

mind to trace phenomena back to their antecedent causes, but not less so to understand their purpose and meaning.¹ He appreciated the philosophies of Descartes and Spinoza inasmuch as they laid stress upon the deductive mathematical treatment, but he could not agree with Spinoza, who discarded altogether and treated with scorn all teleological explanations. In Leibniz philosophical thought arrived at the position which, with certain interruptions, it still occupies at the present day; its task being, not to afford new knowledge, but to mediate between the claims of two kinds of knowledge: that which deals with things

¹ From the point of view of the problem of knowledge we may thus say that Leibniz distinctly announced three kinds of knowledge, founded upon the law of contradiction (mathematical or metaphysical truths), the law of sufficient reason (all contingent truths found by observation and experience, tracing the causal connection of things), and the law of final causes through which the apparent contingency in nature is raised to the position of necessity, inasmuch as in and through the contingent facts and events in the world a definite plan, the design of the Divine Creator, is realised. Lotze remarks that this reduces the whole scheme of Leibniz to a mathematical conception. "The whole world has its reality from God, and indeed in this way that in the mind of God there existed many consistent schemes, among which He admitted that which contained the smallest amount of evil and the greatest perfection. Such a scheme he could not alter or improve, but only admit or reject, as a whole. We see from this that also with Leibniz the whole content of reality

resembles a mathematical formula in which each part is rigidly determined by others and itself determines them, so that not only does the past include the future, but also the latter the past" (Lotze, Syllabus of Lectures on 'German Philosophy since Kant,' 1882, p. 7). We shall see further on how Lotze himself attempted to modify this scheme of Leibniz, giving it a freer, not purely logical, consistency. Whether we admit this rigidity in Leibniz's conception or not, it is quite clear that, so far as the problem of knowledge is concerned, Leibniz admitted the necessity of considering the purpose or meaning of things as a clue for finding the mechanical causes through which it was attained: a rule which was applied in the shallow and popular philosophy of the *Aufklärung* to put forward trivial explanations which made the whole ridiculous. This was quite contrary to the spirit of Leibniz; for we may say that if Spinoza taught us to contemplate things "sub specie æterni," Leibniz taught us to contemplate them "sub specie universi."