

## Foreword

THIS VOLUME continues the account of the major philosophical currents in the West begun in *The Career of Philosophy: From the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*. That study, after showing how the heirs of the three great medieval traditions embraced the new values of the Renaissance and the Reformation, explores the way they faced and tried to meet the challenge of the new science of Galileo and Newton. The thinkers of the seventeenth century undertook to assimilate, clarify, and generalize the new scientific ideas both on the methodological and the substantive sides. Those of the eighteenth century confronted the impact of those ideas on all men's social and cultural institutions, against the background of a rapidly changing social experience. They tried to formulate in detail a scientific ideal of intellectual method that could be carried into all the areas of man's life. This enterprise dominates the movements with which the earlier volume closed, the British and the French Enlightenments. Their controlling concerns spring from the demand for cultural reconstruction, made necessary by scientific ideas. Their technical problems have their source in the difficulties that developed within those ideas themselves when they were pushed to accomplish that reconstruction.

The present volume follows the building of the powerful German tradition through its achievements down to 1848, and carries French and British philosophizing to the mid-nineteenth century. It begins with Leibniz, who really belongs with the scientific philosophers of the preceding age, but who is indispensable to an understanding of the distinctive developments of German thought.

The German Enlightenment grew into a penetrating criticism of the Newtonian scientific ideal, and came to seek a broader and deeper intellectual method that could do greater justice to the manifold areas of man's cultural experience.

In most of the philosophies here treated, science no longer occupies the foreground, though it lurks menacingly in the background. After Leibniz, nearly all the thinkers considered were turning to other cultural problems for their philosophical stimulus. During the *Aufklärung* and the Romantic era the main impulses to German philosophizing came from the nonscientific areas of man's individual and social experience. And the same is true of the French and British philosophical traditions in the first half of the new century. Science returned to serve as a central thread with Darwin; but Romanticism was still there, and science was never again taken as itself offering a satisfactory philosophy of life. Most of the problems and the insights in the thinkers here treated come from religion, from art, from a whole culture in revolution. So after Leibniz and Kant the central thread of science runs underground, till it reemerges with Marx, Comte, and Mill, in preparation for the imminent Darwinian revolution.

Special obligations must be here acknowledged to my colleagues and friends. Ernest Nagel has read the chapters on Leibniz and on James and John Stuart Mill. James Gutmann has carefully worked over those on classic German philosophy, and Albert Hofstadter has made penetrating criticisms of the same chapters. His sympathies with philosophic Idealism and with German philosophy make him hesitate to deny "Truth" to that Idealism, and to see in it the perhaps higher function of imaginative symbolism. Professor Klaus Epstein of Brown has brought to bear his knowledge of the German tradition. Above all, Professor J. Glenn Gray of Colorado College has given the whole of Book V the benefit of his philosophic insights and erudition in German thought. In spite of this indispensable assistance where it was most needed, the responsibility for errors of fact and for erratic interpretations must rest on me. Like its predecessor, this volume would not have been possible in its present form without the alert brain, the conscientious care, and the patient advice of Joan McQuary of the Columbia University Press.

The coming of Darwinian thought still seems to me the major

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fresh impulse to philosophizing in the nineteenth century. The third and concluding volume of *The Career of Philosophy* will deal with the hundred years since Darwin.

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