

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

TIME AND THE EXPERIENCE OF TIME.¹

TIME is a promise and a threat: the stream we breast holds in solution our hopes and our fears. Time is regret and relief: the solution precipitates some beautiful crystal, but alas! we are swept onward and to our sorrow must leave the treasure behind. Or the solution deposits some noisome ooze which clears the flood and we move forward rejoicing in the purified and sweetened bath. Such is time for the man who does not reflect on the nature of time. It is literally a matter of course. *Die Zeit versteht sich von selbst; der Mensch versteht die Zeit nicht.* Such would seem to be the conclusion to be drawn from the various conclusions man's intellect has arrived at in seeking to understand time. To the man who reflects time has always been a problem, a challenge which the deepest thinkers have had constantly thrown in their face. Some like Parmenides meet the challenge with supercilious disdain. Some like Heraclitus, accept service under the inscrutable challenger and fight by his side. Almost every philosopher worthy of his spurs has entered the list in support or in defiance of the cause which to the man of action seems to be so obviously just that it is not worth fighting about. Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, St. Augustine, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel—this is only a selection from the roster of heroes in this war of the ages.

The problem of time is especially acute for the philosophers of to-day, and the thinkers to whom this urgency is most due, at least for us in this Association, are William James, Josiah

¹ Delivered—with a few omissions—as the presidential address before the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association at Yale University, December 29, 1913.