

and to the expulsion of the current conception of a vital force; but he did not adopt the shallow views of the materialists, nor those of later pessimists, nor was he overawed by Darwinism. His position is defined by his version of a truth stated already by Leibniz—that mechanism is an all-pervading but a subordinate principle of Reality: thus, neither the 'Force and Matter' of Büchner, nor the 'Will' of Schopenhauer, nor the 'Unconscious' of Hartmann, nor 'Natural Selection,' led him astray.

It may appear strange to my readers that I give such a prominent place to a thinker who is so little popularly known; indeed, the philosophy which he represents refrains on principle from indulging in easy watchwords or marketable phrases; it is more an attitude of mind and a habit of thought which he cultivates; the study of his writings may appropriately serve as an introduction to philosophy preparatory to the formation of a comprehensive reasoned creed. And apart from the episode of the idealistic systems which intervened between Kant and Lotze, this is really the position of philosophical thought initiated by Locke and Hume in this country and by Leibniz abroad, and clearly defined by Kant.

Instead of starting with some self-evident principle, some definition of method or some highest conception of the essence of Reality, of the truly Real, as Descartes and Spinoza did, and as the idealists in Germany attempted to do, the philosophy I am now referring to is contemplative and critical rather than constructive. It tries to understand the great bodies of Thought and Knowledge which are already in existence, aims at grasping them as