

in his later years to enter into more detailed logical and psychological discussions, the principal interest he took in it was to enforce by argument, as well as by the influence of his powerful personality, a conviction of the existence, for the human mind, of a definite and immediate source of certainty regarding the highest problems of conduct, action, and duty. In fact, he laboured perhaps more than any other thinker at the establishment of a philosophical creed that should be of practical value in the solution of the great problems which were then being ventilated on the

est terms subsequently by Lotze. Knowledge does not deal only with an increasing number of purely empirical data, the things and events which surround us; it does not, secondly, consist in addition only in certainty—that is, in the necessary connection or relation of things (laws physical and mental); but it consists, thirdly, also in a comprehension of the meaning of things, of their purpose, of the all-embracing system or order of the whole. Thus Knowledge is, first, descriptive, and as such continually accumulating and extending itself; secondly, constructive and synthetical, joining together to a necessary system; and, thirdly, synoptic, viewing and interpreting the whole in a general scheme, revealing the meaning and purpose of things. And, lastly, we find two modern ideas foreshadowed already in Fichte's doctrine. The beginning of philosophy is not a logical principle which would require proof, and thus lead to an endless regression of thought. The beginning of philosophy is a postulate: you must do something, -you must act. The idea of action involves that of overcoming a resistance. In following

out this train of thought, a meaning is assigned to the objects or tasks which present themselves to be solved; ever reappearing in new forms, they constitute the activity of the intellect. Difference and opposition is always required to maintain action. The overcoming or solution of existing differences and difficulties produces ever new and higher tasks. Logically this scheme is indicated by the formula of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; in Fichte's system we find the birth of the dialectical method practised and extolled later on by Hegel. Inasmuch, however, as Fichte is forced to throw back the whole of the active process of the intellect into a hyper-individual region, he leads the way to the world of the unconscious, out of which the difference of subject and object, of self and other selves, emerges in the minds of finite persons. The conscious activity of the conscious and moral self leads us back to the conception of an unconscious striving or instinct as the source and essence of all reality. This idea we also meet with under various forms in recent philosophy.