

of those doctrines which lie equally beyond the reach of confident asseveration or confident denial. We cannot refute the dogma of certain uncontrollable necessities, in virtue of which, if one event shall occur, a less good on the whole must ensue, or a maximum of good be rendered impossible. But if so, neither can we refute the optimism of Leibnitz.

8. It will be perceived how it is, that the optimists may avail themselves of this theory, to soften all that is hard or obnoxious in those doctrines which seem to charge upon God that He is the author of evil. He did not will the infinite possible forms of universe into their state of possibility, any more than He willed the properties of figure or quantity into their state of trueness. He only willed one of these forms into its state of actual existence—and He did it on the principle of its being that form of an economy for a universe, under which the greatest good could be rendered upon the whole. It was only in that creative exercise by which He called our present universe, from the possible to the actual, that there was a forthgoing of will on the part of God—and He is not the author of the possible which exists only in idea, but the author only of the actual which He has made to exist in real and positive Being. Now it is of prime importance to remark for the vindication of character, that, in choosing the best possible form of a universe, the evil enveloped in that form was not the thing chosen. The thing chosen was the maximum of good—the *summum bonum* of a creation, which, of all possible creations, was the best. This directs us to an object wholly distinct,