

religious, ecclesiastical, political, and scientific, were so prominent and absorbing that the time had not yet arrived for accepting a dogmatic system produced by a solitary thinker, who had retired from contact with the world and acquired that serenity of mind to which the loud assertions of opposed parties presented themselves merely as different modes of one and the same highest truth. Nor had the different existing beliefs in various regions lost that vitality the absence of which would have prepared the thinking and searching mind for the reception of a new truth. In one word, reconciliation of the many scattered views and theories was more wanted than the construction of a new doctrine and theory of life. Thus it came about that the spirit of conciliation, with an optimistic belief in its possibility, which characterised Leibniz' work, was more acceptable and became more popular.

The endeavour to carry out the system which its author had only adumbrated, and to convert it into a teachable doctrine, became the task of the followers of Leibniz, of whom Christian Wolff was the most industrious and successful. The result of Wolff's labours, however, soon proved to be unsatisfactory: the best ideas of Leibniz were on the point of being lost; the work of reconciliation, the higher synthesis, turned out to be merely a shallow compromise. A dry formalism, easy to teach but destructive of the spirit of Leibniz' philosophy, was introduced, which, in the sequel, tended to make philosophy trivial and ridiculous, or to reduce it merely to the dicta of common-sense. The deeper truths which lay hidden in the world of