

This abstract position which Hegel's philosophy took up in dealing with the religious problem was further emphasised by two characteristics of his system. That system started, indeed, with the idea of showing how everything was the working of the Divine Spirit, which unfolds itself in a great variety of forms in nature, mind, and history. *Prima facie*, therefore, it supported an eminently spiritual or religious view of things, and there is no doubt that it attracted for a time many young and ardent minds, who were tired of the formality and prose of the traditional teaching of rationalists and of orthodox alike. It seemed to be the veritable solution of the problem of the spirit. It must also have been considered as a great advantage that this spiritualising and deepening process of thought was carried out by a definite teachable method, the dialectical method. This first impression was strengthened through the personal influence which Hegel's Lectures had upon his hearers. They witnessed the wrestlings of a powerful intellect with the highest problems which the human mind can set to itself; they were shown the solution — or at least the road to the solution — of the supreme difficulties which had in that age again begun to trouble and harass thinking and believing persons; they met with a promise that the real truth of the Christian dispensation, the aspirations of the Reformation and the Revolution, should be intelligibly explained, confirmed, and harmonised. To this must be added the fascination created by the mystical element which pervaded all Hegel's writings and the prophetic tone of his oral teaching. When,