

starting-point and to justify the methods of advance which were to be adopted. At the end of the century which precedes the period we are dealing with this was done with much detail and patience and unexampled completeness by Immanuel Kant; his philosophy has accordingly been rightly and consistently termed Criticism, and the nineteenth century itself has marked its indebtedness to Kant, and to the thinkers who immediately preceded him, nowhere more than by continually and repeatedly urging the necessity of a theory of knowledge. And yet it can hardly be maintained that those systems which have had the deepest influence and have marked the great eras of philosophic thought are exclusively characterised by that cautious and critical spirit which would not venture on any bold generalisation without a previous patient examination. It is not always to the careful and accurate surveyor; often it is rather to the daring explorer of an unknown country that we owe the greatest discoveries, the enlargement of our knowledge and the revolution of our views. Though we must admit that the critical spirit, which during the last fifty years has acquired an almost undisputed sway over all but the purely exact and experimental sciences, favours the

Bacon, Descartes, Locke, and Kant, referred, therefore, not to knowledge in general but more exclusively to philosophical knowledge; scientific knowledge being considered as firmly established, in fact, frequently as a model of true knowledge. Investigations as to the hidden and unconscious principles which guided such exact knowledge have latterly been undertaken, not so much in the interests of science itself as rather with the intention of placing

philosophical thought on a similarly secure foundation. Accordingly we find that scientific authorities themselves show, as a rule, little interest in the philosophy of their respective sciences. The widespread modern interest in scientific first principles is not purely scientific, it centres in the question: To what extent are they capable of supporting a moral and spiritual view of things?