

hand—even that, not of supplying a dogma of its own, but of setting a difficulty which attaches to another dogma at rest.

10. This conception has its source in a fancy or invention of the schoolmen; and which has at least a very striking, if not altogether satisfying illustration, to recommend it. What we allude to is the privative character of evil—in as much as the formal cause of it, is conceived to have no efficiency. Evil is supposed by them to consist in privation—and hence the schoolmen call the cause of evil “deficiente.” Hence the quarter to which we should look for the origin of evil is the essential defect of the creature—arising from the necessary limitation to which, as creatures, all of them are subject. In short it is in morals what cold is in physics—a thing of negative quality altogether—that is, as cold, instead of being a positive agent of opposite properties to heat, is regarded as the absence or the negation of heat—so sin is regarded as but the negation of virtue or righteousness. “Every thing,” says Leibnitz, “that is purely positive or absolute is a perfection, and every imperfection proceeds from limitation, that is to say is of a privative character.” At this rate God is regarded as the cause of all the perfections—and limitations or privations as resulting from an original imperfection in creatures, which bounds what is termed their receptivity. This is finely illustrated by the *vis inertiae* in matter, and its effects on a loaded vessel, which the river causes to go with more or less slowness, in proportion to the weight that it carries. Its velocity, comes from the river;