

26.
Philosophy
of the Ab-
solute
Spirit.

We may therefore say that Hegel's philosophy is the philosophy of the Absolute Spirit. The word Spirit combines many meanings, in the same way as the German equivalent *Geist* does. We express by it the essence of the highest, of the Divine mind as well as of the human mind, and we also speak of the Spirit of nature, and the Spirit of the age. It further includes the idea of life and development, as opposed to that of rest and stability which is implied in the word substance. The very title, therefore, of Hegel's work was happily chosen.¹ It gave some definiteness to what had been left quite vague in contemporary philosophy, and it also gave expression to an idea which underlay the best of German thought since the time of Leibniz, the idea of development, the history of the various phenomena² in which Reality, the

¹ The German term *Geist* is even more comprehensive than the English term Spirit, for it includes what we mean by Mind as well as by Spirit. This work of Hegel has quite recently been admirably translated into English by Prof. J. B. Baillie in the 'Library of Philosophy,' edited by J. H. Muirhead (2 vols. 1910). He has chosen the term "Mind" to represent *Geist*, whereas I note that Ed. Caird (see 'Hegel' in Blackwood's Philosophical Classics) speaks of the "Phenomenology of Spirit" (p. 62). The translator of Höfding's 'History of Philosophy' uses the term "Mind" (vol. ii. p. 177). This twofold rendering exhibits the ambiguity of the German word *Geist*, which in its derived adjectives *Geistig* and *Geistlich* shows more clearly that it comprises the two meanings of Mental and Spiritual.

² The 'Phenomenology' is not more intelligible to the student of to-day than it appears to have

been to Hegel's contemporaries. Fortunately, however, in our days, over a century after the appearance of the book, two important works have been published which have done much to promote a better knowledge and appreciation of Hegel's great design—which, in a certain sense, may be considered to furnish the programme of thought for a certain class of intellects that will never die out. The first of the two works I refer to is Kuno Fischer's 'Paraphrase of Hegel's Teaching' in the last part of his monumental History. As Prof. Windelband says, the present generation will resort to this as the best guide to a just appreciation of Hegel's doctrine. The other work is Lord Haldane's 'Gifford Lectures' (2 vols., 1903-4), the very title of which most happily represents what Hegel was striving for, The Pathway to Reality. That the independent position taken up by the English school of Hegel's interpreters