

phases in which the World-Process is developed, the stages of the evolution of the Unknowable Absolute. Lotze, following the later Schelling, would no more see in this mechanically conceived movement of the Absolute a solution of the ultimate philosophical problem than he saw it in the logically conceived Triads of Hegel. He believes that the human mind possesses an immediate knowledge of the ultimate Reality which passes through these mechanical or logical forms of development.¹

¹ The position which Spencer takes up is so well known and has become so popular that it is unnecessary to give here special references to passages in his writings in which the doctrine of the Unknowable is explained. Nevertheless I believe that an attentive perusal of the concluding pages of the first part of 'First Principles' forms one of the best introductions to the study of philosophy; further, that a comparison of it with the first thirty-eight pages of Lotze's early 'Metaphysik' will be one of the best means of introducing the philosophical student to the fundamental difference which exists between the two leading tendencies of philosophical thought at the present day. Some of the important arguments for dealing with the metaphysical problem of the truly Real (Lotze) or the Absolute (Spencer) are common to both. But nevertheless the main drift of these arguments is entirely different. According to Lotze, and more or less according to all thinkers who represent the same tendency of thought, the idea of the truly Real is formed by a process of gradual adaptation of definite notions and terms of language for the purpose of expressing a deep-lying thought which the human mind desires to fix; for this the soul is considered to possess an immediate sense, it has

a definite meaning and is the subject of supremest interest, being as such the pivot upon which all moral distinctions turn. "There must exist a principle of certitude according to which we are able to decide as to the correctness of any result of our reasoning. . . . We must assume that philosophy does not create the rules for this decision, but that the whole soul is present with a sense of that verity which it possesses and practises before it scientifically explains it. Wherever we wish to determine something unknown through definite terms, we make the tacit assumption that we must in some way be able to know what notions are expressive of it and what not; in case this judgment were impossible, the possibility of an investigation would vanish. The internal nature of the content we are in search of, whilst yet unknown to us, is not present in separate definitions of thought, but existing, as it does, in the form of a meaning, it nevertheless possesses implicitly a defensive power to reject that which is not adequate to it. . . . By rejecting what is inadequate and negating false determinations it gains in content itself, . . . acquiring for our consciousness in this way a positive expression of its own essence. This is the simple nature of every process of thought which, through defining