

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

MODERN IDEALISM AND THE LOGOS TEACHING.¹

WHEN the foundations of European civilization were being laid in the ancient world, two nations brought contributions of great and permanent significance. The Greeks supplied the conception of the world as a Cosmos, of that rational order which permeates all being and acts persuasively upon the thought and will of man. The Hebrews brought the conception of the will of man as obligated to conform itself to the holy will of Jehovah, and to find therein the support for the supreme values of moral and civil life. As the Greek contribution was analyzed and amplified by the classical philosophers, it took form as the great teaching of ancient Idealism, with its clear-eyed recognition of the spiritual meaning implied in all reality developed into a reasonable and harmonious interpretation of life and experience in its detail. Under the influence of such teachers as the prophets, Jesus, and Paul, the Hebrew conception also was analyzed and deepened, until the intrinsic idealism which it had always implied was brought to light. Then the holy will of Jehovah appeared no longer as an external and austere force, but rather as the persuasiveness of an ideal which, although divine, is still simply that Perfect Manhood which is the true goal of every man. And this interpretation, already adumbrated by Jeremiah as the standpoint of the New Covenant, was seized upon by the more deep thinking representatives of the Christian movement as most adequately expressing the true inwardness of the Christian meaning and purpose.

¹ Read as the Presidential Address at the meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Western Division, held in Chicago, March 25-26, 1921.