

inner life as the playground of rising and vanishing ideas, he introduced the conception of the limit or threshold of consciousness, suggesting through this, if not elaborating, an idea which has since been variously worked out: that of the unconscious, the subconscious, and the subliminal.

13.
Conceptions
introduced
by Herbart.

In addition to this, Herbart urged the necessity of conducting psychological inquiries by the exact method of observation, measurement, and calculation, and although he did not succeed in this endeavour he had a clear notion of what would be required in order to convert

ever, did not follow Fichte in his process of abstract thought through which the term Mind (Self or Ego) ceases to denote the individual and becomes a general or absolute mind, for Herbart was as much influenced by the individualism of Leibniz. He confines his ontology and psychology to that of individual beings, considering the conception of a general or absolute mind as an illegitimate abstraction. Accordingly he consistently opposes the higher Hegelian logic and psychology which, as it were, represents the life and thought of the Absolute, and he confines himself to the lower or formal logic, and to the psychology of individual human minds. The principal difference which existed between Herbart's psychological position and that of contemporary thinkers in this country was that Herbart, quite as much as the Idealists whom he opposed, came to psychology from the metaphysical point of view, *i.e.*, from the discussion of the problem of reality. This problem hardly existed for English and Scotch thinkers at that time. The Idealists, however, did not apply their metaphysical solutions of the problem of reality to that special reality which we call the Soul or the inner personal life

of the individual, but dealt rather with cosmological and theological problems, as also with problems of human history and society. On the other side, the early educational interests of Herbart led him back to views current in the Leibniz-Wolffian school, which did not lose sight of the existence and independence of a plurality of individuals in the conception of an underlying unity or substance after the model of Spinoza. A new problem, however, existed for Herbart as it already existed for Leibniz — how is the plurality of existing beings (called by Herbart, "Reals") to be reconciled with the universal order? Leibniz had solved this problem in his "Monadology" by the conception of a central monad and the theory of a pre-established harmony. This solution Herbart does not adopt. For him the unity or order of the existing things and beings is that of a system, and as such he also conceives of the unity of mental life. This idea of a systematic unity, as differing from that of a substantial unity, has since the time of Herbart, and probably much through his influence, gained ground in modern psychology both in this country and abroad.