secure, so as to exclude the possibility of proving anything and everything in the sphere, and according to the method of the finite formulae of thought. Such was the genesis of Empirical philosophy, which abandons the search for truth in thought itself, and goes to fetch it from Experience, the outward and the inward present.

The rise of Empiricism is due to the need thus stated of concrete contents, and a firm footing – needs which the abstract metaphysic of the understanding failed to satisfy. Now by concreteness of contents it is meant that we must know the objects of consciousness as intrinsically determinate and as the unity of distinct characteristics. But, as we have already seen, this is by no means the case with the metaphysic of understanding, if it conform to its principle. With the mere understanding, thinking is limited to the form of an abstract universal, and can never advance to the particularisation of this universal. Thus we find the metaphysicians engaged in an attempt to elicit by the instrumentality of thought what was the essence or fundamental attribute of the Soul. The Soul, they said, is simple. The simplicity thus ascribed to the Soul meant a mere and utter simplicity, from which difference is excluded: difference, or in other words composition, being made the fundamental attribute of body, or of matter in general. Clearly, in simplicity of this narrow type we have a very shallow category, quite incapable of embracing the wealth of the soul or of the mind. When it thus appeared that abstract metaphysical thinking was inadequate, it was felt that resource must be had to empirical psychology. The same happened in the case of Rational

Physics. The current phrases there were, for instance, that space is infinite, that Nature makes no leap, etc. Evidently this phraseology was wholly unsatisfactory in presence of the plenitude and life of nature.

§ 38

To some extent this source from which Empiricism draws is common to it with metaphysic. It is in our materialised conceptions, i.e. in facts which emanate, in the first instance, from experience, that metaphysic also finds the guarantee for the correctness of its definitions (including both its initial assumptions and its more detailed body of doctrine). But, on the other hand, it must be noted that the single sensation is not the same thing as experience, and that the Empirical School elevates the facts included under sensation, feeling, and perception into the form of general ideas propositions, or laws. This, however, it does with the reservation that these general principles (such as force) are to have no further import or validity of their own beyond that taken from the sense impression, and that no connection shall be deemed legitimate except what can be shown to exist in phenomena. And on the subjective side Empirical cognition has its stable footing in the fact that in a sensation consciousness is directly present and certain of itself.

In Empiricism lies the great principle that whatever is true must be in the actual world and present to sensation. This principle contradicts that 'ought to be' on the strength of which 'reflection' is vain enough to treat the actual present with scorn and to point to a scene beyond a scene which is assumed to have place and being only in the understanding of those who talk of it. No less than Empiricism, philosophy (§ 7) recognises only what is, and has nothing to do with what merely ought to be and what is thus confessed not to exist. On the subjective side, too, it is right to notice the valuable principle of freedom involved in Empiricism. For the main lesson of Empiricism is that man must see for himself and feel that he is present in every fact of knowledge which he has to accept.

When it is carried out to its legitimate consequences, Empiricism being in its facts limited to the finite sphere denies the supersensible in general, or at least any knowledge of it which would define its nature; it leaves thought no powers except abstraction and formal universality and identity. But there is a fundamental delusion in all scientific empiricism. It employs the metaphysical categories of matter, force, those of one, many, generality, infinity, etc.; following the clue given by these categories it proceeds to draw conclusions, and in so doing presupposes and applies the syllogistic form. And all the while it is unaware that it contains metaphysics in wielding which, it makes use of those categories and their combinations in a style utterly thoughtless and uncritical.

From Empiricism came the cry: 'Stop roaming in empty abstractions keep your eyes open, lay hold on man and nature as they are here before you, enjoy the present moment.' Nobody can deny that there is a good deal of truth in these words. The everyday world, what is here and now was a good exchange for the futile other-world – for the mirages and the chimeras of the abstract understanding. And thus was acquired an infinite principle – that solid footing so much missed in the old metaphysic. Finite principles are the most that the understanding can pick out – and these being essentially unstable and tottering, the structure they supported must collapse with a crash. Always the instinct of reason was to find an infinite principle. As yet, the time had not come for finding it in thought. Hence, this instinct seized upon the present, the Here, the This – where doubtless there is implicit infinite form, but not in the genuine existence of that form. The external world is the truth, it if could but know it: for the truth is actual and must exist. The infinite principle, the self-centred truth, therefore, is in the world for reason to discover: though it exists in an individual and sensible shape, and not in its truth.

Besides, this school makes sense-perception the form in which fact is to be apprehended; and in this consists the defect of Empiricism. Sense perception as such is always individual, always transient: not indeed that the process of knowledge stops short at sensation: on the contrary, it proceeds to find out the universal and permanent element in the individual apprehended by sense. This is the process leading from simple perception to experience.

In order to form experiences, Empiricism makes especial use of the form of Analysis. In the impression of sense we have a concrete of many elements, the several attributes of which we are expected to peel off one by one, like the skins of an onion. In thus dismembering the thing, it is understood that we disintegrate and take to pieces these attributes which have coalesced, and add nothing but our own act of disintegration. Yet analysis is the process from the immediacy of sensation to thought: those attributes, which the object analysed contains in union, acquire the form of universality by being separated. Empiricism therefore labours under a delusion, if it supposes that, while analysing the objects, it leaves them as they were: it really transforms the concrete into an abstract. And as a consequence of this change, the living thing is killed: life can exist only in the concrete and one. Not that we can do without this division, if it be our intention to comprehend. Mind itself is an inherent division. The error lies in forgetting that this is only one half of the process, and that the main point is the reunion of what has been parted. And it is where analysis never gets beyond the stage of partition that the words of the poet are true:

*Encheiresin Naturae nennt's die Chemie,
Spottet ihrer selbst, und weiss nicht, wie:
hat die Theile in ihrer Hand,
Fehlt leider nur das geistige Band.*

[c.f. Goethe, *Faust*, I. 1938-41:

Then the parts in his hand he may hold and class,
But the spiritual link is lost, alas!

Encheiresin Naturae [link of soul to body], this alchemy names,
Nor knows how herself she banter and blames!]

Analysis starts from the concrete; and the possession of this material gives it a considerable advantage over the abstract thinking of the old metaphysics. It establishes the differences in things, and this is very important; but these very differences are nothing after all but abstract attributes, i.e. thoughts. These thoughts, it is assumed, contain the real essence of the objects; and thus once more we see the axiom of bygone metaphysics reappear, that the truth of things lies in thought.

Let us next compare the empirical theory with that of metaphysics in the matter of their respective contents. We find the latter, as already stated, taking for its theme the universal objects of the reason, viz. God, the Soul, and the World: and these themes, accepted from popular conception, it was the problem of philosophy to reduce into the form of thoughts. Another specimen of the same method was the Scholastic philosophy, the theme presupposed by which was formed by the dogmas of the Christian Church; and it aimed at fixing their meaning and giving them a systematic arrangement through thought. The facts on which Empiricism is based are of entirely different kind. They are the sensible facts of nature and the facts of the finite mind. In other words, Empiricism deals with a finite material, and the old metaphysicians had an infinite – though, let us add, they made this infinite content finite by the finite form of the understanding. The same finitude of form reappears in Empiricism – but here the facts are finite also. To this extent, then, both modes of philosophising have the same method; both proceed from data or assumptions, which they accept as ultimate.

Generally speaking, Empiricism finds the truth in the outward world, and even if it allow a supersensible world, it holds knowledge of that world to be impossible, and would restrict us to the province of sense-perception. This doctrine when systematically carried out produces what has been latterly termed Materialism. Materialism of this stamp looks upon matter, qua matter, as the genuine objective world. But with matter we are at once introduced to an abstraction, which as such cannot be perceived, and it may be maintained that there is no matter, because, as it exists, it is always something definite and concrete. Yet the abstraction we term matter is supposed to lie at the basis of the whole world of sense, and expresses the sense-world in its simplest terms as out-and-out individualisation, and hence a congeries of points in mutual exclusion. So long then as this sensible sphere is and continues to be for Empiricism a mere datum, we have a doctrine of bondage: for we become free, when we are confronted by no absolutely alien world, but depend upon a fact which we ourselves are. Consistently with the empirical point of view, besides, reason and unreason can only be subjective: in other words, we must take what is given just as it is, and we have no right to ask whether and to what extent it is rational in its own nature.

§ 39

Touching this principle it has been justly observed that in what we call Experience, as distinct from mere single perception of single facts, there are two elements. The one is the matter, infinite in its multiplicity, and as it stands a mere set of singulars: the other is the form, the characteristics of universality and necessity. Mere experience no doubt offers many, perhaps innumerable, cases of similar perceptions: but, after all, no multitude, however great, can be the same thing as universality. Similarly, mere experience affords perceptions of changes succeeding each other and of objects in juxtaposition; but it presents no necessary connection. If perception, therefore, is to maintain its claim to be the sole basis of what men hold for truth, universality and necessity appear something illegitimate: they become an accident of our minds, a mere custom, the content of which might be otherwise constituted than it is.

It is an important corollary of this theory, that on this empirical mode of treatment legal and ethical principles and laws, as well as the truths of religion, are exhibited as the work of chance, and stripped of their objective character and inner truth.

The scepticism of Hume, to which this conclusion was chiefly due, should be clearly marked off from Greek scepticism. Hume assumes the truth of the empirical element, feeling and sensation, and proceeds to challenge universal principles and laws, because they have no warranty from sense-perception. So far was ancient scepticism from making feeling and sensation the canon of truth, that it turned against the deliverances of sense first of all.

IV. Second Attitude of Thought to Objectivity

Two. The Critical Philosophy

§ 40

In common with Empiricism, the Critical Philosophy assumes that experience affords the one sole foundation for cognitions; which however it does not allow to rank as truths, but only as knowledge of phenomena.

The Critical theory starts originally from the distinction of elements presented in the analysis of experience, viz. the matter of sense, and its universal relations. Taking into account Hume's criticism on this distinction as given in the preceding section, viz. that sensation does not explicitly apprehend more than an individual or more than a mere event, it insists at the same time on the fact that universality and necessity are seen to perform a function equally essential in constituting what is called experience. This element, not being derived from the empirical facts as such, must belong to the spontaneity of thought; in other words, it is *a priori*. The Categories or Notions of the Understanding constitute the *objectivity* of experiential cognitions. In every case they involve a connective reference, and hence through their means are formed synthetic judgments *a priori*, that is, primary and underivative connections of opposites.

Even Hume's scepticism does not deny that the characteristics of universality and necessity are found in cognition. And even in Kant this fact remains a presupposition after all; it may be said, to use the ordinary phraseology of the sciences, that Kant did no more than offer another *explanation* of the fact.

§ 41

The Critical Philosophy proceeds to test the value of the categories employed in metaphysics, as well as in other sciences and in ordinary conception. This scrutiny however is not directed to the content of these categories, nor does it inquire into the exact relation they bear to one another: but simply considers them as affected by the contrast between subjective and objective. The contrast, as we are to understand it here, bears upon the distinction (see preceding §) of the two elements in experience. The name of objectivity is here given to the element of universality and necessity, i.e. to the categories themselves, or what is called the *a priori* constituent. The Critical Philosophy however widened the contrast in such a way, that the subjectivity comes to embrace the *ensemble* of experience, including both of the aforesaid elements; and nothing remains on the other side but the ‘thing-in-itself’.

The special forms of the *a priori* element, in other words, of thought, which in spite of its objectivity is looked upon as a purely subjective act, present themselves as follows in a systematic order which, it may be remarked, is solely based upon psychological and historical grounds.

(1) A very important step was undoubtedly made, when the terms of the old metaphysics were subjected to scrutiny. The plain thinker pursued his unsuspecting way in those categories which had offered themselves naturally. It never occurred to him to ask to what extent these categories had a value and authority of their own. If, as has been said, it is characteristic of free thought to allow no assumptions to pass unquestioned, the old metaphysicians were not free thinkers. They accepted their categories as they were, without further trouble, as an *a priori* datum, not yet tested by reflection. The Critical philosophy reversed this. Kant undertook to examine how far the forms of thought were capable of leading to the knowledge of truth. In particular he demanded a criticism of the faculty of cognition as preliminary to its exercise. That is a fair demand, if it meant that even the forms of thought must be made an object of investigation. Unfortunately there soon creeps in the misconception of already knowing before you know – the error of *refusing to enter the water until you have learnt to swim*. True, indeed, the forms of thought should be subjected to a scrutiny before they are used: yet what is this scrutiny but *ipso facto* a cognition?

So that what we want is to combine in our process of inquiry the action of the forms of thought with a **criticism** of them. The forms of thought must be studied in their essential nature and complete development: they are at once the object of research and the action of that object. Hence they examine themselves: in their own action they must determine their limits, and point out their defects. This is that action of thought, which will hereafter be specially considered under the name of Dialectic, and regarding which we need only at the outset observe that, instead of being brought to bear upon the categories from without, it is Immanent in their own action.

We may therefore state the first point in Kant’s philosophy as follows: Thought must itself investigate its own capacity of knowledge. People in the present day have got over Kant and his philosophy: everybody wants to get further. But there are two ways of going further – a backward and a forward. The light of criticism soon shows that many of our modern essays in philosophy are mere repetitions of the old metaphysical method, an endless and uncritical thinking in a groove determined by the natural bent of each man’s mind.

(2) Kant’s examination of the categories suffers from the grave defect of viewing them, not absolutely and for their own sake, but in order to see whether they are subjective or objective. In the language of common life we mean by **objective** what exists outside of us and reaches us from without by means of sensation. What Kant did was to deny that the categories, such as cause and effect, were, in this sense of the word, objective, or given in sensation, and to maintain on the contrary that they belonged to our own thought itself, to the spontaneity of thought. To that extent therefore they were subjective. And yet in spite of this, Kant gives the name objective to what is thought, to the universal and necessary, while he describes as subjective whatever is merely felt. This arrangement apparently reverses the first-mentioned use of the word, and has caused Kant to be charged with confusing language. But the charge is unfair if we more narrowly consider the facts of the case. The vulgar believe that the objects of perception which confront them, such as an

individual animal, or a single star, are independent and permanent existences, compared with which thoughts are unsubstantial and dependent on something else. In fact however the perceptions of sense are the properly dependent and secondary feature, while the thoughts are really independent and primary. This being so, Kant gave the title objective to the intellectual factor, to the universal and necessary: and he was quite justified in so doing. Our **sensations** on the other hand are subjective; for sensations lack stability in their own nature, and are no less fleeting and evanescent than thought is permanent and self-subsisting. At the present day, the special line of distinction established by Kant between the subjective and objective is adopted by the phraseology of the educated world. Thus the criticism of a work of art ought, it is said, to be not subjective, but objective – in other words, instead of springing from the particular and accidental feeling or temper of the moment, it should keep its eye on those general points of view which the laws of art establish. In the same acceptation we can distinguish in any scientific pursuit the objective and the subjective interest of the investigation.

But after all, objectivity of thought, in Kant's sense, is again to a certain extent subjective. Thoughts, according to Kant, although universal and necessary categories, are **only our** thoughts – separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge. But the true objectivity of thinking means that the thoughts, far from being merely ours, must at the same time be the real essence of the things, and of whatever is an object to us.

Objective and subjective are convenient expressions in current use, the employment of which may easily lead to confusion. Up to this point, the discussion has shown three meanings of objectivity. First, it means what has external existence, in distinction from which the subjective is what is only supposed, dreamed, &c. Secondly, it has the meaning, attached to it by Kant, of the universal and necessary, as distinguished from the particular, subjective, and occasional element which belongs to our sensations. Thirdly, as has been just explained, it means the thought-apprehended essence of the existing thing, in contradistinction from what is merely our thought, and what consequently is still separated from the thing itself, as it exists in independent essence.

§ 42

(a) The Theoretical Faculty. Cognition *qua* cognition. The specific ground of the categories is declared by the Critical system to lie in the primary identity of the 'I' in thought what Kant calls the 'transcendental unity of self-consciousness'. The impressions from feeling and perception are, if we look to their contents, a multiplicity or miscellany of elements: and the multiplicity is equally conspicuous in their form. For sense is marked by a mutual exclusion of members; and that under two aspects, namely space and time, which, being the forms, that is to say, the universal type of perception, are themselves *a priori*. This congeries, afforded by sensation and perception, must however be reduced to an identity or primary synthesis. To accomplish this the 'I' brings it in relation to itself and unites it there in **one** consciousness which Kant calls 'pure apperception'. The specific modes in which the Ego refers to itself the multiplicity of sense are the pure concepts of the understanding, the Categories.

Kant, it is well known, did not put himself to much trouble in discovering the categories. 'I', the unity of selfconsciousness, being quite abstract and completely indeterminate, the question arises, how are we to get at the specialised forms of the 'I', the categories? Fortunately, the common logic offers to our hand an empirical classification of the kinds of **judgment**. Now, to judge is the same as to **think** of a determinate object. Hence the various modes of judgment, as enumerated to our hand, provide us with the several categories of thought. To the philosophy of Fichte belongs the great merit of having called attention to the need of exhibiting the **necessity** of these categories and giving a genuine **deduction** of them. Fichte ought to have produced at least one effect on the method of logic. One might have expected that the general laws of thought, the usual stock-in-trade of logicians, or the classification of notions, judgments, and syllogisms, would be no longer taken merely from observation and so only empirically treated, but be

deduced from thought itself. If thought is to be capable of proving anything at all, if logic must insist upon the necessity of proofs, and if it proposes to teach the theory of demonstration, its first care should be to give a reason for its own subject.

(1) Kant therefore holds that the categories have their source in the 'Ego' and that the 'Ego' consequently supplies the characteristics of universality and necessity. If we observe what we have before us primarily, we may describe it as a congeries or diversity: and in the categories we find the simple points or units, to which this congeries is made to converge. The world of sense is a scene of mutual exclusion: its being is outside itself. That is the fundamental feature of the sensible. 'Now' has no meaning except in reference to a before and a hereafter. Red, in the same way, only subsists by being opposed to yellow and blue. Now this other thing is outside the sensible; which latter is, only in so far as it is not the other, and only in so far as that other is. But thought, or the 'Ego', occupies a position the very reverse of the sensible, with its mutual exclusions, and its being outside itself. The 'I' is the primary identity – at one with itself and all at home in itself. The word 'I' expresses the mere act of bringing-to-bear-upon-self: and whatever is placed in this unit or focus is affected by it and transformed into it. The 'I' is as it were the crucible and the fire which consumes the loose plurality of sense and reduces it to unity. This is the process which Kant calls pure apperception in distinction from the common apperception, to which the plurality it receives is a plurality still; whereas pure apperception is rather an act by which the 'I' makes the materials 'mine'.

This view has at least the merit of giving a correct expression to the nature of all consciousness. The tendency of all man's endeavours is to understand the world, to appropriate and subdue it to himself: and to this end the positive reality of the world must be as it were crushed and pounded, in other words, idealised. At the same time we must note that it is not the mere act of *our* personal self-consciousness which introduces an absolute unity into the variety of sense. Rather, this identity is itself the absolute. The absolute is, as it were, so kind as to leave individual things to their own enjoyment, and it again drives them back to the absolute unity.

(2) Expressions like 'transcendental unity of self-consciousness' have an ugly look about them, and suggest a monster in the background: but their meaning is not so abstruse as it looks. Kant's meaning of transcendental may be gathered by the way he distinguishes it from transcendent. The transcendent may be said to be what steps out beyond the categories of the understanding: a sense in which the term is first employed in mathematics. Thus in geometry you are told to conceive the circumference of a circle as formed of an infinite number of infinitely small straight lines. In other words, characteristics which the understanding holds to be totally different, the straight line and the curve, are expressly invested with identity. Another transcendent of the same kind is the self-consciousness which is identical with itself and infinite in itself, as distinguished from the ordinary consciousness which derives its form and tone from finite materials. That unity of self-consciousness, however, Kant called *transcendental* only; and he meant thereby that the unity was only in our minds and did not attach to the objects apart from our knowledge of them.

(3) To regard the categories as subjective only, i.e. as a part of ourselves, must seem very odd to the natural mind; and no doubt there is something queer about it. It is quite true however that the categories are not contained in the sensation as it is given us. When, for instance, we look at a piece of sugar, we find it is hard, white, sweet, etc. All these properties we say are united in one object. Now it is this unity that is not found in the sensation. The same thing happens if we conceive two events to stand in the relation of cause and effect. The senses only inform us of the two several occurrences which follow each other in time. But that the one is cause, the other effect – in other words, the causal nexus between the two – is not perceived by sense; it is only evident to thought. Still, though the categories, such as unity, or cause and effect, are strictly the property of thought, it by no means follows that they must be ours merely and not also characteristics of the objects. Kant however confines them to the subject-mind, and his philosophy may be styled subjective idealism: for he holds that both the form and the matter of knowledge are supplied by the Ego – or knowing subject – the form by our intellectual, the matter by our sentient ego.

So far as regards the content of this subjective idealism, not a word need be wasted. It might perhaps at first sight be imagined, that objects would lose their reality when their unity was transferred to the subject. But neither we nor the objects would have anything to gain by the mere fact that they possessed being.

The main point is not, *that* they are, but *what* they are, and whether or not their content is true. It does no good to the things to say merely that they have being. What has being, will also cease to be when time creeps over it. It might also be alleged that subjective idealism tended to promote self-conceit. But surely if a man's world be the sum of his sensible perceptions, he has no reason to be vain of such a world. Laying aside therefore as unimportant this distinction between subjective and objective, we are chiefly interested in knowing what a thing is: i.e. its content, which is no more objective than it is subjective. If mere existence be enough to make objectivity, even a crime is objective: but it is an existence which is nullity at the core, as is definitely made apparent when the day of punishment comes.

§ 43

The Categories may be viewed in two aspects. On the one hand it is by their instrumentality that the mere perception of sense rises to objectivity and experience. On the other hand these notions are unities in our consciousness merely: they are consequently conditioned by the material given to them, and having nothing of their own they can be applied to use only within the range of experience. But the other constituent of experience, the impressions of feeling and perception, is not one whit less subjective than the categories.

To assert that the categories taken by themselves are empty can scarcely be right, seeing that they have a content, at all events, in the special stamp and significance which they possess. Of course the content of the categories is not perceptible to the senses, nor is it in time and space: but that is rather a merit than a defect. A glimpse of this meaning of content may be observed to affect our ordinary thinking. A book or a speech for example is said to have a great deal in it, to be full of content in proportion to the greater number of thoughts and general results to be found in it: while, on the contrary, we should never say that any book, e.g. a novel, had much in it, because it included a great number of single incidents, situations, and the like. Even the popular voice thus recognises that something more than the facts of sense is needed to make a work pregnant with matter. And what is this additional desideratum but thoughts, or in the first instance the categories? And yet it is not altogether wrong, it should be added, to call the categories of themselves empty, if it be meant that they and the logical Idea, of which they are the members, do not constitute the whole of philosophy, but necessarily lead onwards in due progress to the real departments of Nature and Mind. Only let the progress not be misunderstood. The logical Idea does not thereby come into possession of a content originally foreign to it: but by its own native action is specialised and developed to Nature and Mind.

§ 44

It follows that the categories are no fit terms to express the Absolute the Absolute not being given in perception and Understanding, or knowledge by means of the categories, is consequently incapable of knowing the Things-in-themselves.

The Thing-in-itself (and under 'thing' is embraced even Mind and God) expresses the object when we leave out of sight all that consciousness makes of it, all its emotional aspects, and all specific thoughts of it. It is easy to see what is left utter abstraction, total emptiness, only described still as an 'other-world' the negative of every image, feeling, and definite thought. Nor does it require much penetration to see that this *caput mortuum* is still only a product of thought, such as accrues when thought is carried on to abstraction unalloyed: that it is the work of the empty 'Ego', which makes an *object* out of this empty self-identity of its own. The *negative* characteristic which this abstract identity receives as an object is also enumerated among the categories of Kant, and is no less familiar than the empty identity aforesaid. Hence one can only read with surprise the perpetual remark that we do not know the Thing-in-itself. On the contrary there is nothing we can know so easily.

§ 45

It is Reason, the faculty of the Unconditioned, which discovers the conditioned nature of the knowledge comprised in experience. What is thus called the object of Reason, the Infinite or Unconditioned, is nothing but self-sameness, or the primary identity of the 'Ego' in thought (mentioned in § 42). Reason itself is the name given to the abstract 'Ego' or thought, which makes this pure identity its aim or object (cf. note to the preceding §). Now this identity, having no definite attribute at all, can receive no illumination from the truths of experience, for the reason that these refer always to definite facts. Such is the sort of Unconditioned that is supposed to be the absolute truth of Reason what is termed the *Idea*; while the cognitions of experience are reduced to the level of untruth and declared to be appearances.

Kant was the first definitely to signalise the distinction between Reason and Understanding. The object of the former, as he applied the term, was the infinite and unconditioned, of the latter the finite and conditioned. Kant did valuable service when he enforced the finite character of the cognitions of the understanding founded merely upon experience, and stamped their contents with the name of appearance. But his mistake was to stop at the purely negative point of view, and to limit the unconditionality of Reason to an abstract self-sameness without any shade of distinction. It degrades Reason to a finite and conditioned thing, to identify it with a mere stepping beyond the finite and conditioned range of understanding. The real infinite, far from being a mere transcendence of the finite, always involves the absorption of the finite into its own fuller nature. In the same way Kant restored the Idea to its proper dignity: vindicating it for Reason, as a thing distinct from abstract analytic determinations or from the merely sensible conceptions which usually appropriate to themselves the name of ideas. But as respects the Idea also, he never got beyond its negative aspect, as what ought to be but is not.

The view that the objects of immediate consciousness, which constitute the body of experience, are mere appearances (phenomena) was another important result of the Kantian philosophy. Common Sense, that mixture of sense and understanding, believes the objects of which it has knowledge to be severally independent and self-supporting; and when it becomes evident that they tend towards and limit one another, the interdependence of one upon another is reckoned something foreign to them and to their true nature. The very opposite is the truth. The things immediately known are mere appearances – in other words, the ground of their being is not in themselves but in something else. But then comes the important step of defining what this something else is. According to Kant, the things that we know about are *to us* appearances only, and we can never know their essential nature, which belongs to another world we cannot approach.

Plain minds have not unreasonably taken exception to this subjective idealism, with its reduction of the facts of consciousness to a purely personal world, created by ourselves alone. For the true statement of the case is rather as follows. The things of which we have direct consciousness are mere phenomena, not for us only, but in their own nature; and the true and proper case of these things, finite as they are, is to have their existence founded not in themselves but in the universal divine Idea. This view of things, it is true, is as idealist as Kant's; but in contradistinction to the subjective idealism of the Critical philosophy should be termed absolute idealism. Absolute idealism, however, though it is far in advance of vulgar realism, is by no means merely restricted to philosophy. It lies at the root of all religion; for religion too believes the actual world we see, the sum total of existence, to be created and governed by God.

§ 46

But it is not enough simply to indicate the existence of the object of Reason. Curiosity impels us to seek for knowledge of this identity, this empty thing-in-itself. Now knowledge means such an acquaintance with the object as apprehends its distinct and special subject-matter. But such subject-matter involves a complex interconnection in the object itself, and supplies a ground of connection with many other objects. In the present case, to express the nature of the features of the Infinite or Thing-in-itself, Reason would

have nothing except the categories: and in any endeavour so to employ them Reason becomes over-soaring or 'transcendent'.

Here begins the second stage of the Criticism of Reason – which, as an independent piece of work, is more valuable than the first. The first part, as has been explained above, teaches that the categories originate in the unity of self-consciousness; that any knowledge which is gained by their means has nothing objective in it, and that the very objectivity claimed for them is only subjective. So far as this goes, the Kantian Criticism presents that 'common' type of idealism known as Subjective Idealism. It asks no questions about the meaning or scope of the categories, but simply considers the abstract form of subjectivity and objectivity, and that even in such a partial way that the former aspect, that of subjectivity, is retained as a final and purely affirmative term of thought. In the second part, however, when Kant examines the *application*, as it is called, which Reason makes of the categories in order to know its objects, the content of the categories, at least in some points of view, comes in for discussion: or, at any rate, an opportunity presented itself for a discussion of the question. It is worth while to see what decision Kant arrives at on the subject of metaphysic, as this application of the categories to the unconditioned is called. His method of procedure we shall here briefly state and criticise.

§ 47

(α) The first of the unconditioned entities which Kant examines is the Soul (see above, § 34). 'In my consciousness', he says, 'I always find that I (1) am the determining subject; (2) am singular or abstractly simple; (3) am identical, or one and the same, in all the variety of what I am conscious of; (4) distinguish myself as thinking from all the things outside me.'

Now the method of the old metaphysic, as Kant correctly states it, consisted in substituting for these statements of experience the corresponding categories or metaphysical terms. Thus arise these four new propositions: (a) the Soul is a substance; (b) it is a simple substance; (c) it is numerically identical at the various periods of existence; (d) it stands in relation to space.

Kant discusses this translation, and draws attention to the Paralogism or mistake of confounding one kind of truth with another. He points out that empirical attributes have here been replaced by categories; and shows that we are not entitled to argue from the former to the latter, or to put the latter in place of the former.

This criticism obviously but repeats the observation of Hume (§ 39) that the categories as a whole – ideas of universality and necessity – are entirely absent from sensation; and that the empirical fact both in form and contents differs from its intellectual formulation.

If the purely empirical fact were held to constitute the credentials of the thought, then no doubt it would be indispensable to be able precisely to identify the 'idea' in the 'impression'.

And in order to make out, in his criticism of the metaphysical psychology, that the soul cannot be described as substantial, simple, self-same, and as maintaining its independence in intercourse with the material world, Kant argues from the single ground that the several attributes of the soul, which consciousness lets us feel in *experience*, are not exactly the same attributes as result from the action of *thought* thereon. But we have seen above that according to Kant all knowledge, even experience, consists in thinking our impressions – in other words, in transforming into intellectual categories the attributes primarily belonging to sensation.

Unquestionably one good result of the Kantian criticism was that it emancipated mental philosophy from the 'soul-thing', from the categories, and, consequently, from questions about the simplicity, complexity, materiality, etc., of the soul. But even for the common sense of ordinary men, the true point of view, from which the inadmissibility of these forms best appears, will be not that they are thoughts, but that thoughts of such a stamp neither can nor do retain truth.

§ 47

If thought and phenomenon do not perfectly correspond to one another, we are free at least to choose which of the two shall be held the defaulter. The Kantian idealism, where it touches on the world of Reason, throws the blame on the thoughts; saying that the thoughts are defective, as not being exactly fitted to the sensations and to a mode of mind wholly restricted within the range of sensation, in which as such there are no traces of the presence of these thoughts. But as to the actual content of the thought, no question is raised.

§ 47n

Paralogisms are a species of unsound syllogism, the especial vice of which consists in employing one and the same word in the two premises with a different meaning. According to Kant the method adopted by the rational psychology of the old metaphysicians, when they assumed that the qualities of the phenomenal soul, as given in experience, formed part of its own real essence, was based upon such a Paralogism. Nor can it be denied that predicates like simplicity, permanence, etc., are inapplicable to the soul. But their unfitness is not due to the ground assigned by Kant, that Reason, by applying them, would exceed its appointed bounds. The true ground is that this style of abstract terms is not good enough for the soul, which is very much more than a mere simple or unchangeable sort of thing. And thus, for example, while the soul may be admitted to be simple selfsameness, it is at the same time active and institutes distinctions in its own nature. But whatever is merely or abstractly simple is as such also a mere dead thing. By his polemic against the metaphysic of the past Kant discarded those predicates from the soul or mind. He did well; but when he came to state his reasons, his failure is apparent.

§ 48

(β) The second unconditioned object is the World (§ 35). In the attempt which reason makes to comprehend the unconditioned nature of the World, it falls into what are called Antinomies. In other words it maintains two opposite propositions about the same object, and in such a way that each of them has to be maintained with equal necessity. From this it follows that the body of cosmical fact, the specific statements descriptive of which run into contradiction, cannot be a self-subsistent reality, but only an appearance. The explanation offered by Kant alleges that the contradiction does not affect the object in its own proper essence, but attaches only to the Reason which seeks to comprehend it.

In this way the suggestion was broached that the contradiction is occasioned by the subject-matter itself, or by the intrinsic quality of the categories. And to offer the idea that the contradiction introduced into the world of Reason by the categories of Understanding is inevitable and essential was to make one of the most important steps in the progress of Modern Philosophy. But the more important the issue thus raised the more trivial was the solution. Its only motive was an excess of tenderness for the things of the world. The blemish of contradiction, it seems, could not be allowed to mar the essence of the world; but there could be no objection to attach it to the thinking Reason, to the essence of mind. Probably nobody will feel disposed to deny that the phenomenal world presents contradictions to the observing mind; meaning by 'phenomenal' the world

as it presents itself to the senses and understanding, to the subjective mind. But if a comparison is instituted between the essence of the world and the essence of the mind, it does seem strange to hear how calmly and confidently the modest dogma has been advanced by one, and repeated by others, that thought or Reason, and not the World, is the seat of contradiction. It is no escape to turn round and explain that Reason falls into contradiction only by applying the categories. For this application of the categories is maintained to be necessary, and Reason is not supposed to be equipped with any other forms but the categories for the purpose of cognition. But cognition is determining and determinate thinking: so that, if Reason be mere empty indeterminate thinking, it thinks nothing. And if in the end Reason be reduced to mere identity without diversity (see next §), it will in the end also win a happy release from contradiction at the slight sacrifice of all its facets and contents.

It may also be noted that his failure to make a more thorough study of Antinomy was one of the reasons why Kant enumerated only *four* Antinomies. These four attracted his notice, because, as may be seen in his discussion of the so-called Paralogisms of Reason, he assumed the list of the categories as a basis of his argument. Employing what has subsequently become a favourite fashion, he simply put the object under a rubric otherwise ready to hand, instead of deducing its characteristics from its notion. Further deficiencies in the treatment of the Antinomies I have pointed out, as occasion offered, in my *Science of Logic*. Here it will be sufficient to say that the Antinomies are not confined to the four special objects taken from Cosmology: they appear in all objects of every kind, in all conceptions, notions, and Ideas. To be aware of this and to know objects in this property of theirs makes a vital part in a philosophical theory. For the property thus indicated is what we shall afterwards describe as the *Dialectical* influence in logic.

The principles of the metaphysical philosophy gave rise to the belief that, when cognition lapsed into contradictions, it was a mere accidental aberration, due to some subjective mistake in argument and inference. According to Kant, however, thought has a natural tendency to issue in contradictions or antinomies, whenever it seeks to apprehend the infinite. We have in the latter part of the above paragraph referred to the philosophical importance of the antinomies of reason, and shown how the recognition of their existence helped largely to get rid of the rigid dogmatism of the metaphysic of understanding, and to direct attention to the Dialectical movement of thought. But here too Kant, as we must add, never got beyond the negative result that the thing-in-itself is unknowable, and never penetrated to the discovery of what the antinomies really and positively mean. That true and positive meaning of the antinomies is this: that every actual thing involves a coexistence of opposed elements. Consequently to know, or, in other words, to comprehend an object is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations. The old metaphysic, as we have already seen, when it studied the objects of which it sought a metaphysical knowledge, went to work by applying categories abstractly and to the exclusion of their opposites.

Kant, on the other hand, tried to prove that the statements issuing through this method could be met by other statements of contrary import with equal warrant and equal necessity. In the enumeration of these antinomies he narrowed his ground to the cosmology of the old metaphysical system, and in his discussion made out four antinomies, a number which rests upon the list of the categories. The first antinomy is on the question: Whether we are or are not to think the world limited in space and time. In the second antinomy we have a discussion of the dilemma: Matter must be conceived either as endlessly divisible, or as consisting of atoms. The third antinomy bears upon the antithesis of freedom and necessity, to such extent as it is embraced in the question, Whether everything in the world must be supposed subject to the condition of causality, or if we can also assume free beings, in other words absolute initial points of action, in the world. Finally, the fourth antinomy is the dilemma: Either the world as a whole has a cause or it is uncaused.

The method which Kant follows in discussing these antinomies is as follows. He puts the two propositions implied in the dilemma over against each other as thesis and antithesis, and seeks to prove both: that is to say he tries to exhibit them as inevitably issuing from reflection on the

question. He particularly protests against the charge of being a special pleader and of grounding his reasoning on illusions. Speaking honestly, however, the arguments which Kant offers for his thesis and antithesis are mere shams of demonstration. The thing to be proved is invariably implied in the assumption he starts from, and the speciousness of his proofs is only due to his prolix and apagogic mode of procedure. Yet it was, and still is, a great achievement for the Critical Philosophy when it exhibited these antinomies: for in this way it gave some expression (at first certainly subjective and unexplained) to the actual unity of those categories which are kept persistently separate by the understanding. The first of the cosmological antinomies, for example, implies a recognition of the doctrine that space and time present a discrete as well as a continuous aspect: whereas the old metaphysic, laying exclusive emphasis on the continuity, had been led to treat the world as unlimited in space and time. It is quite correct to say that we can go beyond every *definite* space and beyond every *definite* time: but it is no less correct that space and time are real and actual only when they are defined or specialised into 'here' and 'now' – a specialisation which is involved in the very notion of them. The same observations apply to the rest of the antinomies. Take, for example, the antinomy of freedom and necessity. The main gist of it is that freedom and necessity as understood by abstract thinkers are not independently real, as these thinkers suppose, but merely ideal factors (moments) of the true freedom and the true necessity, and that to abstract and isolate either conception is to make it false.

§ 49

(γ) The third object of the Reason is God (§ 36): he also must be known and defined in terms of thought. But in comparison with an unalloyed identity, every defining term as such seems to the understanding to be only a limit and a negation: every reality accordingly must be taken as limitless, i.e. undefined. Accordingly God, when he is defined to be the sum of all realities, the most real of beings, turns into a *mere abstract*. And the only term under which that most real of real things can be defined is that of Being itself the height of abstraction. These are two elements, abstract identity, on one hand, which is spoken of in this place as the notion; and Being on the other which Reason seeks to unify. And their union is the *Ideal* of Reason.

§ 50

To carry out this unification two ways or two forms are admissible. Either we may begin with Being and proceed to the *abstractum* of Thought: or the movement may begin with the abstraction and end in Being.

We shall, in the first place, start from Being. But Being, in its natural aspect, presents itself to view as a Being of infinite variety, a World in all its plentitude. And this world may be regarded in two ways: first, as a collection of innumerable unconnected facts; and second, as a collection of innumerable facts in mutual relation, giving evidence of design. The first aspect is emphasised in the Cosmological proof; the latter in the proofs of Natural Theology. Suppose now that this fullness of being passes under the agency of thought. Then it is stripped of its isolation and unconnectedness, and viewed as a universal and absolutely necessary being which determines itself and acts by general purposes or laws. And this necessary and self-determined being, different from the being at the commencement, is God.

The main force of Kant's criticism on this process attacks it for being a syllogising, i.e. a transition. Perceptions, and that aggregate of perceptions we call the world, exhibit as they stand no traces of that universality which they afterwards receive from the purifying act of thought. The empirical conception of the world therefore gives no warrant for the idea of universality. And so any attempt on the part of thought to ascend from the empirical conception of the world to God is checked by the argument of Hume (as in the

paralogisms, § 47), according to which we have no right to think sensations, that is, to elicit universality and necessity from them.

Man is essentially a thinker: and therefore sound Common Sense, as well as Philosophy, will not yield up their right of rising to God from and out of the empirical view of the world. The only basis on which this rise is possible is the thinking study of the world, not the bare sensuous, animal, intuition of it. Thought and thought alone has eyes for the essence, substance, universal power, and ultimate design of the world. And what men call the proofs of God's existence are, rightly understood, ways of describing and analysing the native course of the mind, the course of *thought* thinking the *data* of the senses. The rise of thought beyond the world of sense, its passage from the finite to the infinite, the leap into the supersensible which it takes when it snaps asunder the chain of sense, all this transition is thought and nothing but thought. Say there must be no such passage, and you say there is to be no thinking. And in sooth, animals make no such transition. They never get further than sensation and the perception of the senses, and in consequence they have no religion.

Both on general grounds, and in the particular case, there are two remarks to be made upon the criticism of this exaltation in thought. The first remark deals with the question of form. When the exaltation is exhibited in a syllogistic process, in the shape of what we call *proofs* of the being of God, these reasonings cannot but start from some sort of theory of the world, which makes it an aggregate either of contingent facts or of final causes and relations involving design. The merely syllogistic thinker may deem this starting-point a solid basis and suppose that it remains throughout in the same empirical light, left at last as it was at the first. In this case, the bearing of the beginning upon the conclusion to which it leads has a purely affirmative aspect, as if we were only reasoning from one thing which *is* and continues to *be*, to another thing which in like manner is. But the great error is to restrict our notions of the nature of thought to its form in understanding alone. To think the phenomenal world rather means to recast its form, and transmute it into a universal. And thus the action of thought has also a *negative* effect upon its basis: and the matter of sensation, when it receives the stamp of universality, at once loses its first and phenomenal shape. By the removal and negation of the shell, the kernel within the sense-percept is brought to the light (§§ 13 and 23). And it is because they do not, with sufficient prominence, express the negative features implied in the exaltation of the mind from the world to God that the metaphysical proofs of the being of a God are defective interpretations and descriptions of the process. If the world is only a sum of incidents, it follows that it is also deciduous and phenomenal, in *esse* and *posse* null. That upward spring of the mind signifies that the being which the world has is only a semblance, no real being, no absolute truth; it signifies that, beyond and above that appearance, truth abides in God, so that true being is another name for God. The process of exaltation might thus appear to be transition and to involve a means, but it is not a whit less true that every trace of transition and means is absorbed; since the world, which might have seemed to be the means of reaching God, is explained to be a nullity. Unless the being of the world is nullified, the *point d'appui* for the exaltation is lost. In this way the apparent means vanishes, and the process of derivation is cancelled in the very act by which it proceeds. It is the affirmative aspect of this relation, as supposed to subsist between two things, either of which *is* as much as the other, which Jacobi mainly has in his eye when he attacks the demonstrations of the understanding. Justly censuring them for seeking conditions (i.e. the world) for the unconditioned, he remarks that the Infinite or God must on such a method be presented as dependent and derivative. But that

elevation, as it takes place in the mind, serves to correct this semblance: in fact, it has no other meaning than to correct that semblance. Jacobi, however, failed to recognise the genuine nature of essential thought – by which it cancels the mediation in the very act of mediating; and consequently, his objection, though it tells against the merely ‘reflective’ understanding, is false when applied to thought as a whole, and in particular to reasonable thought.

To explain what we mean by the neglect of the negative factor in thought, we may refer by way of illustration to the charges of Pantheism and Atheism brought against the doctrines of Spinoza. The absolute Substance of Spinoza certainly falls short of absolute spirit, and it is a right and proper requirement that God should be defined as absolute spirit. But when the definition in Spinoza is said to identify the world with God, and to confound God with nature and the finite world, it is implied that the finite world possesses a genuine actuality and affirmative reality. If this assumption be admitted, of course a union of God with the world renders God completely finite, and degrades Him to the bare finite and adventitious congeries of existence. But there are two objections to be noted. In the first place Spinoza does not define God as the unity of God with the world, but as the union of thought with extension, that is, with the material world. And secondly, even if we accept this awkward popular statement as to this unity, it would still be true that the system of Spinoza was not Atheism but Acosmism, defining the world to be an appearance lacking in true reality. A philosophy which affirms that God and God alone is should not be stigmatised as atheistic, when even those nations which worship the ape, the cow, or images of stone and brass, are credited with some religion. But as things stand the imagination of ordinary men feels a vehement reluctance to surrender its dearest conviction, that this aggregate of finitude, which it calls a world, has actual reality; and to hold that there is no world is a way of thinking they are fain to believe impossible, or at least much less possible than to entertain the idea that there is no God. Human nature, not much to its credit, is more ready to believe that a system denies God, than that it denies the world. A denial of God seems so much more intelligible than a denial of the world.

The second remark bears on the criticism of the material propositions to which that elevation in thought in the first instance leads. If these ‘propositions have for their predicate such terms as substance of the world, its necessary essence, cause which regulates and directs it according to design, they are certainly inadequate to express what is or ought to be understood by God. Yet apart from the trick of adopting a preliminary popular conception of God, and criticising a result by this assumed standard, it is certain that these characteristics have great value, and are necessary factors in the idea of God. But if we wish in this way to bring before thought the genuine idea of God, and give its true value and expression to the central truth, we must be careful not to start from a subordinate level of facts. To speak of the ‘merely contingent’ things of the world is a very inadequate description of the premises.

The organic structures, and the evidence they afford of mutual adaptation, belong to a higher province, the province of animated nature. But even without taking into consideration the possible blemish which the study of animated nature and of the other teleological aspects of existing things may contract from the pettiness of the final causes, and from puerile instances of them and their bearings, merely animated nature is, at the best, incapable of supplying the material for a truthful expression to the idea to God. God is more than life: he is Spirit. And therefore if the thought of the Absolute takes a

starting-point for its rise, and desires to take the nearest, the most true and adequate starting-point will be found in the nature of spirit alone.

§ 51

The other way of unification by which to realise the Ideal of Reason is to set out from the *abstractum* of Thought and seek to characterise it: for which purpose Being is the only available term. This is the method of the Ontological proof. The opposition, here presented from a merely subjective point of view, lies between Thought and Being; whereas in the first way of junction, being is common to the two sides of the antithesis, and the contrast lies only between its individualisation and universality. Understanding meets this second way with what is implicitly the same objection as it made to the first. It denied that the empirical involves the universal; so it denies that the universal involves the specialisation, which specialisation in this instance is being. In other words it says: Being cannot be deduced from the notion by any analysis.

The uniformly favourable reception and acceptance which attended Kant's criticism of the Ontological proof was undoubtedly due to the illustration which he made use of. To explain the difference between thought and being, he took the instance of a hundred sovereigns, which, for anything it matters to the notion, are the same hundred whether they are real or only possible, though the difference of the two cases is very perceptible in their effect on a man's purse. Nothing can be more obvious than that anything we only think or conceive is not on that account actual; that mental representation, and even notional comprehension, always falls short of being. Still it may not unfairly be styled a barbarism in language, when the name of notion is given to things like a hundred sovereigns. And, putting that mistake aside, those who perpetually urge against the philosophic Idea the difference between Being and Thought might have admitted that philosophers were not wholly ignorant of the fact. Can there be any proposition more trite than this? But after all, it is well to remember, when we speak of God, that we have an object of another kind than any hundred sovereigns, and unlike any one particular notion, representation, or however else it may be styled. It is in fact this and this alone which marks everything finite: its being in time and space is discrepant from its notion. God, on the contrary, expressly has to be what can only be 'thought as existing'; his notion involves being. It is this unity of the notion and being that constitutes the notion of God.

If this were all, we should have only a formal expression of the divine nature which would not really go beyond a statement of the nature of the notion itself. And that the notion, in its most abstract terms, involves being is plain. For the notion, whatever other determination it may receive, is at least reference back on itself, which results by abolishing the intermediation, and thus is immediate. And what is that reference to self, but being? Certainly it would be strange if the notion, the very inmost of mind, if even the 'Ego', or above all the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to include so poor a category as being, the very poorest and most abstract of all. For, if we look at the thought it holds, nothing can be more insignificant than being. And yet there may be something still more insignificant than being that which at first sight is perhaps supposed to *be*, an external and sensible existence, like that of the paper lying before me. However, in this matter, nobody proposes to speak of the sensible existence of a limited and perishable thing. Besides, the petty stricture of the *Kritik* that 'thought and being are different' can at most molest the path of the human mind from the thought of God to the certainty that he is: it cannot take it away. It is this process of transition, depending on the absolute inseparability of the thought of God from his being, for which its proper

authority has been revindicated in the theory of faith or immediate knowledge – whereof hereafter.

§ 52

In this way thought, at its highest pitch, has to go outside for any determinateness; and although it is continually termed Reason, is out-and-out abstract thinking. And the result of all is that Reason supplies nothing beyond the formal unity required to simplify and systematise experiences; it is a *canon*, not an *organon*, of truth, and can furnish only a criticism of knowledge, not a *doctrine* of the infinite. In its final analysis this criticism is summed up in the assertion that in strictness thought is only the indeterminate unity and the action of this indeterminate unity.

Kant undoubtedly held reason to be the faculty of the unconditioned but if reason be reduced to abstract identity only, it by implication renounces its unconditionality and is in reality no better than empty understanding. For reason is unconditioned only in so far as its character and quality are not due to an extraneous and foreign content, only in so far as it is self-characterising, and thus, in point of content, is its own master. Kant, however, expressly explains that the action of reason consists solely in applying the categories to systematise the matter given by perception, i.e. to place it in an outside order, under the guidance of the principle of non-contradiction.

§ 53

(b) The Practical Reason is understood by Kant to mean a *thinking* Will, i.e. a Will that determines itself on universal principles. Its office is to give objective, imperative laws of freedom laws, that is, which state what ought to happen. The warrant for thus assuming thought to be an activity which makes itself felt objectively, that is, to be really a Reason, is the alleged possibility of proving practical freedom by experience, that is, of showing it in the phenomenon of self-consciousness. This experience in consciousness is at once met by all that the Necessitarian produces from contrary experience, particularly by the sceptical induction (employed among others by Hume) from the endless diversity of what men regard as right and duty i.e. from the diversity apparent in those professedly objective laws of freedom.

§ 54

What, then, is to serve as the law which the Practical Reason embraces and obeys, and as the criterion in its act of self-determination? There is no rule at hand but the same abstract identity of understanding as before: there must be no contradiction in the act of self-determination. Hence the Practical Reason never shakes off the formalism which is represented as the climax of the Theoretical Reason.

But this Practical Reason does not confine the universal principle of the Good to its own inward regulation: it first becomes *practical*, in the true sense of the word, when it insists on the Good being manifested in the world with an outward objectivity, and requires that the thought shall be objective throughout, and not merely subjective. We shall speak of this postulate of the Practical Reason afterwards.

The free self-determination which Kant denied to the speculative, he has expressly vindicated for the practical reason. To many minds this particular aspect of the Kantian philosophy made it welcome; and that for good reasons. To estimate rightly what we owe to Kant in the matter, we ought to set before our minds the form of practical philosophy and in particular of ‘moral philosophy’ which prevailed in his time. It may be generally described as a system of Eudaemonism, which, when asked what man’s chief end ought to be, replied Happiness. And by happiness Eudaemonism understood the satisfaction of the private appetites, wishes, and wants of the man: thus raising the contingent and particular into a principle for the will and its actualisation.

To this Eudaemonism, which was destitute of stability and consistency, and which left the 'door and gate' wide open for every whim and caprice, Kant opposed the practical reason, and thus emphasised the need for a principle of will which should be universal and lay the same obligation on all. The theoretical reason, as has been made evident in the preceding paragraphs, is identified by Kant with the negative faculty of the infinite; and as it has no positive content of its own, it is restricted to the function of detecting the finitude of experiential knowledge. To the practical reason, on the contrary, he has expressly allowed a positive infinity, by ascribing to the will the power of modifying itself in universal modes, i.e. by thought. Such a power the will undoubtedly has: and it is well to remember that man is free only in so far as he possesses it and avails himself of it in his conduct. But a recognition of the existence of this power is not enough and does not avail to tell us what are the contents of the will or practical reason. Hence to say that a man must make the Good the content of his will raises the question, what that content is, and what are the means of ascertaining what good is. Nor does one get over the difficulty by the principle that the will must be consistent with itself, or by the precept to do duty for the sake of duty.

§ 55

(c) The **Reflective Power of Judgment** is invested by Kant with the function of an Intuitive Understanding. That is to say, whereas the particulars had hitherto appeared, so far as the universal or abstract identity was concerned, adventitious and incapable of being deduced from it, the *Intuitive* Understanding apprehends the particulars as moulded and formed by the universal itself. Experience presents such universalised particulars in the products of Art and of *organic* nature.

The capital feature in Kant's Criticism of the Judgment is, that in it he gave a representation and a name, if not even an intellectual expression, to the Idea. Such a representation, as an Intuitive Understanding, or an inner adaptation, suggests a universal which is at the same time apprehended as essentially a concrete unity. It is in these *aperçus* alone that the Kantian philosophy rises to the speculative height. Schiller, and others, have found in the idea of artistic beauty, where thought and sensuous conception have grown together into one, a way of escape from the abstract and separatist understanding. Others have found the same relief in the perception and consciousness of life and of living things, whether that life be natural or intellectual. The work of Art, as well as the living individual, is, it must be owned, of limited content. But in the postulated harmony of nature (or necessity) and free purpose in the final purpose of the world conceived as realised, Kant has put before us the Idea, comprehensive even in its content. Yet what may be called the laziness of thought, when dealing with the supreme Idea, finds a too easy mode of evasion in the 'ought to be': instead of the actual realisation of the ultimate end, it clings hard to the disjunction of the notion from reality. Yet if thought will not *think* the ideal realised, the senses and the intuition can at any rate see it in the present reality of living organisms and of the beautiful in Art. And consequently Kant's remarks on these objects were well adapted to lead the mind on to grasp and think the concrete Idea.

§ 56

We are thus led to conceive a different relation between the universal of understanding and the particular of perception, than that on which the theory of the Theoretical and Practical Reason is founded. But while this is so, it is not supplemented by a recognition that the former is the genuine relation and the very truth. Instead of that, the unity (of universal with particular) is accepted only as it exists in finite phenomena, and is adduced only as a fact of experience. Such experience, at first only personal, may come from two sources. It may spring from Genius, the faculty which produces 'aesthetic ideas';

meaning by aesthetic ideas, the picture-thoughts of the free imagination which subserve an idea and suggest thoughts, although their content is not expressed in a notional form, and even admits of no such expression. It may also be due to Taste, the feeling of congruity between the free play of intuition or imagination and the uniformity of understanding.

§ 57

The principle by which the Reflective faculty of Judgment regulates and arranges the products of animated nature is described as the End or final cause the notion in action, the universal at once determining and determinate in itself. At the same time Kant is careful to discard the conception of external or finite adaptation, in which the End is only an adventitious form for the means and material in which it is realised. In the living organism, on the contrary, the final cause is a moulding principle and an energy immanent in the matter, and every member is in its turn a means as well as an end.

§ 58

Such an Idea evidently radically transforms the relation which the understanding institutes between means and ends, between subjectivity and objectivity. And yet in the face of this unification, the End or design is subsequently explained to be a cause which exists and acts subjectively, i.e. as our idea only: and teleology is accordingly explained to be only a principle of criticism, purely personal to our understanding.

After the Critical philosophy had settled that Reason can know phenomena only, there would still have been an option for animated nature between two equally subjective modes of thought. Even according to Kant's own exposition, there would have been an obligation to admit, in the case of natural productions, a knowledge not confined to the categories of quality, cause and effect, composition, constituents, and so on. The principle of inward adaptation or design, had it been kept to and carried out in scientific application, would have led to a different and a higher method of observing nature.

§ 59

If we adopt this principle, the Idea, when all limitations were removed from it, would appear as follows. The universality moulded by Reason, and described as the absolute and final end or the Good, would be realised in the world, and realised moreover by means of a third thing, the power which proposes this End as well as realises it that is, God. Thus in him, who is the absolute truth, those oppositions of universal and individual, subjective and objective, are solved and explained to be neither self-subsistent nor true.

§ 60

But Good which is thus put forward as the final cause of the world has been already described as only *our* good, the moral law of *our* Practical Reason. This being so, the unity in question goes no further than make the state of the world and the course of its events harmonise with our moral standards. Besides, even with this limitation, the final cause, or Good, is a vague abstraction, and the same vagueness attaches to what is to be Duty. But, further, this harmony is met by the revival and reassertion of the antithesis, which it by its own principle had nullified. The harmony is then described as merely subjective, something which merely ought to be, and which at the same time is not real a mere article of faith, possessing a subjective certainty, but without truth, or that

objectivity which is proper to the Idea. This contradiction may seem to be disguised by adjourning the realisation of the Idea to a future, to a *time* when the Idea will also be. But a sensuous condition like time is the reverse of a reconciliation of the discrepancy; and an infinite progression which is the corresponding image adopted by the understanding on the very face of it only repeats and re-enacts the contradiction.

A general remark may still be offered on the result to which the Critical philosophy led as to the nature of knowledge; a result which has grown one of the current 'idols' or axiomatic beliefs of the day. In every dualistic system, and especially in that of Kant, the fundamental defect makes itself visible in the inconsistency of unifying at one moment what a moment before had been explained to be independent and therefore incapable of unification. And then, at the very moment after unification has been alleged to be the truth, we suddenly come upon the doctrine that the two elements, which, in their true status of unification, had been refused all independent subsistence, are only true and actual in their state of separation. Philosophising of this kind wants the little penetration needed to discover, that this shuffling only evidences how unsatisfactory each one of the two terms is. And it fails simply because it is incapable of bringing two thoughts together. (And in point of form there are never more than two.) It argues an utter want of consistency to say, on the one hand, that the understanding only knows phenomena, and, on the other, assert the absolute character of this knowledge, by such statements as 'Cognition can go no further'; 'Here is the *natural* and absolute limit of human knowledge.' But 'natural' is the wrong word here. The things of nature are limited and are natural things only to such extent as they are not aware of their universal limit, or to such extent as their mode or quality is a limit from our point of view, and not from their own. No one knows, or even feels, that anything is a limit or defect, until he is at the same time above and beyond it. Living beings, for example, possess the privilege of pain which is denied to the inanimate: even with living beings, a single mode or quality passes into the feeling of a negative. For living beings as such possess within them a universal vitality, which overpasses and includes the single mode; and thus, as they maintain themselves in the negative of themselves, they feel the contradiction to exist within them. But the contradiction is within them only in so far as one and the same subject includes both the universality of their sense of life, and the individual mode which is in negation with it. This illustration will show how a limit or imperfection in knowledge comes to be termed a limit or imperfection, only when it is compared with the actually present Idea of the universal, of a total and perfect. A very little consideration might show that to call a thing finite or limited proves by implication the very presence of the infinite and unlimited, and that our knowledge of a limit can only be when the unlimited is *on this side* in consciousness.

The result however of Kant's view of cognition suggests a second remark. The philosophy of Kant could have no influence on the method of the sciences. It leaves the categories and method of ordinary knowledge quite unmolested. Occasionally, it may be, in the first sections of a scientific work of that period, we find propositions borrowed from the Kantian philosophy; but the course of the treatise renders it apparent that these propositions were superfluous decoration, and that the few first pages might have been omitted without producing the least change in the empirical contents.

We may next institute a comparison of Kant with the metaphysics of the empirical school. Natural plain Empiricism, though it unquestionably insists most upon sensuous perception, still allows a supersensible world or spiritual reality, whatever may be its

structure and constitution, and whether derived from intellect, or from imagination, etc. So far as form goes, the facts of this supersensible world rest on the authority of mind, in the same way as the other facts embraced in empirical knowledge rest on the authority of external perception. But when Empiricism becomes reflective and logically consistent, it turns its arms against this dualism in the ultimate and highest species of fact; it denies the independence of the thinking principle and of a spiritual world which develops itself in thought. Materialism or Naturalism, therefore, is the consistent and thoroughgoing system of Empiricism. In direct opposition to such an Empiricism, Kant asserts the principle of thought and freedom, and attaches himself to the first mentioned form of empirical doctrine, the general principles of which he never departed from. There is a dualism in his philosophy also. On one side stands the world of sensation, and of the understanding which reflects upon it. This world, it is true, he alleges to be a world of appearances. But that is only a title or formal description; for the source, the facts, and the modes of observation continue quite the same as in Empiricism. On the other side and independent stands a self-apprehending thought, the principle of freedom, which Kant has in common with ordinary and bygone metaphysic, but emptied of all that it held, and without his being able to infuse into it anything new. For, in the Critical doctrine, thought, or, as it is there called, Reason, is divested of every specific form, and thus bereft of all authority. The main effect of the Kantian philosophy has been to revive the consciousness of Reason, or the absolute inwardness of thought. Its abstractness indeed prevented that inwardness from developing into anything, or from originating any special forms, whether cognitive principles or moral laws; but nevertheless it absolutely refused to accept or indulge anything possessing the character of an externality. Henceforth the principle of the independence of Reason, or of its absolute self-subsistence, is made a general principle of philosophy, as well as a foregone conclusion of the time.

(1) The Critical philosophy has one great negative merit. It has brought home the conviction that the categories of understanding are finite in their range, and that any cognitive process confined within their pale falls short of the truth. But Kant had only a sight of half the truth. He explained the finite nature of the categories to mean that they were subjective only, valid only for our thought, from which the thing-in-itself was divided by an impassable gulf. In fact, however, it is not because they are subjective that the categories are finite: they are finite by their very nature, and it is on their own selves that it is requisite to exhibit their finitude. Kant however holds that what we think is false, because it is we who think it. A further deficiency in the system is that it gives only a historical description of thought, and a mere enumeration of the factors of consciousness. The enumeration is in the main correct: but not a word touches upon the necessity of what is thus empirically colligated. The observations made on the various stages of consciousness culminant in the summary statement that the content of all we are acquainted with is only an appearance. And as it is true at least that all finite thinking is concerned with appearances, so far the conclusion is justified. This stage of 'appearance' however – the phenomenal world – is not the terminus of thought: there is another and a higher region. But that region was to the Kantian philosophy an inaccessible 'other world'.

(2) After all it was only formally that the Kantian system established the principle that thought is spontaneous and self-determining. Into details of the manner and the extent of this self-determination of thought, Kant never went. It was Fichte who first noticed the omission; and who, after he had called attention to the want of a deduction for the categories, endeavoured really to supply something of the kind. With Fichte, the 'Ego' is the starting-point in the philosophical development: and the outcome of its action is supposed to be visible in the categories. But in Fichte the 'Ego' is not really presented as a free, spontaneous energy; it is supposed to receive its first excitation by a shock or impulse from without. Against this shock the 'Ego' will, it is assumed, react, and only through this reaction does it first become conscious of itself. Meanwhile, the nature of the impulse remains a stranger beyond our pale: and the 'Ego', with something else always confronting it, is weighted with a condition. Fichte, in consequence, never advanced

beyond Kant's conclusion, that the finite only is knowable, while the infinite transcends the range of thought. What Kant calls the thing-by-itself, Fichte calls the impulse from without – that abstraction of something else than 'I', not otherwise describable or definable than as the negative or non-Ego in general. The 'I' is thus looked at as standing in essential relation with the not-I, through which its act of self-determination is first awakened. And in this manner the 'I' is but the continuous act of self-liberation from this impulse, never gaining a real freedom, because with the surcease of the impulse the 'I', whose being is its action, would also cease to be. Nor is the content produced by the action of the 'I' at all different from the ordinary content of experience, except by the supplementary remark, that this content is mere appearance.

III. Third Attitude of Thought to Objectivity Immediate or Intuitive Knowledge

§ 61

If we are to believe the Critical philosophy, thought is subjective, and its ultimate and invincible mode is *abstract universality* or formal identity. Thought is thus set in opposition to Truth, which is no abstraction, but concrete universality. In this highest mode of thought, which is entitled Reason, the Categories are left out of account. The extreme theory on the opposite side holds thought to be an act of the *particular* only, and on that ground declares it incapable of apprehending the Truth. This is the Intuitional theory.

§ 62

According to this theory, thinking, a private and particular operation, has its whole scope and product in the Categories. But these Categories, as arrested by the understanding, are limited vehicles of thought, forms of the conditioned, of the dependent and derivative. A thought limited to these modes has no sense of the Infinite and the True, and cannot bridge over the gulf that separates it from them. (This stricture refers to the proofs of God's existence.) These inadequate modes or categories are also spoken of as *notions*: and to get a notion of an object therefore can only mean, in this language, to grasp it under the form of being conditioned and derivative. Consequently, if the object in question be the True, the Infinite, the Unconditioned, we change it by our notions into a finite and conditioned; whereby, instead of apprehending the truth by thought, we have perverted it into untruth.

Such is the one simple line of argument advanced for the thesis that the knowledge of God and of truth must be immediate, or intuitive. At an earlier period all sort of anthropomorphic conceptions, as they are termed, were banished from God, as being finite and therefore unworthy of the infinite; and in this way God had been reduced to a tolerably blank being. But in those days the thought-forms were in general not supposed to come under the head of anthropomorphism. Thought was believed rather to strip finitude from the conceptions of the Absolute – in agreement with the above-mentioned conviction of all ages, that reflection is the only road to truth. But now, at length, even the thought-forms are pronounced anthropomorphic, and thought itself is described as a mere faculty of Unitisation.

Jacobi has stated this charge most distinctly in the seventh supplement to his *Letters on Spinoza* – borrowing his line of argument from the works of Spinoza himself, and applying it as a weapon against knowledge in general. In his attack knowledge is taken to mean knowledge of the finite only, a process of thought from one condition in a series to another, each of which is at once conditioning and conditioned. According to such a

view, to explain and to get the notion of anything, is the same as to show it to be derived from something else. Whatever such knowledge embraces, consequently, is partial, dependent, and finite, while the infinite or true, i.e. God, lies outside of the mechanical interconnection to which knowledge is said to be confined. It is important to observe that, while Kant makes the finite nature of the Categories consist mainly in the formal circumstance that they are subjective, Jacobi discusses the Categories in their own proper character, and pronounces them to be in their very import finite. What Jacobi chiefly had before his eyes, when he thus described science, was the brilliant successes of the physical or 'exact' sciences in ascertaining natural forces and laws. It is certainly not on the finite ground occupied by these sciences that we can expect to meet the in-dwelling presence of the infinite. Lalande was right when he said he had swept the whole heaven with his glass, and seen no God. (See § 60n.) In the field of physical science, the universal, which is the final result of analysis, is only the indeterminate aggregate – of the external finite – in one word, Matter: and Jacobi well perceived that there was no other issue obtainable in the way of a mere advance from one explanatory clause or law to another.

§ 63

All the while the doctrine that truth exists for the mind was so strongly maintained by Jacobi, that Reason alone is declared to be that by which man lives. This Reason is the knowledge of God. But, seeing that derivative knowledge is restricted to the compass of finite facts, Reason is knowledge underivative, or Faith.

Knowledge, Faith, Thought, Intuition are the categories that we meet with on this line of reflection. These terms, as presumably familiar to every one, are only too frequently subjected to an arbitrary use, under no better guidance than the conceptions and distinctions of psychology, without any investigation into their nature and notion, which is the main question after all. Thus, we often find knowledge contrasted with faith, and faith at the same time explained to be an underivative or intuitive knowledge – so that it must be at least some sort of knowledge. And, besides, it is unquestionably a fact of experience, firstly, that what we believe is in our consciousness-which implies that we *know about it*; and secondly, that this belief is a certainty in our consciousness – which implies that we *know it*. Again, and especially, we find thought opposed to immediate knowledge and faith, and, in particular, to intuition. But if this intuition be qualified as intellectual, we must really mean intuition which thinks, unless, in a question about the nature of God, we are willing to interpret intellect to mean images and representations of imagination. The word faith or belief, in the dialect of this system, comes to be employed even with reference to common objects that are present to the senses. We believe, says Jacobi, that we have a body – we believe in the existence of the things of sense. But if we are speaking of faith in the True and Eternal, and saying that God is given and revealed to us in immediate knowledge or intuition, we are concerned not with the things of sense, but with objects special to our thinking mind, with truths of inherently universal significance. And when the individual 'I', or in other words personality, is under discussion – not the 'I' of experience, or a single private person – above all, when the personality of God is before us, we are speaking of personality unalloyed – of a personality in its own nature universal. Such personality is a thought, and falls within the province of thought only. More than this. Pure and simple intuition is completely the same as pure and simple thought. Intuition and belief, in the first instance, denote the definite conceptions we attach to these words in our ordinary employment of them: and to

this extent they differ from thought in certain points which nearly every one can understand. But here they are taken in a higher sense, and must be interpreted to mean a belief in God, or an intellectual intuition of God; in short, we must put aside all that especially distinguishes thought on the one side from belief and intuition on the other. How belief and intuition, when transferred to these higher regions, differ from thought, it is impossible for any one to say. And yet, such are the barren distinctions of words, with which men fancy that they assert an important truth; even while the formulae they maintain are identical with those which they impugn.

The term *Faith* brings with it the special advantage of suggesting the faith of the Christian religion; it seems to include Christian faith, or perhaps even to coincide with it; and thus the Philosophy of Faith has a thoroughly orthodox and Christian look, on the strength of which it takes the liberty of uttering its arbitrary dicta with greater pretension and authority. But we must not let ourselves be deceived by the semblance surreptitiously secured by a merely verbal similarity. The two things are radically distinct. Firstly, the Christian faith comprises in it an authority of the Church: but the faith of Jacobi's philosophy has no other authority than that of a personal revelation. And, secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine: while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite, that, while it has room for the faith of the Christian, it equally admits a belief in the divinity of the Dalai Lama, the ox, or the monkey – thus, so far as it goes, narrowing Deity down to its simplest terms, a 'Supreme Being'. Faith itself, taken in this professedly philosophical sense, is nothing but the sapless abstract of immediate knowledge – a purely formal category applicable to very different facts; and it ought never to be confused or identified with the spiritual fullness of Christian faith, whether we look at that faith in the heart of the believer and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or in the system of theological doctrine.

With what is here called faith or immediate knowledge must also be identified inspiration, the heart's revelations, the truths implanted in man by nature, and also in particular, healthy reason or Common Sense, as it is called. All these forms agree in adopting as their leading principle the immediacy, or self-evident way, in which a fact or body of truths is presented in consciousness.

§ 64

This immediate knowledge, consists in knowing that the Infinite, the Eternal, the God which is in our Idea, really *is*: or, it asserts that in our consciousness there is immediately and inseparably bound up with this idea the certainty of its actual being.

To seek to controvert these maxims of immediate knowledge is the last thing philosophers would think of. They may rather find occasion for self-gratulation when these ancient doctrines, expressing as they do the general tenor of philosophic teaching, have, even in this unphilosophical fashion, become to some extent universal convictions of the age. The true marvel rather is that any one could suppose that these principles were opposed to philosophy – the maxims, viz., that whatever is held to be true is immanent in the mind, and that there is truth for the mind (§ 63). From a formal point of view, there is a peculiar interest in the maxim that the being of God is immediately and inseparably bound up with the thought of God, that objectivity is bound up with the subjectivity which the thought originally presents. Not content with that, the philosophy of immediate knowledge goes so far in its one-sided view, as to affirm that the attribute of existence, even in perception, is quite as inseparably connected with the conception we have of our

own bodies and of external things, as it is with the thought of God. Now it is the endeavour of philosophy to prove such a unity, to show that it lies in the very nature of thought and subjectivity, to be inseparable from being and objectivity. In these circumstances therefore, philosophy, whatever estimate may be formed of the character of these proofs, must in any case be glad to see it shown and maintained that its maxims are facts of consciousness, and thus in harmony with experience. The difference between philosophy and the asseverations of immediate knowledge rather centres in the exclusive attitude which immediate knowledge adopts, when it sets itself up against philosophy.

And yet it was as a self-evident or immediate truth that the *cogito, ergo sum* of Descartes, the maxim on which may be said to hinge the whole interest of Modern Philosophy, was first stated by its author. The man who calls this a syllogism, must know little more about a syllogism than that the word ‘*ergo*’ [“therefore”] occurs in it. Where shall we look for the middle term? And a middle term is a much more essential point of a syllogism than the word ‘*ergo*’. If we try to justify the name, by calling the combination of ideas in Descartes an ‘immediate’ syllogism, this superfluous variety of syllogism is a mere name for an utterly unmediated synthesis of distinct terms of thought. That being so, the synthesis of being with our ideas, as stated in the maxim of immediate knowledge, has no more and no less claim to the title of syllogism than the axiom of Descartes has. From Hotho’s ‘*Dissertation on the Cartesian Philosophy*’ (published 1826), I borrow the quotation in which Descartes himself distinctly declares that the maxim *cogito, ergo sum* is no syllogism. The passages are *Respons. ad II Object.*; *De Methodo* iv; *Ep.* i. 118. From the first passage I quote the words more immediately to the point. Descartes says: ‘That we are thinking beings is *prima quaedam notio quae ex nullo syllogismo concluditur*’ (a certain primary notion, which is deduced from no syllogism); and goes on: ‘*neque cum quis dicit: Ego cogito, ergo sum sive existo, existentiam ex cogitatione per syllogismum deducit*’ (nor, when one says, I think, therefore I am or exist, does he deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism). Descartes knew what it implied in a syllogism, and so he adds that, in order to make the maxim admit of a deduction by syllogism, we should have to add the major premise: ‘*Illud omne quod cogitate, est sive existit*’ (Everything which thinks, is or exists). Of course, he remarks, this major premise itself has to be deduced from the original statement.

The language of Descartes on the maxim that the ‘I’ which *thinks* must also at the same time be, his saying that this connection is given and implied in the simple perception of consciousness that this connection is the absolute first, the principle, the most certain and evident of all things, so that no scepticism can be conceived so monstrous as not to admit it – all this language is so vivid and distinct, that the modern statements of Jacobi and others on this immediate connection can only pass for needless repetitions.

§ 65

The theory of which we are speaking is not satisfied when it has shown that mediate knowledge taken separately is an adequate vehicle of truth. Its distinctive doctrine is that immediate knowledge alone, to the total exclusion of mediation, can possess a content which is true. This exclusiveness is enough to show that the theory is a relapse into the metaphysical understanding, with its catch words ‘either-or’. And thus it is really a relapse into the habit of external mediation, the gist of which consists in clinging to those narrow and one-sided categories of the finite, which it falsely imagined itself to have left for ever behind. This point, however, we shall not at present discuss in detail. An exclusively immediate knowledge is asserted as a fact only, and in the present

Introduction we can only study it from this external point of view. The real significance of such knowledge will be explained when we come to the logical question of the opposition between mediate and immediate. But it is characteristic of the view before us to decline to examine the nature of the fact, that is, the notion of it; for such an examination would itself be a step towards mediation and even towards knowledge. The genuine discussion on logical ground, therefore, must be deferred till we come to the proper province of Logic itself.

The whole of the second part of Logic, the Doctrine of Essential Being, is a discussion of the intrinsic and self-affirming unity of immediacy and mediation.

§ 66

Beyond this point then we need not go: immediate knowledge is to be accepted as a *fact*. Under these circumstances examination is directed to the field of experience, to a psychological phenomenon. If that be so, we need only note, as the commonest of experiences, that truths which we well know to be results of complicated and highly mediated trains of thought present themselves immediately and without effort to the mind of any man who is familiar with the subject. The mathematician, like everyone who has mastered a particular science, meets any problem with ready-made solutions which presuppose most complicated analyses: and every educated man has a number of general views and maxims which he can muster without trouble, but which can only have sprung from frequent reflection and long experience. The facility we attain in any sort of knowledge, art, or technical expertness, consists in having the particular knowledge or kind of action present to our mind in any case that occurs, even, we may say, immediate in our very limbs, in an outgoing activity. In all these instances, immediacy of knowledge is so far from excluding mediation, that the two things are linked together – immediate knowledge being actually the product and result of mediated knowledge.

It is no less obvious that immediate *existence* is bound up with its mediation. The seed and the parents are immediate and initial existences in respect of the offspring which they generate. But the seed and the parents, though they exist and are therefore immediate, are yet in their turn generated; and the child, without prejudice to the mediation of its existence, is immediate, because it is. The fact that I am in Berlin, my immediate presence here, is mediated by my having made the journey hither.

§ 67

One thing may be observed with reference to the immediate knowledge of God, of legal and ethical principles (including under the head of immediate knowledge what is otherwise termed Instinct, Implanted or Innate Ideas, Common Sense, Natural Reason, or whatever form, in short, we give to the original spontaneity). It is a matter of general experience that education or development is required to bring out into consciousness what is therein contained. It was so even with the Platonic reminiscence; and the Christian rite of baptism, although a sacrament, involves the additional obligation of a Christian upbringing. In short, religion and morals, however much they may be faith or immediate knowledge, are still on every side conditioned by the mediating process which is termed development, education, training.

The adherents, no less than the assailants, of the doctrine of Innate Ideas have been guilty throughout of the like exclusiveness and narrowness as is here noted. They have drawn a hard and fast line between the essential and immediate union (as it may be described) of certain universal principles with the soul, and another union which has to be brought

about in an external fashion, and through the channel of *given* objects and conceptions. There is one objection, borrowed from experience, which was raised against the doctrine of Innate Ideas. All men, it was said, must have these ideas; they must have, for example, the maxim of contradiction present in the mind – they must be aware of it; for this maxim and others like it were included in the class of Innate Ideas. The objection may be set down to misconception; for the principles in question, though innate, need not on that account have the form of ideas or conceptions of something we are aware of. Still, the objection completely meets and overthrows the crude theory of immediate knowledge, which expressly maintains its formulae in so far as they are in consciousness. Another point calls for notice. ‘We may suppose it admitted by the intuitive school, that the special case of religious faith involves supplementing by a Christian or religious education and development. In that case it is acting capriciously when it seeks to ignore this admission when speaking about faith, or it betrays a want of reflection not to know, that, if the necessity of education be once admitted, mediation is pronounced indispensable.

The reminiscence of ideas spoken of by Plato is equivalent to saying that ideas implicitly exist in man, instead of being, as the Sophists assert, a foreign importation into his mind. But to conceive knowledge as reminiscence does not interfere with, or set aside as useless, the development of what is implicitly in man; which development is another word for mediation. The same holds good of the innate ideas that we find in Descartes and the Scotch philosophers. These ideas are only potential in the first instance, and should be looked at as being a sort of mere capacity in man.

§ 68

In the case of these experiences the appeal turns upon something that shows itself bound up with immediate consciousness. Even if this combination be in the first instance taken as an external and empirical connection, still, even for empirical observation, the fact of its being constant shows it to be essential and inseparable. But, again, if this immediate consciousness, as exhibited in experience, be taken separately, so far as it is a consciousness of God and the divine nature, the state of mind which it implies is generally described as an exaltation above the finite, above the senses, and above the instinctive desires and affections of the natural heart: which exaltation passes over into, and terminates in, faith in God and a divine order. It is apparent, therefore, that, though faith may be an immediate knowledge and certainty, it equally implies the interposition of this process as its antecedent and condition.

It has been already observed, that the so-called proofs of the being of God, which start from finite being, give an expression to this exaltation. In that light they are no inventions of an oversubtle reflection, but the necessary and native channel in which the movement of mind runs: though it may be that, in their ordinary form, these proofs have not their correct and adequate expression.

§ 69

It is the passage (§ 64) from the subjective Idea to being which forms the main concern of the doctrine of immediate knowledge. A primary and self-evident interconnection is declared to exist between our Idea and being. Yet precisely this central point of transition, utterly irrespective of any connections which show in experience, clearly involves a mediation. And the mediation is of no imperfect or unreal kind, where the mediation takes place with and through something external, but one comprehending both antecedent and conclusion.

§ 70

For, what this theory asserts is that truth lies neither in the Idea as a merely subjective thought, nor in mere being on its own account – that mere being *per se*, a being that is not of the Idea, is the sensible finite being of the world. Now all this only affirms, without demonstration, that the Idea has truth only by means of being, and being has truth only by means of the Idea. The maxim of immediate knowledge rejects an indefinite empty immediacy (and such is abstract being, or pure unity taken by itself), and affirms in its stead the unity of the Idea with being. And it acts rightly in so doing. But it is stupid not to see that the unity of distinct terms or modes is not merely a purely immediate unity, i.e. unity empty and indeterminate, but that – with equal emphasis – the one term is shown to have truth only as mediated through the other – or, if the phrase be preferred, that either term is only mediated with truth through the other. That the quality of mediation is involved in the very immediacy of intuition is thus exhibited as a fact, against which understanding, conformably to the fundamental maxim of immediate knowledge that the evidence of consciousness is infallible, can have nothing to object. It is only ordinary abstract understanding which takes the terms of mediation and immediacy, each by itself absolutely, to represent an inflexible line of distinction, and thus draws upon its own head the hopeless task of reconciling them. The difficulty, as we have shown, has no existence in the fact, and it vanishes in the speculative notion.

§ 71

The one-sidedness of the intuitional school has certain characteristics attending upon it, which we shall proceed to point out in their main features, now that we have discussed the fundamental principle. The *first* of these corollaries is as follows. Since the criterion of truth is found, not in the nature of the content, but in the mere fact of consciousness, every alleged truth has no other basis than subjective certitude and the assertion that we discover a certain fact in our consciousness. What I discover in my consciousness is thus exaggerated into a fact of the consciousness of all, and even passed off for the very nature of consciousness.

Among the so-called proofs of the existence of God, there used to stand the *consensus gentium*, to which appeal is made as early as Cicero. The *consensus gentium* is a weighty authority, and the transition is easy and natural, from the circumstance that a certain fact is found in the consciousness of every one to the conclusion that it is a necessary element in the very nature of consciousness. In this category of general agreement there was latent the deep-rooted perception, which does not escape even the least cultivated mind, that the consciousness of the individual is at the same time particular and accidental. Yet unless we examine the nature of this consciousness itself, stripping it of its particular and accidental elements and, by the toilsome operation of reflection disclosing the universal in its entirety and purity, it is only a unanimous agreement upon a given point that can authorise a decent presumption that that point is part of the very nature of consciousness.

Of course, if thought insists on seeing the necessity of what is presented as a fact of general occurrence, the *consensus gentium* is certainly not sufficient. Yet even granting the universality of the fact to be a satisfactory proof, it has been found impossible to establish the belief in God on such an argument, because experience shows that there are individuals and nations without any such faith.

In order to judge of the greater or less extent to which Experience shows cases of Atheism or of the belief in God, it is all-important to know if the mere general conception of deity suffices, or if a more definite knowledge of God is required. The Christian world would certainly refuse the title of

God to the idols of the Hindus and the Chinese, to the fetishes of the Africans, and even to the gods of Greece themselves. If so, a believer in these idols would not be a believer in God. If it were contended, on the other hand, that such a belief in idols implies some sort of belief in God, as the species implies the genus, then idolatry would argue not faith in an idol merely, but faith in God. The Athenians took an opposite view. The poets and philosophers who explained Zeus to be a cloud, and maintained that there was only one God, were treated as atheists at Athens.

The danger in these questions lies in looking at what the mind may make out of an object, and not what that object actually and explicitly is. If we fail to note this distinction, the commonest perceptions of men's senses will be religion: for every such perception, and indeed every act of mind, implicitly contains the principle which, when it is purified and developed, rises to religion. But to be capable of religion is one thing, to have it another. And religion yet implicit is only a capacity or a possibility.

Thus in modern times, travellers have found tribes (as Captains Ross and Parry found the Esquimaux) which, as they tell us, have not even that small modicum of religion possessed by African sorcerers, the *goetes* of Herodotus. On the other hand, an Englishman, who spent the first months of the last Jubilee at Rome, says, in his account of the modern Romans, that the common people are bigots, whilst those who can read and write are atheists to a man.

The charge of Atheism is seldom heard in modern times: principally because the facts and the requirements of religion are reduced to a minimum. (See § 73.)

But there can be nothing shorter and more convenient than to have the bare assertion to make, that we discover a fact in our consciousness, and are certain that it is true: and to declare that this certainty, instead of proceeding from our particular mental constitution only, belongs to the very nature of the mind.

§ 72

A *second* corollary which results from holding immediacy of consciousness to be the criterion of truth is that all superstition or idolatry is allowed to be truth, and that an apology is prepared for any contents of the will, however wrong and immoral. It is because he believes in them, and not from the reasoning and syllogism of what is termed mediate knowledge, that the Hindu finds God in the cow, the monkey, the Brahmin, or the Lama. But, the natural desires and affections spontaneously carry and deposit their interests in consciousness, where also immoral aims make themselves naturally at home: the good or bad character would thus express the *definite being* of the will, which would be known, and that most immediately, in the interests and aims.

§ 73

Thirdly and lastly, the immediate consciousness of God goes no further than to tell us *that* he is: to tell us *what* he is would be an act of cognition, involving mediation. So that God as an object of religion is expressly narrowed down to the indeterminate supersensible, God in general: and the significance of religion is reduced to a minimum.

If it were really needful to win back and secure the bare belief that there is a God, or even to create it, we might well wonder at the poverty of the age which can see a gain in the merest pittance of religious consciousness, and which in its church has sunk so low as to worship at the altar that stood in Athens long ago, dedicated to the 'Unknown God'.

§ 74

We have still briefly to indicate the general nature of the form of immediacy. For it is the essential one-sidedness of the category which makes whatever comes under it one-sided and, for that reason, finite. And, first, it makes the universal no better than an abstraction external to the particulars, and God a being without determinate quality. But God can

only be called a spirit when he is known to be at once the beginning and end, as well as the mean, in the process of mediation. Without this unification of elements he is neither concrete, nor living, nor a spirit. Thus the knowledge of God as a spirit necessarily implies mediation. The form of immediacy, secondly, invests the particular with the character of independent or self-centred being. But such predicates contradict the very essence of the particular – which is to be referred to something else outside. They thus invest the finite with the character of an absolute. But, besides, the form of immediacy is altogether abstract: it has no preference for one set of contents more than another, but is equally susceptible of all: it may as well sanction what is idolatrous and immoral as the reverse. Only when we discern that the content – the particular – is not self-subsistent, but derivative from something else, are its finitude and untruth shown in their proper light. Such discernment, where the content we discern carries with it the ground of its dependent nature, is a knowledge which involves mediation. The only content which can be held to be the truth is one not mediated with something else, not limited by other things: or, otherwise expressed, it is one mediated by itself, where mediation and immediate reference-to-self coincide. The understanding that fancies it has got clear of finite knowledge, the identity of the analytical metaphysicians and the old ‘rationalists’, abruptly takes again as principle and criterion of truth that immediacy which, as an abstract reference-to-self, is the same as abstract identity. Abstract thought (the scientific form used by ‘reflective’ metaphysic) and abstract intuition (the form used by immediate knowledge) are one and the same.

The stereotyped opposition between the form of immediacy and that of mediation gives to the former a half-ness and inadequacy that affects every content which is brought under it. Immediacy means, upon the whole, an abstract reference-to-self, that is, an abstract identity or abstract universality. Accordingly the essential and real universal, when taken merely in its immediacy, is a mere abstract universal; and from this point of view God is conceived as a being altogether without determinate quality. To call God spirit is in that case only a phrase: for the consciousness and self-consciousness which spirit implies are impossible without a distinguishing of it from itself and from something else, i.e. without mediation.

§ 75

It was impossible for us to criticise this, the third attitude which thought has been made to take towards objective truth, in any other mode than what is naturally indicated and admitted in the doctrine itself. The theory asserts that immediate knowledge is a fact. It has been shown to be untrue in fact to say that there is an immediate knowledge, a knowledge without mediation either by means of something else or in itself. It has also been explained to be false in fact to say that thought advances through finite and conditioned categories only, which are always mediated by a something else, and to forget that in the very act of mediation the mediation itself vanishes. And to show that, in point of fact, there is a knowledge which advances neither by unmixed immediacy nor by unmixed mediation, we can point to the example of Logic and the whole of philosophy.

§ 76

If we view the maxims of immediate knowledge in connection with the uncritical metaphysic of the past from which we started, we shall learn from the comparison the reactionary nature of the school of Jacobi. His doctrine is a return to the modern starting-point of this metaphysic in the Cartesian philosophy. Both Jacobi and Descartes maintain the following three points:

(1) The simple inseparability of the thought and being of the thinker. *Cogito, ergo sum* is the same doctrine as that the being, reality, and existence of the 'Ego' is immediately revealed to me in consciousness. (Descartes, in fact, is careful to state that by thought he means consciousness in general. *Princip. Phil.* i. 9.) This inseparability is the absolutely first and most certain knowledge, not mediated or demonstrated.

(2) The inseparability of existence from the conception of God: the former is necessarily implied in the latter, or the conception never can be without the attribute of existence, which is thus necessary and eternal.

Descartes, *Princip. Phil.* i. 15: 'The reader will be more disposed to believe that there exists a being supremely perfect, if he notes that in the case of nothing else is there found in him an idea, in which he notices necessary existence to be contained in the same way. He will see that that idea exhibits a true and unchangeable nature – a nature which cannot but exist, since necessary existence is contained in it.' A remark which immediately follows, and which sounds like mediation or demonstration, does not really prejudice the original principle.

In Spinoza we come upon the same statement that the essence or abstract conception of God implies existence. The first of Spinoza's definitions, that of the *Causa Sui* (or Self-Cause), explains it to be 'that of which the essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing'. The inseparability of the notion from being is the main point and fundamental hypothesis in his system. But what notion is thus inseparable from being? Not the notion of finite things, for they are so constituted as to have a contingent and a created existence. Spinoza's eleventh proposition, which follows with a proof that God exists necessarily, and his twentieth, showing that God's existence and his essence are one and the same, are really superfluous, and the proof is more in form than in reality. To say that God is Substance, the only Substance, and that, as Substance is *Causa Sui*, God therefore exists necessarily, is merely stating that God is that of which the notion and the being are inseparable.

(3) The immediate consciousness of the existence of external things. By this nothing more is meant than sense-consciousness. To have such a thing is the slightest of all cognitions: and the only thing worth knowing about it is that such immediate knowledge of the being of things external is error and delusion, that the sensible world as such is altogether void of truth; that the being of these external things is accidental and passes away as a show; and that their very nature is to have only an existence which is separable from their essence and notion.

§ 77

There is however a distinction between the two points of view:

(1) The Cartesian philosophy, from these unproved postulates, which it assumes to be unprovable, proceeds to wider and wider details of knowledge, and thus gave rise to the sciences of modern times. The modern theory (of Jacobi), on the contrary, (§ 62) has come to what is intrinsically a most important conclusion that cognition, proceeding as it must by finite mediations, can know only the finite, and never embody the truth; and would fain have the consciousness of God go no further than the aforesaid very abstract belief that God *is*.

Anselm on the contrary says: 'Methinks it is carelessness, if, after we have been confirmed in the faith, we do not exert ourselves to see the meaning of what we believe.' [*Tractat. Cur Deus Homo?*] These words of Anselm, in connection with the concrete truths of Christian doctrine, offer a far harder problem for investigation, than is contemplated by this modern faith.

(2) The modern doctrine on the one hand makes no change in the Cartesian method of the usual scientific knowledge, and conducts on the same plan the experimental and finite sciences that have sprung from it. But, on the other hand, when it comes to the science which has infinity for its scope, it throws aside that method and thus, as it knows no

other, it rejects all methods. It abandons itself to wild vagaries of imagination and assertion, to a moral priggishness and sentimental arrogance, or to a reckless dogmatism and lust of argument, which is loudest against philosophy and philosophic doctrines. Philosophy of course tolerates no mere assertions or conceits, and checks the free play of argumentative see-saw.

§ 78

We must then reject the opposition between an independent immediacy in the contents or facts of consciousness and an equally independent mediation, supposed incompatible with the former. The incompatibility is a mere assumption, an arbitrary assertion. All other assumptions and postulates must in like manner be left behind at the entrance to philosophy, whether they are derived from the intellect or the imagination. For philosophy is the science in which every such proposition must first be scrutinised and its meaning and oppositions be ascertained.

Scepticism, made a negative science and systematically applied to all forms of knowledge, might seem a suitable introduction, as pointing out the nullity of such assumptions. But a sceptical introduction would be not only an ungrateful but also a useless course; and that because Dialectic, as we shall soon make appear, is itself an essential element of affirmative science.

Scepticism, besides, could only get hold of the finite forms as they were suggested by experience, taking them as given, instead of deducing them scientifically. To require such a scepticism accomplished is the same as to insist on science being preceded by universal doubt, or a total absence of presupposition. Strictly speaking, in the resolve that *wills pure thought*, this requirement is accomplished by freedom which, abstracting from everything, grasps its pure abstraction, the simplicity of thought.

VI. Logic Defined & Divided

§ 79

In point of form Logical doctrine has three sides: (α) the Abstract side, or that of understanding; (β) the Dialectical, or that of negative reason; (γ) the Speculative, or that of positive reason.

These three sides do not make three *parts* of logic, but are stages or 'moments' in every logical entity, that is, of every notion and truth whatever. They may all be put under the first stage, that of understanding, and so kept isolated from each other; but this would give an inadequate conception of them. The statement of the dividing lines and the characteristic aspects of logic is at this point no more than historical and anticipatory.

§ 80

(α) Thought, as *Understanding*, sticks to fixity of characters and their distinctness from one another: every such limited abstract it treats as having a subsistence and being of its own.

In our ordinary usage of the term thought and even notion, we often have before our eyes nothing more than the operation of Understanding. And no doubt thought is primarily an exercise of Understanding; only it goes further, and the notion is not a function of Understanding merely. The action of Understanding may be in general described as investing its subject-matter with the form of universality. But this universal is an abstract universal: that is to say, its opposition to the particular is so rigorously maintained, that it is at the same time also reduced to the character of a

particular again. In this separating and abstracting attitude towards its objects, Understanding is the reverse of immediate perception and sensation, which, as such, keep completely to their native sphere of action in the concrete.

It is by referring to this opposition of Understanding to sensation or feeling that we must explain the frequent attacks made upon thought for being hard and narrow, and for leading, if consistently developed, to ruinous and pernicious results. The answer to these charges, in so far as they are warranted by the facts, is that they do not touch thinking in general, certainly not the thinking of Reason, but only the exercise of Understanding. It must be added, however, that the merit and rights of the mere Understanding should unhesitatingly be admitted. And that merit lies in the fact that apart from Understanding there is no fixity or accuracy in the region of theory or of practice.

Thus, in theory, knowledge begins by apprehending existing objects in their specific differences. In the study of nature, for example, we distinguish matters, forces, genera, and the like, and stereotype each in its isolation. Thought is here acting in its analytic capacity, where its canon is identity, a simple reference of each attribute to itself. It is under the guidance of the same identity that the process in knowledge is effected from one scientific truth to another. Thus, for example, in mathematics magnitude is the feature which, to the neglect of any other, determines our advance. Hence in geometry we compare one figure with another, so as to bring out their identity. Similarly in other fields of knowledge, such as jurisprudence, the advance is primarily regulated by identity. In it we argue from one specific law or precedent to another: and what is this but to proceed on the principle of identity?

But Understanding is as indispensable in practice as it is in theory. Character is an essential in conduct, and a man of character is an understanding man, who in that capacity has definite ends in view and undeviatingly pursues them. The man who will do something great must learn, as Goethe says, to limit himself. The man who, on the contrary, would do everything, really would do nothing, and fails. There is a host of interesting things in the world: Spanish poetry, chemistry, politics, and music are all very interesting, and if any one takes an interest in them we need not find fault. But for a person in a given situation to accomplish anything, he must stick to one definite point, and not dissipate his forces in many directions. In every calling, too, the great thing is to pursue it with understanding. Thus the judge must stick to the law, and give his verdict in accordance with it, undeterred by one motive or another, allowing no excuses, and looking neither left nor right. Understanding, too, is always an element in thorough training. The trained intellect is not satisfied with cloudy and indefinite impressions, but grasps the objects in their fixed character: whereas the uncultivated man wavers unsettled, and it often costs a deal of trouble to come to an understanding with him on the matter under discussion, and to bring him to fix his eye on the definite point in question.

It has been already explained that the Logical principle in general, far from being merely a subjective action in our minds, is rather the very universal, which as such is also objective. This doctrine is illustrated in the case of understanding, the first form of logical truths. Understanding in this larger sense corresponds to what we call the goodness of God, so far as that means that finite things are and subsist. In nature, for example, we recognise the goodness of God in the fact that the various classes or species of animals and plants are provided with whatever they need for their preservation and welfare. Nor is man excepted, who, both as an individual and as a nation, possesses partly in the given circumstances of climate, or quality and products of soil, and partly in his natural parts or talents, all that is required for his maintenance and development. Under this shape Understanding is visible in every department of the objective world; and no object in that world can ever be wholly perfect which does not give full satisfaction to the canons of understanding. A state, for example, is imperfect, so long as it has not reached a clear differentiation of orders and callings, and so long as those functions of politics and government, which are different in principle, have not evolved for themselves special organs, in the same way as we see, for example, the developed animal organism provided with separate organs for the functions of sensation, motion, digestion, &c.

The previous course of the discussion may serve to show that understanding is indispensable even in those spheres and regions of action which the popular fancy would deem furthest from it, and that in proportion as understanding is absent from them, imperfection is the result. This particularly holds good of Art, Religion, and Philosophy. In Art, for example, understanding is visible where the forms of beauty, which differ in principle, are kept distinct and exhibited in their

purity. The same thing holds good also of single works of art. It is part of the beauty and perfection of a dramatic poem that the characters of the several persons should be closely and faithfully maintained, and that the different aims and interests involved should be plainly and decidedly exhibited. Or again, take the province of Religion. The superiority of Greek over Northern mythology (apart from other differences of subject-matter and conception) mainly consists in this: that in the former the individual gods are fashioned into forms of sculpture-like distinctness of outline, while in the latter the figures fade away vaguely and hazily into one another. Lastly comes Philosophy. That Philosophy never can get on without the understanding hardly calls for special remark after what has been said. Its foremost requirement is that every thought shall be grasped in its full precision, and nothing allowed to remain vague and indefinite.

It is usually added that understanding must not go too far. Which is so far correct, that understanding is not an ultimate, but on the contrary finite, and so constituted that when carried to extremes it veers round to its opposite. It is the fashion of youth to dash about in abstractions – but the man who has learnt to know life steers clear of the abstract ‘either-or’, and keeps to the concrete.

§ 81

(β) In the Dialectical stage these finite characterisations or formulae supersede themselves, and pass into their opposites.

(1) But when the Dialectical principle is employed by the understanding separately and independently – especially as seen in its application to philosophical theories – Dialectic becomes Scepticism; in which the result that ensues from its action is presented as a mere negation.

(2) It is customary to treat Dialectic as an adventitious art, which for very wantonness introduces confusion and a mere semblance of contradiction into definite notions. And in that light, the semblance is the nonentity, while the true reality is supposed to belong to the original dicta of understanding. Often, indeed, Dialectic is nothing more than a subjective seesaw of arguments *pro* and *con*, where the absence of sterling thought is disguised by the subtlety which gives birth to such arguments. But in its true and proper character, Dialectic is the very nature and essence of everything predicated by mere understanding – the law of things and of the finite as a whole. Dialectic is different from ‘Reflection’. In the first instance, Reflection is that movement out beyond the isolated predicate of a thing which gives it some reference, and brings out its relativity, while still in other respects leaving it its isolated validity. But by Dialectic is meant the indwelling tendency outwards by which the one-sidedness and limitation of the predicates of understanding is seen in its true light, and shown to be the negation of them. For anything to be finite is just to suppress itself and put itself aside. Thus understood the Dialectical principle constitutes the life and soul of scientific progress, the dynamic which alone gives immanent connection and necessity to the body of science; and, in a word, is seen to constitute the real and true, as opposed to the external, exaltation above the finite.

Note to § 81

(1) Dialectic

It is of the highest importance to ascertain and understand rightly the nature of Dialectics. Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there Dialectic is at work. It is also the soul of all knowledge which is truly scientific. In the popular way of looking at things, the refusal to be bound by the abstract deliverances of understanding appears as fairness, which, according to the proverb: “Live and let live”, demands that each should have its turn; we admit one, but we admit the other also.

But when we look more closely, we find that the limitations of the finite do not merely come from without; that its own nature is the cause of its abrogation, and that by its own nature is the cause of

its abrogation, and that by its own act it passes into its counterpart. We say, for instance, that man is mortal, and seem to think that the ground of his death is in external circumstances only; so that if this way of looking were correct, man would have two special properties, vitality and – also – mortality. But the true view of the matter is that life as life, involves the germ of death, and that the finite, being radically self-contradictory, involves its own self-suppression.

Nor, again, is Dialectic to be confounded with mere Sophistry. The essence of Sophistry lies in giving authority to a partial and abstract principle, in its isolation, as may suit the interest and particular situation of the individual at the time. For example, a regard to my existence, and my having the means of existence, is a vital motive of conduct, but if I exclusively emphasise this consideration or motive of my welfare, and draw the conclusion that I may steal or betray my country, we have a case of Sophistry.

Similarly, it is a vital principle in conduct that I should be subjectively free, that is to say, that I should have an insight into what I am doing, and a conviction that it is right. But if my pleading insists on this principle alone I fall into Sophistry, such as would overthrow all the principles of morality. From this sort of party-pleading, Dialectic is wholly different; its purpose is to study things in their **own being and movement** and thus to demonstrate the finitude of the partial categories of understanding.

Dialectic, it may be added, is no novelty in philosophy. Among the ancients Plato is termed the inventor of Dialectic; and his right to the name rests on the fact that the Platonic philosophy first gave the free scientific, and thus at the same time the objective, form to Dialectic. Socrates, as we should expect from the general character of his philosophising, has the dialectical element in a predominantly subjective shape, that of Irony. He used to turn Dialectic, first against ordinary consciousness, and then especially against the Sophists. In his conversations he used to simulate the wish for some clearer knowledge about the subject under discussion, and after putting all sorts of questions with that intent, he drew those with whom he conversed to the opposite of what their first impressions had pronounced correct.

If, for instance, the Sophists claimed to be teachers, Socrates by a series of questions forced the Sophist Protagoras to confess that all learning is only recollection. In his more strictly scientific dialogues, Plato employs the dialectical method to show the finitude of all hard and fast terms of understanding. Thus in the *Parmenides* he deduces the many from the one. In this grand style did Plato treat Dialectic. In modern times it was, more than any other, Kant who resuscitated the name of Dialectic, and restored it to its post of honour. He did it, as we have seen, by working out the Antinomies of the reason. The problem of these Antinomies is no mere subjective piece of work oscillating between one set of grounds and another; it really serves to show that every abstract proposition of understanding, taken precisely as it is given, naturally veers round to its opposite.

However reluctant Understanding may be to admit the action of Dialectic, we must not suppose that the recognition of its existence is peculiarly confined to the philosopher. It would be truer to say that Dialectic gives expression to a law which is felt in all other grades of consciousness, and in general experience. Everything that surrounds us may be viewed as an instance of Dialectic. We are aware that everything finite, instead of being stable and ultimate, is rather changeable and transient; and this is exactly what we mean by that Dialectic of the finite, by which the finite, as implicitly other than what it is, is forced beyond its own immediate or natural being to turn suddenly into its opposite.

We have before this (§80) identified Understanding with what is implied in the popular idea of the goodness of God; we may now remark of Dialectic, the in same objective signification, that its principle answers to the idea of his power. All things, we say - that is, the finite world as such - are doomed; in saying so, we have a vision of Dialectic as the universal and irresistible power before which nothing can stay, however secure and stable it may deem itself. The category of power does not, it is true, exhaust the depth of the divine nature of the notion of God; but it certainly forms a vital element in all religious consciousness.

Apart from this general objectivity of Dialectic, we find traces of its presence in each of the particular provinces and phases of the natural and spiritual world. Take as an illustration the motion of the heavenly bodies. At this moment the planet stands in this spot, but implicitly it is the possibility of being in another spot; and that possibility of being otherwise the planet brings into existence by moving. Similarly the 'physical' elements prove to be Dialectical. The process of

meteorological action is the exhibition of their Dialectic. It is the same dynamic that lies at the root of every natural process, and, as it were, forces nature out of itself.

To illustrate the presence of Dialectic in the spiritual world, especially in the provinces of law and morality, we have only to recollect how general experience shows us the extreme of one state or action suddenly into its opposite: a Dialectic which is recognised in many ways in common proverbs. The *summum jus summa injuria*, which means that to drive an abstract right to its extremity is to do a wrong.

In political life, as every one knows, extreme anarchy and extreme despotism naturally lead to one another. The perception of Dialectic in the province of individual Ethics is seen in the well-known adages: "Pride comes before a fall"; "Too much wit outwits itself". Even feeling, bodily as well as mental, has its dialectic. Everyone knows how the extremes of pain and pleasure pass into each other: the heart overflowing with joy seeks relief in tears, and the deepest melancholy will at times betray its presence by a smile.

Note to § 81

(2) Scepticism

Scepticism should not be looked upon merely as a doctrine of doubt. It would be more correct to say that the Sceptic has no doubt of his point, which is the nothingness of all finite existence. He who only doubts still clings to the hope that his doubt may be resolved, and that one or other of the definite views, between which he wavers, will turn out solid and true. Scepticism properly so called is a very different thing: its is complete hopelessness about all which understanding counts stable, and the feeling to which it gives birth is one of unbroken calmness and inward repose. Such at least is the noble Scepticism of antiquity, especially as exhibited in the writings of Sextus Empiricus, when in the later times of Rome it had been systematised as a complement to the dogmatic systems of Stoic and Epicurean.

Of far other stamp, and to be strictly distinguished from it, is the modern Scepticism already mentioned (§ 39), which partly preceded the Critical Philosophy, and partly sprang out of it. That later Scepticism consisted solely in denying the truth and certitude of the supersensible, and in pointing to the facts of sense and of immediate sensations as what we have to keep to.

Even to this day Scepticism is often spoken of as the irresistible enemy of all positive knowledge, and hence of philosophy, in so far as philosophy is concerned with positive knowledge. But in these statements there is a misconception. It is only the finite thought of abstract understanding which has to fear Scepticism, because unable to withstand it: philosophy includes the sceptical principle as a subordinate function of its own, in the shape of Dialectic. In contradistinction to mere scepticism, however, philosophy does not remain content with the purely negative result of Dialectic.

The sceptic mistakes the true value of his result, when he supposes it to be no more than a negation pure and simple. For the negative which emerges as the result of dialectic is, because a result, at the same time positive: it contains what it results from, absorbed into itself, and made part of its own nature. Thus conceived, however, the dialectical stage has the features characterising the third grade of logical truth, the speculative form, or form of positive reason.

§ 82

(γ) The Speculative stage, or stage of Positive Reason, apprehends the unity of terms (propositions) in their opposition - the affirmative, which is involved in their disintegration and in their transition.

(1) The result of Dialectic is positive, because it has a definite content, or because its result is not empty and abstract nothing but the negation of certain specific propositions which are contained in the result - for the very reason that it is a resultant and not an immediate nothing.

(2) It follows from this that the 'reasonable' result, though it be only a thought and abstract, is still a concrete, being not a plain formal unity, but a unity of distinct

propositions. Bare abstractions or formal thoughts are therefore no business of philosophy, which has to deal only with concrete thoughts.

(3) The logic of mere Understanding is involved in Speculative logic, and can at will be elicited from it, by the simple process of omitting the dialectical and 'reasonable' element. When that is done, it becomes what the common logic is, a descriptive collection of sundry thought-forms and rules which, finite though they are, are taken to be something infinite.

If we consider only what it contains, and not how it contains it, the true reason-world, so far from being the exclusive property of philosophy, is the right of every human being on whatever grade of culture or mental growth he may stand; which would justify man's ancient title of rational being. The general mode by which experience first makes us aware of the reasonable order of things is by accepted and unreasoned belief; and the character of the rational, as already noted (§ 45), is to be unconditioned, self-contained, and thus to be self-determining.

In this sense man above all things becomes aware of the reasonable order of things when he knows of God, and knows him to be the completely self-determined. Similarly, the consciousness a citizen has of his country and its laws is a perception of reason-world, so long as he looks up to them as unconditioned and likewise universal powers, to which he must subject his individual will. And in the same sense, the knowledge and will of the child is rational, when he knows his parents' will, and wills it.

Now, to turn these rational (of course positively rational) realities into speculative principles, the only thing needed is that they be *thought*. The expression 'Speculation' in common life is often used with a very vague and at the same time secondary sense, as when we speak of a matrimonial or a commercial speculation. By this we only mean two things: first, that what is the subject-matter has to be passed and left behind; and secondly, that the subject-matter of such speculation, though in the first place only subjective, must not remain so, but be realised or translated into objectivity.

What was some time ago remarked respecting the Idea may be applied to this common usage of the term 'speculation'; and we may add that people who rank themselves among the educated expressly speak of speculation even as if it were something purely subjective. A certain theory of some conditions and circumstances of nature or mind may be, say these people, very fine and correct as a matter of speculation, but it contradicts experience and nothing of the sort is admissible in reality. To this the answer is, that the speculative is in its true signification, neither preliminary nor even definitively, something merely subjective: that, on the contrary, it expressly rises above such oppositions as that between subjective and objective, which the understanding cannot get over, and absorbing them in itself, evinces its own concrete and all-embracing nature.

A one-sided proposition therefore can never even give expression to a speculative truth. If we say, for example, that the absolute is the unity of subjective and objective, we are undoubtedly in the right, but so far one-sided, as we enunciate the unity only and lay the accent upon it, forgetting that in reality the subjective and objective are not merely identical but also distinct.

Speculative truth, it may also be noted, means very much the same as what, in special connection with religious experience and doctrines, used to be called Mysticism. The term Mysticism is at present used, as a rule, to designate what is mysterious and incomprehensible: and in proportion as their general culture and way of thinking vary, the epithet is applied by one class to denote the real and the true, by another to name everything connected with superstition and deception.

On which we first of all remark that there is mystery in the mystical, only however for the understanding which is ruled by the principle of abstract identity; whereas the mystical, as synonymous with the speculative, is the concrete unity of those propositions which understanding only accepts in their separation and opposition. And if those who recognise Mysticism as the highest truth are content to leave it in its original utter mystery, their conduct only proves that for them too, as well as for their antagonists, thinking means abstract identification, and that in their opinion, therefore truth can only be won by renouncing thought, or as it is frequently expressed, by leading the reason captive.

But, as we have seen, the abstract thinking of understanding is so far from being either ultimate or stable, that it shows a perpetual tendency to work its own dissolution and swing round into its opposite. Reasonableness, on the contrary, just consists in embracing within itself these opposites

as unsubstantial elements. Thus the reason-world may be equally styled mystical – not however because thought cannot both reach and comprehend it, but merely because it lies beyond the compass of understanding.

Subdivision of Logic

§83

Logic is subdivided into three parts:

- I.** The Doctrine of Being.
- II.** The Doctrine of Essence.
- III.** The Doctrine of Notion and Idea.

That is, the Theory of Thought in:

- I.** its immediacy, the notion implicit and in germ,
- II.** its reflection and mediation, the being-for-self and show of the notion,
- III.** its return into self, and its developed abiding by itself - the notion in and for itself.