

has been realized, or embodied into an actual production by an exercise of the creative power. Of this one, God only is the author. He willed the actual universe into existence—but He did not will the other forms of universes into possibility. They were the objects of his understanding from all eternity, just as number and figure were—and He is no more the author of these than He is the author of His own understanding. He is the author only of that one universe which He selected out of all the possible varieties—and for this reason, that, by the production of it rather than any other, he gave being to the maximum of good. It may so be, that, of all the possible forms, that which yields the greatest amount of good envelopes in it a certain amount of evil. It was not for the evil but for the good that the universe was called out of the region of possibles into the state of a reality—and God in selecting it notwithstanding the evil did that which was wisest and best.

4. The following extract of a few sentences from his essay on the goodness of God, the liberty of man, and the origin of evil, may perhaps make this part of his system intelligible. “ Evil comes rather from the abstract forms themselves, that is to say from ideas which God has not produced by an act of His will, any more than numbers and figures, and any more, in short, than all possible essences, which should be reckoned eternal and necessary—for they are found in the ideal region of the possibles—that is to say in the Divine understanding. God then is not the author of the essences so long as they are but possibilities—but