

also maintained by Hamann<sup>1</sup> and Herder, a friend and a

development of the new philosophy—eccentric thinkers a great appreciation of the personal element which forms the foundation and attractiveness of their somewhat casual, aphoristic, but frequently brilliant writings; holding that what they are leaving in the twilight of individual and emotional thought, his own philosophy is aiming at drawing into the clear daylight of reason. He also points out how Jacobi's polemics, against Spinoza and Fichte in particular, do not touch the deep personal regard which he expresses for both thinkers. In a celebrated letter, published in his 'Collected Works,' Jacobi says to Fichte that he does not take him personally to be an atheist or a godless man, though he has felt obliged to call his doctrine, as also that of Spinoza, atheistic. And towards the latter he had indeed shown his real veneration in an apostrophe written earlier: "Be blessed you great and holy Benedictus! However you may philosophise and err in words regarding the nature of the Highest Being, His truth was in your soul and His love was your life."

<sup>1</sup> Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) was an extraordinary figure in that phase of German thought which led out of the clear but dry and thin atmosphere of the *Aufklärung*, through much mist and confusion, to the poetry and depth of idealism and romanticism. He himself is perhaps most prominent representative in the moment of confusion. That, in spite of this, he had a great personal influence on other thinkers is by no one better brought out than by Hegel himself, who, in the height of his literary career and fame (1828), thought the subject important enough to write a lengthy review ('Werke,' vol. xvii. pp. 38-110) of

Hamann's 'Collected Works'; and for the student of to-day no better characterisation of the man, his works, and his personal influence can be found than this review of Hegel's. He shows there Hamann's similarity to Rousseau inasmuch as he created an extraordinary personal interest, differing, however, from Rousseau in this, that his works were as unreadable, fragmentary, and unfinished as Rousseau's were the very reverse. He interested, repelled, and fascinated a large number of persons who thought him in possession of some mystery which they were in search of. This search after some hidden treasure, the expectancy of the age that some formula or truth was on the point of being revealed, made thinking as well as emotional natures ready to listen to true as well as to false prophets; indeed, the oracular style, backed by a real or supposed inspiration, was common to many writers, and, beginning with Hamann, is characteristic not only of the great poetry of Goethe but also of some of the greatest writings of Schelling and Hegel, and ministered for a time to their attractiveness. Hegel shows, *inter alia*, how the problem of belief acquired in Hamann that larger meaning which it possesses in Jacobi's writings. Speaking of Hamann's first well-known work, entitled 'Socratic Memorabilia,' Hegel says: "Whilst towards the public the semblance of an objective content is given to it, the meaning, content, and aim of this work are personal to a degree in which his other writings are not; yet in all there is more or less contained the interest and the sense of the personal. Also what is said about belief is similarly taken primarily from Christian belief, but is expanded to a wider meaning; that