

The Ideal Philosophy of Leibnitz.

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IV. We come now to Leibnitz's celebrated system of Optimism. This is set forth at fullest in his theological treatise—*Essays on Theodicy in relation to the Goodness of God, the Liberty of Man, and the Origin of Evil*. We observe that this universal genius does not hesitate to grapple with that greatest problem of all the ages—the problem of the existence of evil in the universe of the good and perfect God. His notable work dealing with the subject, published in 1710, rapidly acquired popularity and was translated into almost every European language. The philosopher of the *Monadology* undertakes a magnificent vindication of the love and wisdom of God. Among all the numberless systems presenting themselves before the Infinite Intelligence, there has been originated, in this our present universe, the best, the most perfect one, physically and morally. The existence of evil is entirely compatible with the general perfection of the cosmos. Metaphysical evil arises from that limitation, that imperfection, which are inseparable from all created worlds. Moral evil proceeds from the free choices of men in time and grows out of that same limitation and imperfection of the creatures. But ultimately all partial and apparent evil will be swallowed up in the universal good. The most perfect universe which could possibly have been conceived or created has been absolutely necessitated, because of the perfect wisdom of the one Infinite Spirit. Looked at from the stand-point of universal intelligence—*sub specie æternitatis*—all things work together for the good of the Perfect Whole.

In the present plan of the universe there is the greatest possible variety along with the greatest order and unity. The grandest effects are produced in the simplest ways. There is the most power, knowledge, happiness, and goodness in created beings that this universe allowed; and, as has been said, this universe is the best, because it is grounded in the supreme perfection of God. Even in the external world the same principle applies. The laws of motion, for example, are the most fitting that could have been chosen by an infinite wisdom. All things whatsoever are regulated with as much order and mutual connection as possible. Not only is the order of the entire universe the most perfect possible, but each living monad has all its powers and faculties as thoroughly well ordered as is compatible with its own endless progress and the welfare of all the rest. The tendency of all created monads, we are to remember, is to advance to higher and higher