

may, opposite, to the evil that is in Nature, as the proper and terminating object on which the will of the Almighty laid hold in the act of creation. Had He created our universe because of the evil that is in it, this would have fastened one character on the Maker of all things. But if He have created our universe because, in spite of the evil that is in it, it is the best of all the possible varieties that were in the view of His infinite understanding, this attaches to Him another and a contrary character. He is to be estimated, not by the evil that belongs to our universe, but by the maximum of good that belongs to it. The evil, in fact, may properly be said not to have sprung from His will at all. It exists actually only because it existed possibly—and it was translated from the state of possible to that of actual, not for its sake, but for the sake only of that *summum bonum* wherewith it lay implicated in the best possible form of a universe. At this rate the evil, we should observe, may be viewed as not chargeable on God at all—but properly on the form which He translated from the possible to the actual, in the exercise of greatest goodness because for the production of the greatest good. On the strength of this remark we may perhaps understand Leibnitz when he makes Minerva say that “my father has not made Sextus wicked, he was so from all eternity. He has done nothing but award him existence, which His wisdom could not refuse to that world in which he was comprehended.” He elsewhere makes a distinction between the permissive and the productive will of God. The object of the productive in this