

Is the case so serious, after all, with philosophy? It may be that this old friend and playmate of idle moments can, like the fool in *King Lear*, speak wisdom, which, if the king would heed, might save his life and his happiness.

First of all, the field of philosophy differs from that of the sciences. Theirs remains for the most part fixed and a quiet building up of knowledge is the rule, as soon as they have gained a sure methodical footing. Each investigator starts where his predecessor laid down the work and his advance in the science depends largely on his own patient toil and the keenness of his insight.

In philosophy, it is different. As one says: "There it is the exception that successors gratefully develop what has already been achieved, and each of the great systems of philosophy begins to solve its newly formulated problem *ab 000*, as if the other systems had scarcely existed."* To say that philosophy makes no advance and is simply a harmless war of words is to misconceive its nature. Its problems are constantly recurring; they are tasks which the human mind cannot escape and does not wish to escape. Nor will philosophy cease to ponder these problems with intense interest till the last soul has passed from the earth to the world where the substance of faith and hope is found.

I desire to remove all thought of philosophy as mysterious and unknown, as the peculiar possession of the schools and the lecture-room. Philosophy must be defined in terms of life—life in the highest sense of all we hold most dear and true. Look abroad over human knowledge; what have we? Gratefully do we receive the teachings of the sciences. We reverence those discoverers who have made biology, chemistry and physics what they are to-day. The geologist, the botanist, the astronomer, have each also a marvellous story to tell and we can only listen with profound humility and gratitude. Sweet music awes us into silent aspiration after an as yet unrealized harmony of soul; we look upon art and see more than paint and canvas or marble. A beautiful character arouses hopes too large for earth's possibilities. Think of the comedy, the tragedy, of each life; its hopes and fears, its struggles after ideals, its joys, its sorrows

*Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 9.