

could not have existed: for absurdity alone could not have found either place or credit in the human mind, could not have procured so much lustre, could not have obtained so much authority in any century, still less in a century so enlightened as the eighteenth. Thus because the sensualistic school has existed, it has had reason for existing, and it possesses some element of truth. But there are four schools, and not simply one. Now, absolute truth is one; if one of these four schools contained the absolute truth, there would be one school alone, and not four. They exist; therefore they have reason for existing, and they contain some truth; and at the same time there are four; therefore neither the one nor the other contains the entire truth, and each of them with the element of truth which has made it exist, contains some element of error which reduces it to be, after all, only a particular school; and, bear in mind, error, in the hands of systematic genius, easily becomes extravagance. I should, therefore, as I had promised, have at once absolved and combated all the schools, and consequently that great school which is called the school of sensation, from the title itself of the only principle upon which it rests. I should have absolved the school of sensation as having had its share of truth; and I should have combated it as having mingled with the share of truth which recommends it many errors and extravagances. And by what means was I to combat the school of sensation? I had promised you to combat the errors of one school by means of the truth found in the opposing school; it was therefore my duty to combat the exaggerations of sensualism with whatever is sound and reasonable in idealism. This is what I have done. Perhaps there is a little of my own, if I may be permitted to say it, in the development of the arguments which I have opposed to the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and in the management of the discussion, in some sort, especially in its general and moral character; but the arguments in themselves belong for the most part to the spiritualistic school in its most reasonable, that is, in its negative part, which is always the best part of every school. Hereafter I

shall again seek out the spiritualistic school;* I shall examine it in itself, and I shall turn against it, against its sublime errors and its mystical tendencies, the solid arms which the good sense of empiricism and of skepticism shall furnish me. Meanwhile, it is with spiritualistic dialectics that I have combated the extravagances of the empiric school in its first representative in the eighteenth century. And it is not ancient idealism that I have invoked against modern empiricism, for the one does not answer to the other; ancient philosophy and modern philosophy only serve and only illumine each other on the heights of science and for a small number of elect thinkers: it is modern spiritualism which has served me against modern sensualism. I have opposed to Locke the great men who have followed him, and who were to combat him in order to surpass him, and put science on an onward march. It is not even from Leibnitz, already too far from us, it is from Reid and from Kant,† that I have borrowed arguments; but I have been, almost continually, obliged to change their form, for this form savors somewhat of the country and language of these two great men. Both express themselves as people do at Glasgow and at Königsburg, which is not the manner of expression in France. I have therefore neglected the phraseology of Reid, and especially that of Kant, but I have preserved the basis of their arguments. You are not acquainted with Kant. At a future day I will try to make you acquainted with this mind so firm and so elevated, the Descartes of our age.‡ But you can read in the translation of one of the best pupils of the Normal School, now my colleague in this Faculty, the judicious Reid, with the truly superior commentary of M.

* The revolution of 1830 prevented this project. What I should have done in regard to transcendental idealism may be seen by what I did in 1820 in regard to apparent or real idealism, but certainly much tempered by the philosophy of Königsburg.

† See 1st Series, Vols. 4 and 5.

‡ The 1st Series of my courses was not yet published.

Royer-Collard.* The Scotch philosophy will prepare you for the German philosophy. It is to Reid and to Kant that I refer in great part the polemics which I have instituted against empiricism in the person of Locke.

It was my duty also to be just towards the empiric school, while combating it; it was my duty to exhibit its share of good as well as evil, for both must equally exist in it. And I ask you whether I have not also done this? Have I not recognized and pointed out all the good that exists in the different parts of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*? Have I not carefully produced the happy commencements of the method and theories of Locke, before attacking the errors into which the spirit of system has thrown him? Finally, have I not rendered a proper tribute to his character and to his virtues? I have done it, and with all my heart; and on this point I am sure of being exempt from reproach both towards Locke and towards myself, and towards philosophy. In fact, philosophy is not such or such a school, but the common basis, and, thus to speak, the soul of all schools. It is distinct from all systems, but it is mingled with each of them, for it is manifested, it is developed, it is advanced only by them; its unity is their variety, so discordant in appearance, in reality so harmonious; its progress and its glory is their reciprocal perfectionment by their pacific struggles. When we attack without reserve a considerable system, we proscribe, unintentionally, some real element of the human mind, we wound philosophy itself in some of its parts; when we outrage an illustrious philosopher, to whatever school he may belong, we outrage philosophy, the human mind, in one of its choicest representatives. I hope that nothing like this will ever proceed from these lectures; for, what I profess before all else, what I teach,

* I have continually cited the translation of M. Jouffroy and the admirable lectures of M. Royer-Collard in Vol. 4 of the 1st Series; and I am happy to render homage to him who was and will always be for me a revered master, and to him whom I may now call the first of the independent pupils who have gone forth from my auditory.

is not such or such a philosophy, but philosophy itself; it is not attachment to such or such a system, however great it may be, admiration for such or such a man, whatever may have been his genius, but the philosophical spirit, superior to all systems and to all philosophers, that is, boundless love of truth, knowledge of all systems which pretend to possess it entire and which at least possess something of it, and respect for all men who have sought it and who are seeking it still with talent and loyalty. The true muse of history is not Hatred, it is Love; the mission of true criticism is not only to point out the too real and too numerous extravagances of philosophical systems, but to pick out and disengage from the midst of these errors the truths which may and must be mingled with them, and thereby raise the human reason in its own eyes, absolve philosophy in the past, embolden it, and illumine it in the future.

I cannot part with you, gentlemen, without thanking you for the remarkable zeal, honorable to yourselves and encouraging to me, which you have exhibited during the course of these lectures. Engaged in discussions, the length and dryness of which could have been spared you only at the expense of scientific rigor, your attention and kindness have never for a moment been wanting. I beseech you to preserve them both for me: I shall have need of them next year in the exposition and profound discussion of the consequences of the philosophy of Locke, that is, of all the systems which have been produced by this rich and fruitful sensualistic school in the eighteenth century, the father and first monument of which you now understand.

Other portions of Cousin's works are ready for the press, the publication of which will depend upon the success of these volumes.—[Tr.]

THE END.