

8.
Lotze's
definition of
philosophy.

have received definite expression in the words of language, we have become accustomed to use them without first investigating their foundation, their meaning, or the limits of their validity. In this way both common life and science make use of the conceptions of 'cause and effect,' 'matter and force,' 'end and means,' 'freedom and necessity,' 'body and soul,' &c.; and in consequence of the absence of that investigation they entangle themselves very frequently in contradictions, inasmuch as they are unable to define the region of validity of these frequently opposite assumptions. We may then formally define the task of philosophy as the endeavour to impart unity and consistency to the scattered thoughts of general culture: to follow them into their first presuppositions as well as into their ultimate consequences, to connect them all together, to remove their contradictions and to combine them to a comprehensive view of the world and of life; mainly, however, to make those conceptions which in science and practice serve as principles the subject of a special examination with the object of determining the limits of their validity. Philosophy is partly the name for an investigation which is carried on to this purpose, partly the systematic exposition of the results arrived at."

After his definition, of which the foregoing is a somewhat free rendering, Lotze proceeds to discuss the questions of the unity, the method, and the principle of philosophical reasoning. He maintains that the desire for unity and the search after one unifying principle has been frequently exaggerated; for the unity of principle is in itself a mere assumption. But