

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

TOLAND AND LEIBNIZ

“Il paroît homme d’esprit et de sçavoir,
et il semble seulement qu’il a besoin
d’un peu plus de modération.”

LEIBNIZ

I

THE history of the human mind is not, as Hegel assumed, an impersonal movement, in which human thought develops according to the law of dialectic and in which the persons are merely substitutes for the world mind; but rather a very complex and varied dialogue which is sometimes personal (*i.e.*, between persons or between groups) and sometimes impersonal (*i.e.*, between standpoints or between series of propositions which seem to have a sort of objective connection). “Non ego tibi, sed causa causae respondet” (Hieronymus) is the one extreme, “persona personae respondet” the other. In fact both forms nearly always go together; merely one of them prevails. Since man is not intellect pure and simple, but feeling and will as well, all three of them are implied in every one of his answers; and he does not always succeed in striking the right balance. Who has not participated in discussions in which a theory was rejected merely because it was formulated by a specific person, and at others which were boring because of their lack in personal reference and vitality? If we stress, in opposition to Hegel, the importance of the personal element, we should not overlook the fact that often the seemingly impersonal is personal and *vice versa*.

I shall treat in this paper, as an example of the mixture of personal and impersonal elements, a discussion between Leibniz and Toland which gains in interest if compared with that between