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A
DISCOURSE
ON
PREDESTINATION,
&c.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE RIGHT METHOD OF INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE, IN
WHAT RELATES TO THE NATURE OF THE DEITY,
AND HIS DEALINGS WITH MANKIND,

ILLUSTRATED,

IN A

DISCOURSE

ON

PREDESTINATION,

William
BY DR. KING,

Late Lord Archbishop of Dublin,

PREACHED AT CHRIST CHURCH, DUBLIN, BEFORE THE
HOUSE OF LORDS, MAY 15, 1709,

WITH NOTES

BY THE

REV. RICHARD WHATELY, M. A.

FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Nescire velle quæ magister optimus
Docere non vult, erudita inscitia est.

JOS. SCALIGER.

LONDON,

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1821.

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P R E F A C E.

THE immediate occasion of editing the following discourse, is the high commendation very justly bestowed on it by Dr. Copleston, in the notes to his “ Enquiry concerning Predestination.”

The design however had long been entertained of re-introducing to public notice in some form or other a work of such high value, which once enjoyed such well-merited celebrity, but which has for many years been undeservedly forgotten. Considering indeed not only that the author was a person of no mean repute in his day, but that this very discourse attracted so much attention as to

pass through at least six editions; and considering also that its subject is by no means one of temporary interest, and that it possesses the rare merit of being calculated for almost all descriptions of readers; one is disposed to wonder at its having so far sunk into oblivion, that a large majority probably of theological students have never even heard of it. Yet it is calculated to afford useful hints even to the most learned divine—to furnish the younger student with principles which will form the best basis on which to build his whole system of theology—and to supply even the unlearned reader with most valuable instruction, suited to a moderate capacity, on the most important points. It is ill-calculated however to gratify those who are puffed up with the pride of human learning and ingenuity, and who delight to display their talents in controversy: for it tends in a most eminent degree to

lower a presumptuous, and to soften a polemical, spirit : and the pride and bitterness of the arrogant controversialist are too deeply fixed in the heart to let him afford a patient and candid hearing to a professed peace-maker. And this probably may account in great measure both for the obloquy to which the author was exposed at the time, and for this work being afterwards nearly forgotten. For some account of the unprovoked attacks made upon it, and for a most luminous and concise sketch of the argument, the reader is referred to the first note on Dr. Copleston's third Discourse.

The main objection which has been brought against Dr. King's view of the subject is, that if the moral and intellectual attributes ascribed to God in the Scriptures are not to be understood as the same in Him that they are in us, but merely as *analogical* representations,

the precepts which direct us to *imitate* the divine perfections will be nullified; for how, it is urged, can we copy them, if we know not what they are? It may be worth while to give a brief summary of what may be said in reply to this objection; referring the reader who is desirous of a full and satisfactory discussion of the subject, to Dr. Copleston's note above mentioned.

I. Since attributes, such as those in question, "have no form or existence of their own, as the whole essence of them consists in their relation to something else^a;" it is impossible there can, in any case, be *any* resemblance between them, except the resemblance of *ratios* or *relations*; and *this* resemblance is *analogy*: when, for instance, we call God just or merciful, we can mean nothing *more* than his being and acting in *relation* to

^a Copleston's note to Dis. III. p. 128.

certain objects, in the same manner, as a just and merciful man would. So that when we say that the divine attributes are *analogous* to ours, we are asserting the only *kind* of resemblance which can exist in such attributes: for when we attribute, for instance, courage or temperance to two *men*, we are in fact only asserting an analogy; since those qualities are perceived only in their effects, and have only a *relative* existence. Dr. King does indeed contend, that, in the case of the divine attributes, this analogy is, in *degree*, incomparably less *close* and *complete*: but this, no one surely will venture to deny. And it should be remembered, that “he asserts in the strongest terms his belief in the superior excellence of the divine nature, and calls any qualities that are estimable in man, dim shadows and faint communications only of those attributes which

exist in God in complete and adorable perfection^b."

II. The utmost dissimilarity in the *causes* is no impediment to the most exact correspondence in the *effects*; nor, consequently, is our ignorance of the attributes of the Deity, as they are in Him, any obstacle to our imitating the results of them. When Solomon says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise," he cannot be supposed to imply that the ant possesses the very intellectual qualities which we call, in men, prudence, forethought, and diligence; yet it is not for this reason at all the less fit to be proposed to men as a model; for they may be led, from perceiving the beneficial *results* of that labour to which she is led by instinct, to practise the like from reason. So also, of the numerous and studiously varied

^b Copleston's note to Dis. III. p. 132.

parables delivered by our Lord, there is no one in which the analogy will hold quite closely throughout, and yet no one in which it is not amply sufficient for every practical purpose. Nor was He at all studious in every case to make the analogy as complete in all its circumstances as it might have been. For instance, in the parable of the unjust steward, a man acting from the basest motives, is proposed as a model for the imitation of Christians; who are taught to imitate him in the single circumstance of making a careful provision for the future; though the principles from which their conduct springs ought to be the very reverse of his. The same may be observed in numberless other parables and precepts; it is to the *practical result* that the attention is intended to be directed. For instance, this is the case even in the precept, to “love thy neighbour as thyself;” for it is only figura-

tively that a man is said to *love* himself^c; the regard which he has for his own happiness being, not in *degree* merely, but in *kind*, very different from any benevolent affections towards another; but the force of the precept is, that *as* we diligently seek to promote our own welfare, without having any further object in view, so we ought also diligently to promote the welfare of others, looking to nothing beyond. And this is practically sufficient.

In like manner, when we are told to “be merciful as our Father which is in heaven is merciful,” the obvious meaning of the precept is, that we should study to do good to mankind; and that we should shew kindness “to the unthankful and to the evil,” even as we see that they are partakers of the divine favours; though the circumstance which

^c Vide Stewart's Outlines, §. 5.

most increases our admiration for such conduct in a *man*, cannot be supposed to exist in the Deity: for what we most admire in a man is his submitting to *pain* and *mortification*, and suppressing those *irritable* feelings which ingratitude naturally excites in the *human* breast.

With respect to the general tendency and practical use of this discourse it should be observed, that though Dr. King's primary object is to treat of Predestination and the doctrines connected with it, we should greatly underrate the importance of his reasonings, if we supposed them to apply to that point alone: the principles he lays down are at least equally applicable to every other mysterious doctrine revealed in Scripture. So that if we admit Dr. King's notions to be correct, they must be the proper basis of all sound theology; and the discourse might justly have borne the title

of a RULE FOR INTERPRETING RIGHTLY THE SCRIPTURE-ACCOUNTS OF GOD, AND OF HIS DEALINGS WITH MANKIND. In fact, the difficulties respecting prescience and the necessity which it implies, are precisely those which least admit of, and least need, that mode of explanation which Dr. King has adopted; as I have endeavoured to shew in the Appendix, and as may be more fully seen in Tucker's most ingenious and accurate, though prolix and tedious, discussion of the subject, in the twenty-sixth chapter of his "Light of Nature:" to which I am indebted for nearly the whole substance of the reasonings I have employed.

It may perhaps be matter of surprise to some readers, that Dr. King's argument should be spoken of in terms of such high commendation, at the same time that he is charged with a want of precision in the use of the words "con-

tingent" and "necessary," in treating of that very point which is the primary object of his discourse. But, in fact, the objection to his argument, thus arising, is greater in appearance than in reality: the difficulty he is encountering may seem indeed to vanish when the precise language of Tucker is applied to the subject; but it will be found, in reality, to have only shifted its place and altered its form: there will still be the same difficulty in reconciling the *responsibility* of the creature with the *omnipotence* of the Creator, which there *seemed* to be in reconciling his *prescience* with our *freedom*: and there will therefore be no less necessity for Dr. King's humble, forbearing, and practical system of interpretation, than there would have been, had his view of the difficulty been in all respects unexceptionable. In Appendix, No. I. however, the reader will find an attempt to arrive at a more precise sys-

tem of phraseology than Dr. King's, on this part of the subject.

The utility, however, of his mode of reasoning is (as has been already observed), not confined to this single point: he himself, by way of illustration, points out its application to several other cases: and a reader of candour and judgment may easily learn to apply, for himself, in a great variety of instances, the principle which Dr. King lays down. And in proportion as this plan is adopted, it may be confidently hoped, that controversial bitterness, and arrogant dogmatism, will be lessened, and the practical utility of the doctrines of Scripture increased.

The obligations I am under to Tucker's *Light of Nature* have been already mentioned. How far I am indebted to Dr. Copleston, those who have perused his "*Enquiry*" will, in part, perceive: I say, *in part*, because having long en-

joyed the advantage of familiar intercourse with him, I have derived from his conversation more instruction than from his writings; and more indeed than it is possible accurately to estimate. When any two persons have been very long accustomed to discuss subjects together, it is difficult, if not impossible, for one of them to state precisely which are his own original ideas, and which are, wholly, or partly, derived from the other : and if he is indebted to that other for almost the whole of his intellectual training, and has derived from him the very principles on which his reasonings are conducted, he will scarcely be authorized, so far as his views coincide with those of his instructor, to claim any thought as entirely his own, but must make a general acknowledgment of having drawn from him, either directly or indirectly, nearly the whole of his intellectual stores.

I beg leave, however, distinctly to state, that Dr. Copleston is not *responsible* for any thing contained in the present publication; having neither suggested, nor even perused, any part of it, but having merely given a general approbation to the design of reprinting Dr. King's discourse.

A
DISCOURSE
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ROMANS viii. 29, 30.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

§. 1. **IN** these words the Apostle lays down the several steps by which God proceeds in the saving of his elect. First, He knows and considers those, whom he designs for salvation. Secondly, He decrees and predestinates them to be like his Son Jesus Christ, in holiness here, and glory hereafter, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Thirdly, He calls them to the means of salvation. Fourthly, He justifies: and, lastly, He glorifies them. This is the chain and series of God's dealing with his beloved; in which he is represented to us as first designing, and then executing, his gracious purposes towards them.

I am very sensible, that great contentions and divisions have happened in the church of God

about predestination and reprobation, about election and the decrees of God ; that learned men have engaged with the greatest zeal and fierceness in this controversy, and the disputes have proved so intricate, that the most diligent reader will perhaps, after all his labour in perusing them, be but little satisfied and less edified by the greatest part of all that has been written upon this subject. And hence it is that considering men of all parties seem at last, as it were by consent, to have laid it aside ; and seldom any now venture to bring it into the pulpit, except some very young or imprudent preachers.

Not but that the doctrine laid down in my text is undoubtedly true and useful, if we could but light on the true and useful way of treating it ; for so our Church has told us in her Seventeenth Article, where she informs us, “That as the godly consideration of Predestination is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, where-

by the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness^a of most unclean living."

The case therefore being thus, I shall endeavour to lay before you that which I take to be the edifying part of the doctrine of Predestination; and in such a manner (I hope) as to avoid every thing that may give occasion to ignorant or corrupt men to make an ill use of it.

§. 2. In order to this I shall,

First, Consider the representation that the text gives of God, as contriving our salvation; and shall endeavour to explain how these terms of foreknowing and predestinating are to be understood when attributed to God.

Secondly, Why the holy Scriptures represent God to us after this manner.

Thirdly, What use we are to make of this doctrine of God's foreseeing, freely electing, and predestinating men to salvation.

As to the first of these, you may observe, that in the representation here given of God's dealing, there are five acts ascribed to him; forc-

^a See Dr. Copleston's Appendix on the Seventeenth Art. note in p. 202.

knowing, predestinating, calling, justifying, and glorifying. And about each of these, great disputes have arisen among divines, and parties and sects have been formed on the different opinions concerning them. However as to the three last, Protestants seem now pretty well agreed; but as to the two first, the difference is so great, that on account thereof, there yet remain formed and separate parties, that mutually refuse to communicate with one another: though I believe, if the differences between them were duly examined and stated, they would not appear to be so great as they seem to be at first view; nor consequently would there appear any just reason for those animosities, that yet remain between the contending parties.

§. 3. In order to make this evident, we may consider,

1. That it is in effect agreed on all hands, that the nature of God, as it is in itself, is incomprehensible^b by human understanding: and

^b Edwards, the opponent of Dr. King, seems to dwell much (as indeed many other writers do) on the distinction between the *nature* of God and his *attributes*; as if we could comprehend the latter, though not the former: a

not only his nature, but likewise his powers and faculties, and the ways and methods in which he

notion which is fostered by the prevailing custom of speaking of the "being" and the "attributes" of a Deity, as two distinct points, to be proved separately; whereas this is in fact setting up a distinction, where there is not, as far as our notions and knowledge are concerned, any substantial difference; by which means confusion is introduced into our reasonings. For what, in fact, do we know of *any thing*, except its *attributes*? We know just as much, and as little of it, as we know of its attributes. Ask any one what his idea of God is, and he will reply by calling him "the author of the universe," (that is, *attributing* to him the creation,) and assigning to him such and such other *attributes*: and if any one could clearly and fully comprehend those attributes, as they are in the Deity, he would, so far at least, clearly and fully comprehend the nature of the Deity.

It is worth observing, however, that imperfectly and indistinctly as we *understand* these attributes, the proof of the *existence* of a Being possessed of them is most clear and full; being in fact the very same evidence on which we believe in the *existence of one another*. How do we know that men exist? (that is, not merely beings having a certain *visible* bodily form; for that is not what we chiefly imply by the word "man;" but *rational agents*, such as we call men;) surely not by the *immediate* evidence of our senses, (since mind is not an object of sight,) but by observing the *things performed*—the manifest *result* of rational contrivance. If we land in a strange

exercises them, are so far beyond our reach, that we are utterly incapable of framing exact and adequate notions of them. Thus the Scriptures frequently teach us, particularly St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. xi. 33. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Ver. 34. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"

§. 4. (2.) We ought to remember, that the descriptions which we frame to ourselves of God, or of the divine attributes, are not taken from any direct or immediate perceptions that

country, doubting whether it be inhabited, as soon as we find, for instance, a boat, or a house, we are as perfectly certain that a man has been there, as if he had appeared before our eyes. Now we are surrounded with similar proofs that there is a God.

With respect to the *kind* of knowledge we have of God, we shall best judge of it by attending to the case of children, whose example is in Scripture so strongly put before us. All the knowledge of children respecting their parents, and the other objects around them, is relative: they know not what any thing is in *itself*, but only the *relation* in which it stands to them; and even *that* very *imperfectly*.

we have of him or them ; but from some observations we have made of his works, and from the consideration of those qualifications, that we conceive would enable us to perform the like. Thus observing great order, conveniency, and harmony in all the several parts of the world, and perceiving that every thing is adapted, and tends to the preservation and advantage of the whole ; we are apt to consider, that we could not contrive and settle things in so excellent and proper a manner without great wisdom ; and thence conclude that God, who has thus concerted and settled matters, must have wisdom : and having then ascribed to him wisdom, because we see the effects and result of it in his works, we proceed and conclude that he has likewise foresight and understanding, because we cannot conceive wisdom without these, and because if we were to do what we see he has done, we could not expect to perform it without the exercise of these faculties.

And it doth truly follow from hence, that God must either have these or other faculties and powers equivalent to them, and adequate to these mighty effects which proceed from them. And

because we do not know what his faculties are in themselves, we give them the names of those powers, that we find would be necessary to us in order to produce such effects, and call them wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge: but at the same time we cannot but be sensible that they are of a nature altogether different from ours, and that we have no direct or proper notion or conception of them. Only we are sure that they have effects like unto those that do proceed from wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge in us: and when our works fail to resemble them in any particular, as to perfection, it is by reason of some want or defect in these qualifications.

Thus our reason teaches us to ascribe these attributes to God, by way of resemblance and analogy^c to such qualities or powers as we find most valuable and perfect in ourselves.

^c The words "resemblance" and "analogy" are not used by Dr. King with a sufficiently precise distinction of their respective senses. On this point, which is one of great importance in the present question, the reader is referred to Dr. Copleston's first note on Discourse iii. p. 122. where will be found the most clear and satisfactory

§. 5. (3.) If we look into the holy Scriptures, and consider the representations given us there of God or his attributes, we shall find them generally of the same nature, and plainly borrowed from some resemblance to things with which we are acquainted by our senses. Thus when the holy Scriptures speak of God, they ascribe hands, and eyes, and feet to him: not that it is designed that we should believe that he has any of these members according to the literal signification: but the meaning is, that he has a power to execute all those acts, to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental: that is, he can converse with men as well as if he had a tongue and mouth; he can discern all that we do or say as perfectly as if he had eyes and ears; he can reach us as well as if he had hands and feet; he has as true and substantial a being as if he had a body; and he is as truly present every where as if that body were infinitely extended. And in truth, if all

statement of the proper use, and of the abuse, of those terms, that has ever appeared. The same note contains also an analysis and a most masterly defence of the present discourse.

these things, which are thus ascribed to him, did really and literally belong to him, he could not do what he does near so effectually, as we conceive and are sure he doth them by the faculties and properties which he really possesses, though what they are in themselves be unknown to us.

After the same manner and for the same reason we find him represented as affected with such passions as we perceive to be in ourselves, viz. as angry and pleased, as loving and hating, as repenting and changing his resolutions, as full of mercy and provoked to revenge: and yet on reflection we cannot think that any of these passions can literally affect the divine nature. But the meaning confessedly is, that he will as certainly punish the wicked as if he were inflamed with the passion of anger against them; that he will as infallibly reward the good as we will those for whom we have a particular and affectionate love; that when men turn from their wickedness, and do what is agreeable to the divine command, he will as surely change his dispensations towards them, as if he really repented and had changed his mind.

And as the nature and passions of men are

thus by analogy and comparison ascribed to God, because these would in us be the principles of such outward actions, as we see he has performed, if we were the authors of them : so in the same manner, and by the same condescension to the weakness of our capacities, we find the powers and operations of our mind ascribed unto him.

As for example, it is the part of a wise man to consider beforehand what is proper for him to do, to prescribe means and methods to obtain his ends, to lay down some scheme or plan of his work before he begins, and to keep resolutely to it in the execution ; for if he should be conceived to deviate in any thing from his first purpose, it would argue some imperfection in laying the design, or want of power to execute it. And therefore it is after this manner the Scripture represents God, as purposing and contriving beforehand all his works ; and for this reason, wisdom, and understanding, and counsel, and foreknowledge, are ascribed to him : because both reason and Scripture assure us, that we ought to conceive of God as having all the perfection that we perceive to be in these attri-

butes, and that he has all the advantages that these powers or faculties could give him.

The advantages that understanding and knowledge give a man in the use of them, are to enable him to order his matters with conveniency to himself, and consistency in his works; so that they may not hinder or embarrass one another. And inasmuch as all the works of God are so ordered that they have the greatest congruity in themselves, and are most excellently adapted to their several uses and ends; we are sure there is a power in God who orders them, equivalent to knowledge and understanding; and because we know not what it is in itself, we give it these names.

§. 6. Lastly, the use of foreknowledge with us is to prevent any surprise when events happen, and that we may not be at a loss what to do by things coming upon us unawares. Now inasmuch as we are certain that nothing can surprise God, and that he can never be at a loss what to do in any event; therefore we conclude that God has a faculty to which our foreknowledge bears some analogy, and therefore we call it by that name.

But it does not follow from hence that any of these are more properly and literally in God, after the manner that they are in us, than hands or eyes, than mercy, love, or hatred are; but, on the contrary, we must acknowledge, that those things which we call by these names, when attributed to God, are of so very different a nature from what they are in us, and so superior to all that we can conceive, that in reality there is no more likeness between them than between our hand and God's power: nor can we draw consequences from the real nature of one to that of the other with more justness of reason, than we can conclude, because our hand consists of fingers and joints, that the power of God is distinguished by such parts.

And therefore to argue because foreknowledge as it is in us, if supposed infallible, cannot consist with the contingency^d of events; that there-

^d Dr. King appears not to have taken a sufficiently precise view of the sense of the word *contingency*: if we understand by it (as he seems sometimes to have done) the dependence of any event on the will and free choice of any one, then *this* is not inconsistent even with *our* foreknowledge: for a man would not be at all liable to mistake; for instance, in foretelling that mankind will never forsake

fore what we call so in God, cannot, is as far from reason as it would be to conclude, because

their habitations and betake themselves to the life of brute-beasts; though it certainly depends on their *will*, to do so or not. But in its ordinary sense, the word "contingent" denotes no quality in *events*, but only the relation in which they stand to our *knowledge*; thus, the same thing may be contingent to one person, and at the same time not contingent (or *certain* as it is called) to another: for instance, whether such an one was killed or not in the last battle that was fought in India, may be a contingency to his friends in England, but is a certainty to those on the spot. The admirable reasoning therefore of Dr. King does not apply in this case: not because contingency *implies, with us*, ignorance of the event, (for that alone would not be a sufficient ground of exception,) but because it implies *nothing else*: that is the *whole* meaning of the word: so that it is a contradiction in terms to speak of the same thing as *known*, and as *contingent*, at the *same* time, to the *same* being; though that may be contingent to *us*, which is known to *God*.

"One example has already been produced in the word *certainty*, which properly relates to the *mind* which thinks, and is improperly transferred to the *object* about which it is thinking. However convenient this transference of the term may be in common life, it leads to the most erroneous conclusions in abstracting reasoning: and the further adoption of a term as opposed to it, for the purpose of denoting another class of events, viz. *contingent*, has contributed to fix the error. The same may be said of the term *probable*, which is frequently used as if it de-

our eyes cannot see in the dark, that therefore, when God is said to see all things, his eyes must be enlightened with a perpetual sunshine; or because we cannot love or hate without passion, that therefore when the Scriptures ascribe these to God, they teach us that he is liable to these affections as we are.

We ought therefore to interpret all these things when attributed to God, as thus expressed only by way of condescension to our capacities, in order to help us to conceive what we are to expect from him, and what duty we are to pay him; and particularly, that the terms of foreknowledge, predestination, nay, of understanding and will, when ascribed to him, are not to be taken strictly or properly, nor are we to think that they are in him after the same man-

noted some quality in the events themselves, whereas it is merely relative, like *certain* and *contingent*, to the human mind, and is expressive of the manner in which we stand affected by such and such objects." *Copleston*, p. 80, 81.

The reader is referred for a fuller discussion of this subject to the Appendix, No. I. at the end of this discourse, on the word "necessary," and those connected with it: and also to Tucker's "Light of Nature," c. 26.

ner, or in the same sense, that we find them in ourselves ; but, on the contrary, we are to interpret them only by way of analogy or comparison.

That is to say, when we ascribe foreknowledge to him, we mean that he can no more be surprised with any thing that happens, than a wise man, that foresees an event, can be surprised when it comes to pass : nor can he any more be at a loss what he is to do in such a case, than a wise man can, who is most perfectly acquainted with all accidents which may obstruct his design, and has provided against them.

§. 7. So when God is said to predetermine* and

* This doctrine is perhaps the more insisted on by the sacred writers, from the circumstance that the heathen, from whom so large a portion of their converts were drawn, seem not to have attributed omniscience to their deities ; or, at least, to have been doubtful about it.

The frequent use of "shall," by our Bible translators, where, according to the present idiom of our language, "will" would have been the right rendering, is another circumstance (as is remarked by Dr. Copleston, p. 101, note) which favours, to the English reader, the Calvinistic views. If I am going too far in saying, that the word "will" is *never* used in that translation to denote *simple futurity*, but always *volition*, at least it may safely be as-

foreordain all things according to the counsel of his will, the importance of this expression is, that all things depend as much on God, as if he had settled them according to a certain scheme and design, which he had voluntarily framed in his own mind, without regard had to any other consideration besides that of his own mere will and pleasure.

If then we understand predetermination and predestination in this analogous sense, to give us a notion of the irresistible power of God, and

serted that such is the rule *generally* observed. Innumerable instances might be produced of the use of *shall* as a sign of the future tense merely : as, for instance, Obadiah says to Elijah, (1 Kings xviii. 14.) "Thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here ; and he shall slay me." So also our Lord says, "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death." Shakespeare indeed frequently uses these words according to the present idiom ; but frequently according to the other also ; for instance, (Cymbeline, Act i. Scene 6.) "Your highness shall from this practice but make hard your heart:" and again in *Trinilus and Cressida*, Act iv. Scene 4. "O you shall be exposed, my lord, to dangers."

The probability is, that our language was at that period in a state of *transition* as to the use of "will" and "shall ;" and that the rule which our Bible-translators have, chiefly at least, adhered to, was that of the *older* use.

of that supreme dominion he may exercise over his creatures, it will help us to understand what the sovereignty is that God has over us, the submission that we ought to pay him, and the dependence we have upon him.

But it no ways follows from hence that this is inconsistent with the contingency of events, or free will. And from hence it appears what it is that makes us apt to think so: which is only this, that we find in ourselves when we determine to do a thing, and are able to do what we have resolved on, that thing cannot be contingent to us: and if God's foreknowledge and predetermination were of the same nature with ours, the same inconsistency would be justly inferred. But I have already shewed that they are not of the same kind, and that they are only ascribed to him by way of analogy and comparison, as love and mercy, and other passions are; that they are quite of another nature, and that we have no proper notion of them, any more than a man born blind has of sight and colours; and therefore that we ought no more to pretend to determine what is consistent or not consistent with them, than a blind man ought to deter-

mine, from what he hears or feels, to what objects the sense of seeing reaches: for this were to reason from things that are only comparatively and improperly ascribed to God, and by way of analogy and accommodation to our capacities, as if they were properly and univocally the same in him and in us.

If we would speak the truth, those powers, properties, and operations, the names of which we transfer to God, are but faint shadows and resemblances, or rather indeed emblems and parabolical figures of the divine attributes, which they are designed to signify; whereas his attributes are the originals, the true real things of a nature so infinitely superior and different from any thing we discern in his creatures, or that can be conceived by finite understandings, that we cannot with reason pretend to make any other deductions from the natures of one to that of the others, than those he has allowed us to make; or extend the parallel any further than that very instance, which the resemblance was designed to teach us.

Thus foreknowledge and predestination, when attributed to God, are designed to teach us the

obligations which we owe to him for our salvation, and the dependence we have on his favour; and so far we may use and press them: but to conclude from thence that these are inconsistent with free will, is to suppose that they are the same in him and us; and just as reasonable as to infer, because wisdom is compared in Scripture to a tree of life, that therefore it grows in the earth, has its spring and fall, and is warmed by the sun and fed by the rain.

§. 8. And this brings me to the second head which I proposed to myself in this discourse, which was to shew you, why God and heavenly things are after this manner represented to us in holy Scripture. And the first reason that I shall offer is, that we must either be content to know them this way, or not at all. I have already told you, and I believe every considering man is convinced, that the nature and perfections of God, as he is in himself, are such that it is impossible we should comprehend them, especially in the present state of imperfection, ignorance, and corruption, in which this world lies. He is the object of none of our senses, by which we receive all our direct and immediate

perception of things : and therefore if we know any thing of him at all, it must be by deductions of reason, by analogy and comparison, by resembling him to something that we do know and are acquainted with.

It is by this way we arrive at the most noble and useful notions we have, and by this method we teach and instruct others. Thus when we would help a man to some conception of any thing that has not fallen within the reach of his senses, we do it by comparing it to something that already has, by offering him some similitude, resemblance, or analogy, to help his conception. As, for example, to give a man a notion of a country to which he is a stranger, and to make him apprehend its bounds and situation, we produce a map to him, and by that he obtains as much knowledge of it, as serves him for his present purpose. Now a map is only paper and ink, diversified with several strokes and lines, which in themselves have very little likeness to earth, mountains, valleys, lakes, and rivers. Yet none can deny but by proportion and analogy they are very instructive ; and if any should imagine that these countries are really paper, because the

maps that represent them are made of it, and should seriously draw conclusions from that supposition, he would expose his understanding, and make himself ridiculous : and yet such as argue from the faint resemblances that either Scripture or reason give of the divine attributes and operations, and proceed in their reasonings, as if these must in all respects answer one another, fall into the same absurdities that those would be guilty of, who should think countries must be of paper, because the maps that represent them are so.

To apply this more particularly to the case before us. We ascribe decrees and predestination to God, because the things signified by these words bear some resemblance to certain perfections that we believe to be in him. But if we remember that they are only similitudes and representations of them, and that there is as little likeness between the one and the other, as between the countries and maps which represent them : and that the likeness lies not in the nature of them, but in some particular effect or circumstance that is in some measure common to both : we must acknowledge it very un-

reasonable to expect that they should answer one another in all things: or because the different representations of the same thing cannot be exactly adjusted in every particular, that therefore the thing represented is inconsistent in itself.

Foreknowledge and decrees are only assigned to God to give us a notion of the steadiness and certainty of the divine actions; and if so, for us to conclude that what is represented by them is inconsistent with the contingency of events or free-will, because the things representing (I mean, our foreknowledge and decrees) are so, is the same absurdity, as it is to conclude, that China is no bigger than a sheet of paper, because the map that represents it is contained in that compass.

§. 9. This seems to me a material point, and therefore I will endeavour to illustrate with an instance or two more. Every body is satisfied that time, motion, and velocity, are subjects of very useful knowledge; and that adjusting and discovering the proportions that these bear to one another, is perhaps all that is profitable in natural philosophy. How is it then, that we

proceed in our demonstrations concerning these? It is not by representing time by a line, the degrees of velocity by another, and the motion that results from both by a superficies or a solid? and from these we draw conclusions, which are not only very true, but also of great moment to arts and sciences; and never fail in our deductions, while we keep justly to the analogy and proportion they bear to one another in the production of natural effects; neither is it easy, nor perhaps possible, to come at such knowledge any other way.

Yet in the nature of the thing, there is no great similitude between a line and time; and it will not be very obvious to a person, who is not acquainted with the method of the skilful in such matters, to conceive how a solid should answer the compounded effect of time and motion. But if any, instead of endeavouring to understand the method and proportions used by the learned in such cases, in order to discover to them these useful truths, should reject the whole as a thing impossible; alleging that we make time a permanent thing and existing altogether, because a line which represents it in

this scheme is so, we should think that he hardly deserved an answer to such a foolish objection.

And yet of this nature are most, if not all, the objections that are commonly made against the representations that the Scripture gives us of the divine nature, and of the mysteries of our religion.

§. 10. Thus the holy Scriptures represent to us that distinction which we are obliged to believe to be in the unity of God, by that of three persons, and the relation they bear to one another, by that of a father to his son, and of a man to his spirit; and those that object against this, and infer that these must be three substances, because three persons among men are so, do plainly forget that these are but representations and resemblances; and fall into the same absurd way of reasoning that the former do, who conclude, that we make time a permanent thing, because a line is so, by which we represent it.

§. 11. Again, if we were to describe to an ignorant American what was meant by writing, and told him that it is a way of making words visible and permanent, so that persons at any

distance of time and place may be able to see and understand them; the description would seem very strange to him, and he might object that the thing must be impossible, for words are not to be seen but heard: they pass in the speaking, and it is impossible they should affect the absent, much less those that live in distant ages. To which there needs no other answer than to inform him, that there are other sorts of words beside those he knows, that are truly called so, because equivalent to such as are spoken; that they have both the same use, and serve equally to communicate our thoughts to one another; and that if he will but have patience, and apply himself to learn, he will soon understand, and be convinced of the possibility and usefulness of the thing: and none can doubt but he were much to blame, and acted an unwise part, if he refused to believe the person that offered to instruct him, or neglected to make the experiment.

And sure when any one objects against the possibility of the Three Persons of the Trinity in one God, it is every whit as good an answer^f to

^f The word Person, in the sense here alluded to, being,

tell such an objector that there are other sort of persons besides those we see among men, whose

as every one knows, not a Scriptural term, but introduced for the purpose of guarding against heresies, by a precise statement of Scriptural doctrine; it would be perhaps, in this case, a more satisfactory answer, to say, that the Greek term "*Hypostasis*," and the Latin "*Persona*," were resorted to as the best that could be found to express the belief of the Church in the Divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in such a manner as to keep clear of the supposition of her teaching that there are three Gods, or three *parts* of the one God, or three *properties* merely, or *agencies* of God; it being her meaning, that though the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, yet there are certain *attributes* of each of these three respectively, which would not apply to any of the others: for instance, though each and all of these three may be properly called "*God*," yet when we call the Son our "*Redeemer*" and "*Mediator*," these are attributes which do not belong to the Father or the Holy Spirit, *as such*; and in like manner, when we call the Holy Spirit our "*Sanctifier*," that is an attribute which does not belong to the Father or the Son, *as such*.

The word *Persona*, which was employed to express this distinction, had come (from its original signification of a mask, such as was used on the stage) to signify the fictitious character itself which the actor sustained; and afterwards, any *character* whatever, real or fictitious. "*Itaque cum ille discepit, tres personas unus sustineo. Summa animi æquitate, meam, adversarii, judicis.*" *Cic. de Orat.* b. ii. §. 24.

personality is as truly different from what we call so, as a word written is different from a word spoken, and yet equivalent to it. And though three persons, such as men are, cannot be in one human nature, as a word spoken cannot be visible and permanent; yet what we call three persons by comparison and analogy, may consist in the unity of the Godhead.

And after the same manner we ought to an-

In the ordinary sense of the English word person, which always implies a *distinct substance*, *Persona* does not I believe once occur in the pure Latin Classics. It is perhaps rather unfortunate, considering what is the ordinary use of our word person, that it should have been adopted as a translation of the Latin word *Persona*, since the point in which the senses of these two words differ is one of such high importance: no imputation however can fairly be cast on the *doctrine* of our Church; which distinctly teaches that the Son is "of *one substance* with the Father," thus plainly indicating, that the word "Person," as employed by her, is *not* to be understood in its *ordinary* sense, since *that* implies a distinct substance. It is therefore a most unfair cavil, to represent the Trinitarians as holding that God is Three, in *the same sense* in which he is one: which would indeed be a contradiction: and it is weakness to allege that there is any contradiction in holding that what is three in *one sense*, may, in *another sense*, be one.

swer those who object against the foreknowledge and decrees of God, as inconsistent with the freedom of choice, by telling them, that though such foreknowledge and decrees as are in our understanding and wills cannot consist with contingency, if we suppose them certain; yet what we call so in God may, being quite of a different nature, and only called by those names, by reason of some analogy and proportion which is between them.

And if men will but have patience, and wait the proper time, when faith shall be perfected into vision, and we shall know even as we are known; they may then see and be as well satisfied that there is no absurdity in the trinity of persons, or foreknowledge of contingency, as the Indian is, when he has learned to read and write, that there is no impossibility in visible permanent words.

§. 7. Lastly, It is observable, that no care, industry, or instruction, can ever give a person born, and continuing blind, any notion of light; nor can he ever have any conception how men who have eyes discern the shape and figure at a distance, nor imagine what colours mean: and

yet he would, I believe, readily (on the account he receives from others, of the advantage of knowing these things) endure labour and pain, and submit to the most difficult and tormenting operations of physic and chirurgery, in order to obtain the use of his eyes, if any reasonable hope could be given him of the success of such an undertaking. And why then should not we as willingly submit to those easy methods which God has prescribed to us, in order to obtain that knowledge of his nature and attributes in which our eternal satisfaction and happiness hereafter is in a very great measure to consist? And it is certain we now know as much of them, as the blind man, in the case supposed, does of light or colours; and have better reason to seek, and more certain hope of attaining in the next life to a fuller and more complete knowledge, than such a man can have with relation to the use of his eyes, and the advantage of seeing. And then will he not rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us? Since he endures so much to obtain sight on the imperfect representations of it made to him by other men, whilst we will not believe and endure as much

for eternal happiness, on the testimony of God.

§. 13. If it be asked, why these things are not made clear to us? I answer, for the same reason that light and colours are not clear to one that is born blind, even because in this imperfect state we want faculties to discern them: and we cannot expect to reach the knowledge of them whilst here, for the same reason that a child, whilst he is so, cannot speak and discourse as he doth when a grown man; there is a time and season for every thing, and we must wait for that season. There is another state and life for the clear discerning of these matters; but in the mean time we ought to take the steps and methods which are proper for our condition: and, if we will not do so, we can no more expect to arrive to the knowledge of these necessary truths, or that state which will make them plain to us, than a child can hope he shall ever be able to read and write, who will not be persuaded to go to school, or obey his master.

This analogical knowledge of God's nature and attributes is all of which we are capable of at present; and we must either be contented to

know him thus, or sit down with an entire ignorance and neglect of God, and finally despair of future happiness. But it concerns us frequently to call to mind the Apostle's observation, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known." Though our present knowledge of divine things be very imperfect, yet it is enough to awaken our desire of more; and though we do not understand the enjoyments of the blessed, yet the description we have of them is sufficient to engage us to seek after them, and to prosecute the methods prescribed in Scripture for attaining them.

§. 14. And therefore let me offer it as a second reason why God and divine things are thus represented to us in Scripture^g, viz. That such knowledge is sufficient to all the intents and purposes of religion; the design whereof is to

^g It has been objected, that Dr. King's representation of the divine attributes does away the force of those passages of Scripture, which command us to imitate the divine perfections: for some remarks on this subject, see Preface.

lead us in the way of eternal happiness, and in order thereunto, to teach and oblige us to live reasonably, to perform our duty to God, our neighbours, and ourselves, to conquer and mortify our passions and lusts, to make us beneficent and charitable to men, and to oblige us to love, obey, and depend upon God.

Now it is easy to shew that such a knowledge as I have described, is sufficient to obtain all these ends: for though I know not what God is in himself, yet if I believe he is able to hurt or help me, to make me happy or miserable, this belief is sufficient to convince me, that it is my duty to fear him. If I be assured that all his works are done with regularity, order, and fitness; that nothing can surprise or disappoint him; that he can never be in any doubt, or at a loss what is proper for him to do; though I do not comprehend the faculties by which he performs so many admirable and amazing things, yet I know enough to make me adore and admire his conduct. If I be satisfied that I can no more expect to escape free, when I break the laws and rules he has prescribed me, than a subject can who assaults his prince in the midst

of all his guards ; this is enough to make me cautious about every word I speak, and every action I perform, and to put me out of all hope of escaping when I offend him.

If I am convinced that God will be as steady to the rules he has prescribed for my deportment as a wise and just prince will be to his laws ; this alone will oblige me to a strict observation of the divine commands, and assure me that I must be judged according as I have kept or transgressed them.

If a man be convinced that by his sins he has forfeited all right and title to happiness, and that God is under no obligation to grant him pardon for them ; that only the free mercy of God can put him into the way of salvation ; and that he may as well without imputation of injustice pardon one, and pass by another, as a prince may, of many equal malefactors, reprieve one for an instance of his mercy and power, and suffer the rest to be carried to execution : if a man, I say, finds himself under these circumstances, he will have the same obligations of gratitude to his God, that the pardoned offender owes to his prince, and impute his escape en-

tirely to the peculiar favour of God, that made the distinction between him and others without any regard to their merits.

If we believe that there is a distinction in the manner of the subsisting of the divine nature, that requires such particular applications from us to God as we pay to three distinct persons here; and that he has such distinct and really different relations to himself and to us on this account, as three men have to one another; that is enough to oblige us to pay our addresses to him as thus distinguished, and to expect as different benefits and blessings from him under this distinction, as we expect from different persons here: and it can be no hindrance to our duty, that we are ignorant of the nature and manner of that distinction.

Let us consider how many honour and obey their prince, who never saw him, who never had any personal knowledge of him, and could not distinguish him from another man if they should meet him. This will shew us, that it is not necessary that we should personally know our governor, to oblige us to perform our duty to him: and if many perform their duty to their

prince without knowing him, why should it seem strange that we should be obliged to do our duty to God, though we do not know any more of his person or nature but that he is our Creator and Governor.

Lastly, To shew that this kind of knowledge is sufficient for salvation, let us suppose one who takes all the descriptions we have of God literally, who imagines him to be a mighty King that sits in heaven, and has the earth for his footstool; that at the same time hath all things in his view which can happen; that has thousands and thousands of ministers to attend him, all ready to obey and execute his commands; that has a great love and favour for such as diligently obey his orders, and is in a rage and fury against the disobedient: could any one doubt but he, who in the simplicity of his heart should believe these things, as literally represented, would be saved by virtue of that belief, or that he would not have motives strong enough to oblige him to love, honour, and obey God?

If it should be objected that such representations do not exactly answer the nature of things, I confess this is true; but I would desire you

to consider; that the best representations we can make of God are infinitely short of the truth, and that the imperfections of such representations will never be imputed to us as a fault, provided we do not wilfully dishonour him by unworthy notions; and our conceptions of him be such as may sufficiently oblige us to perform the duties he requires at our hands.

And if any one farther allege, that he who takes these representations literally, will be involved in many difficulties, and that it will be easy to shew that there are great inconsistencies in them, if we understand them according to the letter;

I answer, he is to be looked upon as very officious and impertinent, that will raise such objections, and put them in the heads of plain, honest people; who by the force of such common though figurative knowledge (as it may be termed) practise the substantial and real duties of religion, that lead them to eternal happiness.

It is true, when curious and busy persons by the unreasonable abuse of their knowledge have raised such objections, they must be answered: and it is then necessary to shew in what sense

these representations ought to be taken; and that they are to be understood by way of comparison, as condescensions to our weakness.

But though these objections are easily answered, yet he who makes them unnecessarily is by no means excused, because they often occasion disturbance to weak people. Many that may be shocked by the difficulty, may not be capable of readily understanding the answers: and therefore thus to raise such scruples, is to lay a stumbling-block in the way of our weak brethren, and perplex them with notions and curiosities, the knowledge of which is no way necessary to salvation.

We ought therefore to consider that it was in great mercy and compassion to the ignorance and infirmity of men, that the holy Spirit vouchsafed to give us such representations of the divine nature and attributes. He knew what knowledge was most proper for us, and what would most effectually work on us to perform our duty: and if we take things as the Scripture represents them, it cannot be denied but they are well adapted to our capacities, and must have a mighty influence on all that sincerely

believe them; in truth, greater than all those nice speculations that we endeavour to substitute in their place.

§. 15. But, thirdly, if we consider seriously the knowledge that we have of the creatures, and even of those things in this world with which we are most familiarly acquainted, it will appear that the conceptions we have of them are much of the same sort as those are which religion gives us of God, and that they neither represent the nature or essential properties of the things as they are in themselves, but only the effects they have in relation to us. For in most cases we know no more of them but only how they affect us, and what sensations they produce in us.

Thus, for example, light and the sun are the most familiar and useful things in nature: we have the comfortable perception of them by our senses of seeing and feeling, and enjoy the benefit and advantage of them; but what they are in themselves we are entirely ignorant.

I think it is agreed by most that write of natural philosophy, that light and colours are nothing but the effects of certain bodies and motions on our sense of seeing, and that there

are no such things at all in nature, but only in our minds : and of this at least we may be sure, that light in the sun or air, are very different things from what they are in our sensations of them ; yet we call both by the same name, and term that which is only perhaps a motion in the air, light ; because it begets in us that conception which is truly light. But it would seem very strange to the generality of men, if we should tell them, that there is no light in the sun, or colours in the rainbow ; and yet, strictly speaking, it is certain, that which in the sun causes the conception of light in us, is as truly different in nature from the representation we have of it in our minds, as our foreknowledge is from what we call so in God.

§. 16. The same may be observed concerning the objects of our other senses, such as heat and cold, sweet and bitter, and which we ascribe to the things that affect our touch and taste. Whereas it is manifest, that these are only the sensations that the actions of outward things produce in us. For the fire that burns us has no such pain in it as we feel, when we complain of its heat ; nor ice, such as we call cold.

Nevertheless, we call the things, whose actions

on our senses cause these sensations in us, by the same name we give to our conceptions of them, and treat and speak of them as if they were the same: we say the fire is hot, because it produceth heat in us; and that the sun is light, because it affects our eyes in such a manner, as enables us to frame that thought which we then perceive in ourselves. But in the mean time we are altogether ignorant what it is particularly in the fire and the sun that has these effects on us, or how it comes thus to affect us. And yet this ignorance of ours doth not hinder us from the use or advantage that nature designed us in these sensations; nor does our transferring to the objects themselves the names that we give our own perceptions of them draw any evil consequences after it; on the contrary, they serve the uses of life, as well as if we knew the very things themselves. The sun, by giving me the sensation of light, directs and refreshes me, as much as if I knew what its nature and true substance are. For, in truth, men are no farther concerned to know the nature of any thing, than as it relates to them, and has some effect on them. And if they know the effects

of outward things, and how far they are to use or avoid them, it is sufficient.

If then such knowledge of natural things, as only shews the effects they have on us, be sufficient to all the uses of life, though we do not know what they are in themselves; why should not the like representation of God and his attributes be sufficient for the ends of religion, though we be ignorant of his and their nature?

Every one knows, that steadiness, regularity, and order, do always proceed from wisdom. When therefore we observe these in the highest degree in all the works of God, shall we not say that God is infinitely wise, because we are ignorant what that really is in itself which produces such stupendous effects? though after all, wisdom, as in us, be as different from what we call so in God, as light in our conception is different from the motion in the air that causes it.

§. 17. We all of us feel a tendency to the earth, which we call gravity, but none ever yet was able to give any satisfactory account of its nature or cause; but in as much as we know, that falling down a precipice will crush us to pieces, the sense we have of this effect of it is

sufficient to make us careful to avoid such a fall. And in like manner, if we know that breaking God's commands will provoke him to destroy us, will not this be sufficient to oblige us to obedience, though we be ignorant what it is we call anger in him?

§. 18. I might go through all the notices we have of natural things, and shew that we only know and distinguish them by the effects they produce on our senses, and make you sensible that such knowledge sufficiently serves the purposes of life. And no reason can be given why the representations given us in Scripture of God and divine things, though they do only shew us the effects that proceed from them, should not be sufficient to answer the purposes of religion.

Particularly we ascribe foreknowledge to God, because we are certain that he cannot be surprised by any event, nor be at any loss what he is to do when it happens. And thereby we give him all the perfection we can, and assure ourselves that we can not deceive him.

After the same manner we ascribe predestination to him, and conceive him as predetermining every thing that comes to pass, because

all his works are as steady and certain, as if he had predetermined them after the same manner that wise men do theirs.

We farther represent him as absolutely free, and all his actions as arising only from himself, without any other consideration but that of his own will; because we are sure, the obligations we owe to him are as great as if he acted in this wise. We are as much obliged to magnify his free mercy and favour to us, to humble our minds before him, and return our tribute of gratitude to him, as if our salvation entirely proceeded from his mere good will and pleasure, without any thing being required on our part in order to it.

§. 19. Let me in the fourth place observe, that as we transfer the actions of our own minds, our powers, and virtues, by analogy to God, and speak of him as if he had the like; so we proceed the same way in the representations we make to one another of the actions of our minds, and ascribe the powers and faculties of bodies to the transactions that pass in them. Thus to weigh things, to penetrate, to reflect, are proper actions of bodies, which we transfer to our

understandings, and commonly say, that the mind weighs or penetrates things, that it reflects on itself or actions ; thus to embrace or reject, to retain or let slip, are corporeal performances, and yet we ascribe the first to the will, and the last to the memory. And it is manifest that this does not cause any confusion in our notions : though none will deny but there is a vast difference between weighing a piece of money in a scale, and considering a thing in our minds ; between one body's passing through another, which is properly penetrating, and the understandings obtaining a clear notion of a thing hard to be comprehended. And so in all the rest, there is indeed a resemblance and analogy between them, which makes us give the same names to each : but to compare them in all particulars, and expect they should exactly answer, would run us into great absurdities. As for example, it would be ridiculous to think that weighing a thing in our minds should have all the effects, and be accompanied with all the circumstances, that are observable in weighing a body.

§. 20. Now to apply this, let us consider that

love, hatred, wisdom, knowledge, and foreknowledge, are properly faculties or actions of our minds; and we ascribe them to God after the same manner that we do reflection, penetrating, discovering, embracing, or rejecting, to our intellectual actions and faculties, because there is some analogy and proportion between them. But then we ought to remember, that there is as great a difference between these, when attributed to God, and as they are in us, as between weighing in a balance and thinking; in truth, infinitely greater; and that we ought no more to expect that the one should in all respects and circumstances answer the other, than that thinking in all things should correspond to weighing. Would you not be surprised to hear a man deny, and obstinately persist in it, that his mind can reflect upon itself, because it is impossible that a body, from whence the notion is originally taken, should move or act on itself? and is it not equally absurd to argue, that what we call foreknowledge in God, can not consist with the contingency or freedom of events, because our prescience, from whence we transfer the notion to the divine understanding, could

not if it were certain? And is it not equally a sufficient answer to both, when we say that the reflection of bodies, though in many circumstances it resembles that action of the mind which we call so, yet in other particulars they are mighty unlike? And though the foreknowledge that we have in some things resembles what we term so in God, yet the properties and effects of these in other particulars are infinitely different.

Nor can we think that whatever is impossible in the one, must be likewise so in the other. It is impossible motion should be in a body, except it be moved by another, or by some other external agent; and it requires a space in which it is performed, and we can measure it by feet and yards; but we should look on him as a very weak reasoner, that would deny any motion to be in the mind, because he could find none of those there. And we should think that we had sufficiently answered this objection, by telling him that these two motions are of very different natures, though there be some analogy and proportion between them. And shall not the same answer satisfy those that argue against the

divine foreknowledge, predestination, and other actions attributed to God, because many things are supposed possible to them, which are impossible to us?

§. 21. It may be objected against this doctrine, that if it be true, all our descriptions of God and discourses concerning him will be only figures and metaphors; that he will be only figuratively merciful, just, intelligent, and foreknowing: and perhaps in time, religion and all the mysteries thereof will be lost in mere figure.

But I answer, that there is great difference between the analogical representations of God, and that which we commonly call figurative. The common use of figures is to represent things that are otherwise very well known, in such a manner as may magnify or lessen, heighten or adorn, the ideas we have of them. And the design of putting them in this foreign dress, as we may call it, is to move our passions, and engage our fancies more effectually than the true and naked view of them is apt to do, or perhaps ought. And from hence it too often happens, that these figures are employed to de-

ceive us, and make us think better or worse of things than they really deserve.

But the analogies and similitudes that the holy Scriptures or our own reason frame of divine things are of another nature; the use of them is to give us some notion of things whereof we have no direct knowledge, and by that means lead us to perception of the nature, or at least of some of the properties and effects of what our understandings cannot directly reach, and in this case to teach us how we are to behave ourselves towards God, and what we are to do in order to obtain a more perfect knowledge of his attributes.

§. 22. And whereas in ordinary figurative representations, the thing expressed by the figure is commonly of much less moment than that to which it is compared: in these analogies the case is otherwise, and the things represented by them have much more reality and perfection in them, than the things by which we represent them. Thus weighing a thing in our minds is a much more noble and perfect action, than examining the gravity of a body by scale and balance, which is the original notion from whence it is borrowed;

and reflection as in our understandings is much more considerable, than the rebounding of one hard body from another, which yet is the literal sense of reflection. And after the same manner, what we call knowledge and foreknowledge in God, have infinitely more reality in them, and are of greater moment than our understanding or prescience, from whence they are transferred to him ; and, in truth, these as in man are but faint communications of the divine perfections, which are the true originals, and which our powers and faculties more imperfectly imitate than a picture does a man : and yet if we reason from them by analogy and proportion, they are sufficient to give us such a notion of God's attributes, as will oblige us to fear, love, obey, and adore him.

If we lay these things together, I suppose, they will furnish us with sufficient reasons to satisfy us why the holy Scriptures represent divine things to us by types and similitudes, by comparisons and analogies, and transferring to God the notions of such perfections as we observe in ourselves, or other creatures : since it appears that we are not capable of better ; that

such knowledge answers all the designs of religion; and that when the matter is duly examined, we hardly know any thing without ourselves in a more perfect manner.

I shall therefore proceed to the third and last thing I proposed, which was to shew the uses we ought to make of what has been said, particularly of God's foreknowing and predestinating his elect to holiness and salvation.

§. 23. And first, from the whole it appears that we ought not to be surprised, when we find the Scriptures giving different and seemingly contradictory schemes of divine things.

It is manifest that several such are to be found in holy writ. Thus God is frequently said in Scripture to repent and turn from the evil that he proposed against sinners; and yet in other places we are told, that "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent." So Numb. xxiii. 19. Thus, Psalm xviii. 11. God is represented as dwelling in thick darkness: "he made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the sky." And yet, 1 Tim. vi 16. he is described as "dwelling

in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." And, 1 John i. 5. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Thus in the second Commandment God is represented as "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." And yet, Ezek. xviii. 20. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;" and ver. 4. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

After the same manner, we are forbid by our Saviour, Matt. vi. 7. "to use vain repetitions as the heathen do; or to think that we shall be heard for our much speaking; because," ver. 8. "your Father knows what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." And yet, Luke xviii. 1. we are encouraged "always to pray, and not to faint:" and this is recommended to us by the parable of an importunate widow, who through her incessant applications became uneasy to the judge, and by her continual cries and petitions so troubled him, that to procure his own ease he did her justice: ver. 5. "Because this widow

troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."

Thus it is said, Exod. xxxiii. 11. "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." And yet, in ver. 20. he declares to the same Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live." There are multitudes of other instances of the like nature, that seem to carry some appearance of a contradiction in them, but are purposely designed to make us understand, that these are only ascribed to God by way of resemblance and analogy, and to correct our imaginations, that we may not mistake them for perfect representations, or think that they are in God in the same manner that the similitudes represent them, and to teach us not to stretch those to all cases, or farther than they are intended.

§. 24. We ought to remember, that two things may be very like one another in some respects, and quite contrary in others; and yet to argue against the likeness in one respect from the contrariety in the other, is as if one should dispute against the likeness of a picture,

because that is made of canvas, oil, and colours, whereas the original is flesh and blood.

Thus in the present case, God is represented as an absolute Lord over his creatures, of infinite knowledge and power, that doth all things for his mere pleasure, and is accountable to none; as one that "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens;" that foresees, predestinates, calls, justifies, glorifies whom he will, without any regard to the creatures whom he thus deals with. This gives us a mighty notion of his sovereignty, at once stops our mouths and silences our objections, oblige us to an absolute submission and dependence on him, and withal to acknowledge the good things we enjoy to be entirely due to his pleasure: this is plainly the design and effect of this terrible representation; and the meaning is, that we should understand that God is no way obliged to give us an account of his actions; that we are no more to inquire into the reasons of his dealing with his creatures, than if he really treated them in this arbitrary method. By the same we are taught to acknowledge, that our salvation as entirely depends on him,

and that we owe it as much to his pleasure, as if he had bestowed it on us without any other consideration but his own will to do so. Thus, James i. 18. "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." And that we might not think there could be any thing in our best works, the prospect whereof could move God to shew kindness to us, the Scriptures give us to understand, that those good works are due to his grace and favour, and the effects, not causes of them. So Ephes. ii. 10. "for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

§. 25. All which representations are designed as a scheme, to make us conceive the obligations we owe to God, and how little we can contribute to our own happiness. And to make us apprehend this to be his meaning, he has on other occasions given us an account of his dealing with men, not only different, but seemingly contradictory to this. Thus he frequently represents himself, as proposing nothing for his own pleasure or advantage in his transactions with

his creatures; as having no other design in them, but to do those creatures good; as earnestly desiring and prosecuting that end only. Nay, he represents himself to us as if he were as uneasy and troubled when we failed to answer his expectations, as we may conceive a good, merciful, and beneficent prince, that had only his subjects' happiness in view, would be, when they refused to join with him for promoting their own interest. And God, farther to express his tenderness towards us, and how far he is from imposing any thing on us, lets us know that he has left us to our own freedom and choice; and to convince us of his impartiality, declares that he acts as a just and equal judge, that he hath no respect of persons, and favours none, but rewards and punishes all men, not according to his own pleasure, but according to their deserts: "and in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts x. 35.

§. 26. Whoever is acquainted with the holy Scriptures, will find all these things plainly delivered to them. Thus to shew us that God proposes no advantages to himself in his dealings

with us, he is described as a person wholly disinterested. Job xxii. 2, 3. "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" And chap. xxxv. 6, 7. "If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine hand?" And as to his leaving us to the liberty of our own choice, observe how he is represented, Deut. xxx. 19: "I call heaven and earth this day to record against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life."

And as to his earnest concern for our salvation, he orders the prophet Ezekiel to deliver this message from him: chap. xxxiii. 11. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" And Hosea xi. 8. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How

shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Adnah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

Every one may see how distant this view of God, and of his dealings with his creatures, is from the former: and yet if we consider it as a scheme framed to make us conceive how graciously, mercifully, and justly God treats us, notwithstanding the supreme and absolute dominion he has over us, there will be no inconsistency between the two. You see here, that though the creatures be in his hand, as *clay* in the *potter's*, of which he may make vessels of *honour* or *dishonour*, without any injury, or being accountable; yet he uses that power, with all the passionate love and concern that parents shew towards their children: and therefore we are to conceive of him as having all the tenderness of affection that parents feel in their heart towards their young ones; and that if he had been so affected, he could not (considering our circumstances) have gone farther than he has done to save us; that our destruction is as entirely due to ourselves, as if we were out of

God's power, and absolutely in the hands of our own counsel.

§. 27. If we take these as schemes designed to give us different views of God, and his transactions with men, in order to oblige us to distinct duties which we owe him, and stretch them no farther, they are very reconcilable. And to go about to clash the one against the other, and argue, as many do, that if the one be true, the other cannot, is full as absurd as to object against that article of our belief, that Christ sits on the right hand of God, because Scripture in other places, and plain reason, assure us that God hath neither hand nor parts.

And whilst a thing may in one respect be like another, and in other respects be like the contrary; and whilst we know that thing only by resemblance, similitude, or proportion, we ought not to be surprised that the representations are contrary, and taken from things that seem irreconcilable, or that the different views of the same thing should give occasion to different, nay contrary schemes.

§. 28. We ought farther to consider, that these are not so much designed to give us

notions of God as he is in himself, as to make us sensible of our duty to him, and to oblige us to perform it. As for example, when the Scriptures represent God as an absolute Lord, that has his creatures entirely in his power, and treats them according to his pleasure; as one that is not obliged to consider their advantage at all, or any thing but his own will; that may elect one to eternal salvation, and pass over another, or condemn him to eternal misery, without any other reason but because he will do so; when we read this, I say, in the holy Scriptures, we ought not to dispute whether God really acts thus or no, or how it will suit with his other attributes of wisdom and justice to do so; but the use we ought to make of it is to call to mind what duty and submission we ought to pay to one who may thus deal with us if he please, and what gratitude we ought to return him, for electing and decreeing us to salvation, when he lay under no manner of obligation to vouchsafe us that favour.

Again, when we find him represented as a gracious and merciful Father, that treats us as

children, that is solicitous for our welfare, that would not our death or destruction ; that has done all things for our eternal happiness, which could be done without violating the laws of our creation, and putting a force upon our natures ; that has given us free-will, that we might be capable of rewards at his hands, and have the pleasure of choosing for ourselves ; which only can make us happy, and like unto himself, in the most noble operations of which a being is capable ; that has given us all the invitations and encouragements to choose well, that mercy could prompt him to, or that the justice which is due to himself and creatures would allow, and that never punishes us, but when the necessity and support of his government requires he should : when we hear these things, we are not so much to enquire whether this representation exactly suits with what really passes in his mind, as how we ought to behave ourselves in such a case towards him that has dealt so graciously with us.

§. 22. And though these representations be but descriptions fitted to our capacities, through God's great condescension towards us ; yet it

is certain, that there is as much mercy, tenderness, and justice in the conduct of God, as this scheme represents; and on the other hand, that we owe as much fear, submission, and gratitude to him, as if the first were the method he took with us.

We make no scruple to acknowledge, that love and hatred, mercy and anger, with other passions, are ascribed to God; not that they are in him, as we conceive them, but to teach us how we are to behave ourselves toward him, and what treatment we may expect at his hands. And if so, why should we make any difficulty to think that foreknowledge, purposes, elections, and decrees are attributed to him, after the same way, and to the same intent?

§. 30. The second use that I shall make of this doctrine, is to put you in mind, how cautious we ought to be in our reasonings and deductions concerning things, of whose nature we are not fully apprized. It is true, that in matters we fully comprehend, all is clear and easy to us, and we readily perceive the connection and consistency of all the parts; but it is not so in things to which we are in a great measure

strangers, and of which we have only an imperfect and partial view, for in these we are very apt to fancy contradictions, and to think the accounts we receive of them absurd.

The truth of this is manifest from innumerable instances: as for example, from the opinion of the Antipodes: whilst the matter was imperfectly known, how many objections were made against it? How many thought they had proved to a demonstration the impossibility and contradiction of the thing? And how far did they prevail with the generality of the world to believe them? And yet how weak, and in truth foolish, do all their arguments appear to men that know, and by experience understand, the matter?

Others will say the same concerning the motion of the earth, notwithstanding the great confidence with which many have undertaken to demonstrate it to be impossible; the reason of which is the imperfect knowledge we have of the thing: and as our understanding of it is more and more enlarged and cleared, the contradictions vanish.

Ought we not then to think all the contradictions we fancy between the foreknowledge

of God and contingency of events, between predestination and free will, to be the effects of our ignorance and partial knowledge? May it not be in this, as in the matter of the Antipodes, and motion of the earth? May not the inconsistencies that we find in the one, be as ill-grounded as those that have been urged against the others? And have we not reason to suspect, nay believe, this to be the case; since we are sure that we know much less of God and his attributes, than of the earth and heavenly motions.

§. 31. Even in the sciences that are most common and certain; there are some things which, amongst those that are unacquainted with such matters, would pass for contradictions. As for example, let us suppose one should happen to mention *negative quantities* among persons strangers to the mathematics; and being asked what is meant by those words, should answer, that he understands by them quantities that are conceived to be less than nothing; and that one of their properties is, that being multiplied by a number less than nothing, the product may be a magnitude greater than any as-

signed. This might justly appear a riddle, and full of contradictions, and perhaps will do so to a great part of my auditors. Something less than nothing in appearance is a contradiction; a number less than nothing has the same face: that these should be multipliable on one another, sounds very oddly; and that the product of less than nothing upon less than nothing should be positive, and greater than any assigned quantity, seems inconceivable. And yet, if the most ignorant will but have patience, and apply themselves for instruction to the skilful in these matters, they will soon find all the seeming contradictions vanish, and that the assertions are not only certain, but plain and easy truths, that may be conceived without any great difficulty.

Ought we not then to suspect our own ignorance, when we fancy contradictions in the descriptions given us of the mysteries of our faith and religion? And ought we not to wait with patience till we come to heaven, the proper school where these things are to be learned? And in the mean time, acquiesce in that light the holy Spirit has given us in the Scriptures;

which, as I have shewed, is sufficient to direct us in our present circumstances.

§. 23. ^bThe third use I shall make of this doctrine is to teach us what answer we are to give that argument that has puzzled mankind, and done so much mischief in the world. It runs thus; "If God foresee or predestinate that I shall be saved, I shall infallibly be so; and if he foresee or have predestinated that I shall be damned, it is unavoidable. And therefore it is no matter what I do, or how I behave myself in this life." Many answers have been given to this, which I shall not at present examine; I shall only add, that if God's *foreknowledge* were exactly conformable to ours, the consequence would seem just; but inasmuch as they are of as different a nature as any two faculties of our souls, it doth not follow (because our foresight of events, if we suppose it infallible, must presuppose a necessity in them) that therefore the divine prescience must require the same necessity in order to its being certain. It is true, we call

^b See Appendix, No. I. at the end of this discourse, on the use of the word necessary, and those connected with it.

God's *foreknowledge* and our own by the same name; but this is not from any real likeness in the nature of the faculties, but from some proportion observable in the effects of them; both having this advantage, that they prevent any surprise on the person endowed with them.

Now as it is true, that no contingency or freedom in the creatures can any way deceive or surprise God, put him to a loss, or oblige him to alter his measures; so on the other hand it is likewise true, that the divine prescience doth not hinder freedom; and a thing may either be or not be, notwithstanding that foresight of it which we ascribe to God. When therefore it is alleged, that if God foresees I shall be saved, my salvation is infallible, this doth not follow; because the foreknowledge of God is not like man's, which requires necessity in the event, in order to its being certain, but of another nature consistent with contingency: and our inability to comprehend this arises from our ignorance of the true nature of what we call foreknowledge in God; and it is as impossible we should comprehend the power thereof, or the manner of its

operation, as that the eye should see a sound, or the ear hear light and colours.

Only of this we are sure, that in this it differs from ours, that it may consist either with the being or not being of what is said to be foreseen or predestinated. Thus St. Paul was a chosen vessel, and he reckons himself in the number of the predestinated, Eph. i. 5. "having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself;" and yet he supposes it possibleⁱ for him to miss of salvation; and therefore he looked on himself as obliged to use mortification, and exercise all other graces, in order to make his calling and election sure; lest, as he tells us, 1 Cor. ix. 27. "that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away," or a reprobate, as the word is translated in other places.

§. 33. The fourth use I shall make of this doctrine is to enable us to discover what judgment we are to pass on those that have managed this controversy: and for mine own part

ⁱ See Appendix, No. I. at the end, on the word necessary.

I must profess, that they seem to me to have taken shadows for substances, resemblances for the things they represent ; and by confounding these, have embroiled themselves and readers in inextricable difficulties.

Whoever will look into the books writ on either side, will find this to be true. But because that is a task too difficult for the generality of men, let them consider the two schemes of the Predestinarians and Freewillers, in the present Bishop of Sarum's Exposition of the Seventeenth Article of our Church ; where they will (as I think) find the opinions of both parties briefly, fully, and fairly represented, and withal perceive this error runs through both.

As for example, the great foundation of the one scheme is, that God acts for himself and his glory, and therefore he can only consider the manifestation of his own attributes and perfections in every action ; and hence they conclude that he must only damn or save men, as his doing of one or other may most promote his glory.

But here it is manifest that they who reason thus are of opinion, that the desire of

glory doth really move the will of God ; whereas glory, and the desire of it, are only ascribed to God in an analogical sense, after the same manner as hands and feet, love and hatred are ; and when God is said to do all things for his own glory, it is not meant that the desire of glory is the real end of his actions, but that he has ordered all things in such an excellent method, that if he had designed them for no other end, they could not have set it forth more effectually. Now to make this figurative expression the foundation of so many harsh conclusions, and the occasions of so many contentions and divisions in the Church, seems to me the same kind of mistake that the Church of Rome commits, in taking the words of Scripture, “ this is my body,” literally ; from whence so many absurdities and contradictions to our senses and reason are inferred.

§. 34. Secondly, If you look diligently into these schemes, you will find a great part of the dispute arises on this question, What is first or second in the mind of God ? Whether he first foresees and then determines, or first determines and by virtue of that foresees ? This question

seems the more strange, because both parties are agreed, that there is neither first nor last in the divine understanding, but all is one single act in him, and continues the same from all eternity. What then can be the meaning of the dispute? Sure it can be no more than this, Whether it be more honourable for God, that we should conceive him as acting this way or that, since it is confessed that neither reaches what really passes in his mind : so that the question is not concerning the operations of God, as they are in themselves, but concerning our way of conceiving them, whether it be more for his honour to represent them according to the first or second scheme ; and certainly the right method is to use both on occasion, so far as they may help us to conceive honourably of the divine Majesty ; and to deal ingenuously with the world, and tell them, that where these schemes have not that effect, or where through our stretching them too far, they induce us to entertain dishonourable thoughts of him, or encourage disobedience, they are not applicable to him. In short, that God is as absolute as the first represents him, and man as free as

the last would have him to be : and that these different and seemingly contradictory schemes are brought in to supply the defects of one another.

§. 35. And therefore, thirdly, the managers of this controversy ought to have looked on these different schemes as chiefly designed to inculcate some duties to us ; and to have pressed them no farther than as they tended to move and oblige us to perform those duties. But they, on the contrary, have stretched these representations beyond the Scripture's design, and set them up in opposition to one another ; and have endeavoured to persuade the world that they are inconsistent : insomuch that some, to establish contingency and free-will, have denied God's prescience ; and others, to set up predestination, have brought in a fatal necessity of all events.

^k And not content therewith, they have accused one another of impiety and blasphemy, and mutually charged each the other's opinion with

^k A most admirable specimen of the temper, moderation, and reverent caution which should appear in treating of such subjects, is to be found in Mr. Sumner's excellent treatise on " Apostolical preaching."

all the absurd consequences they fancied were deducible from it. Thus the maintainers of free-will charge the predestinarians as guilty of ascribing injustice, tyranny, and cruelty to God, as making him the author of all the sin and misery that is in the world; and, on the other hand, the asserters of predestination have accused the others, as destroying the independency and dominion of God, and subjecting him to the will and humours of his creatures: and if either of the schemes were to be taken literally and properly, the maintainers of them would find difficulty enough to rid themselves of the consequences charged on them; but if we take them only as analogical representations, as I have explained them, there will be no ground or reason for these inferences.

§. 36. And it were to be wished, that those who make them would consider, that if they would prosecute the same method in treating the other representations, that the Scriptures give us of God's attributes and operations, no less absurdities would follow: as for example; when God is said to be merciful, loving, and pitiful, all-seeing, jealous, patient, or angry; if

these were taken literally, and understood the same way as we find them in us, what absurd and intolerable consequences would follow ; and how dishonourably must they be supposed to think of God, who ascribe such passions to him ? Yet nobody is shocked at them, because they understand them in an analogical sense. And if they would but allow predestination, election, decrees, purposes, and foreknowledge, to belong to God, with the same difference, they would no more think themselves obliged to charge those that ascribe them to him with blasphemy, in the one case, than in the other.

It is therefore incumbent on us to forbear all such deductions, and we should endeavour to reconcile these several representations together, by teaching the people, that God's knowledge is of another nature than ours ; and that though we cannot in our way of thinking certainly foresee what is free and contingent, yet God may do it by that power which answers to prescience in him, or rather in truth supplies the place of it : nor is it any wonder that we cannot conceive how this is done, since we have no direct or proper notion of God's knowledge ; nor can we

ever in this life expect to comprehend it, any more than a man who never saw, can expect to discern the shape and figure of bodies at a distance, whilst he continues blind.

§. 37. The fifth use we are to make of what has been said, is to teach us how we are to behave ourselves in a church, where either of these schemes is settled and taught as a doctrine: and here I think the resolution is easy; we ought to be quiet, and not unseasonably disturb the peace of the church; much less should we endeavour to expose what she professes, by alleging absurdities and inconsistencies in it. On the contrary, we are obliged to take pains to shew that the pretended consequences do not follow, as in truth they do not; and to discharge all that make them, as enemies of peace, and false accusers of their brethren, by charging them with consequences they disown, and that have no other foundation but the maker's ignorance.

For in truth, as has been already shewed, if such inferences be allowed, hardly any one attribute or operation of God, as ascribed in Scripture, will be free from the cavils of perverse men.

It is observable, that by the same way of reasoning, and by the same sort of arguments, by which some endeavour to destroy the divine prescience, and render his decrees odious, Cotta long ago in Cicero attacked the other attributes, and undertook to prove that God can neither have reason nor understanding, wisdom nor prudence, nor any other virtue. And if we understand these literally and properly, so as to signify the same when applied to God and to men, it will not be easy to answer his arguments: but if we conceive them to be ascribed to him by proportion and analogy, that is, if we mean no more when we apply them to God, than that he has some powers and faculties, though not of the same nature, which are analogous to these advantages which these could give him if he had them, enabling him to produce all the good effects which we see consequent to them, when in the greatest perfection: then the arguments used by ¹Cotta against them

¹Qualem autem Deum intelligere nos possumus nulla virtute præditum? Quid enim? prudentiamne Deo tribuimus? Quæ constat ex scientia rerum bonarum et malarum, et, nec bonarum nec malarum? Cui mali nihil est,

have no manner of force ; since we do not plead for such an understanding, reason, justice, and virtue, as he objects against, but for more valuable perfections that are more than equivalent, and in truth infinitely superior to them ; though called by the same names, because we do not know what they are in themselves, but only see their effects in the world, which are such as might be expected from the most consummate reason, understanding, and virtue.

And after the same manner, when perverse men reason against the prescience, predesti-

nec esse potest, quid huic opus est delectu bonarum et malorum ? Quid autem ratione ? quid intelligentia ? quibus utimur ad eam rem ut apertis obscura assequamur. At obscurum Deo nihil potest esse. Nam Justitia, quæ suum cuique distribuit, quid pertinet ad Deos ? hominum enim societas et communitas, ut vos dicitis, Justitiam procreavit : temperantia autem constat ex prætermittendis voluptatibus corporis ; cui si locus in cælo est, est etiam voluptatibus. Nam fortis Deus intelligi qui potest ? in dolore, an in labore, an in periculo ? quorum Deum nihil attingit. Nec ratione igitur utentem, nec virtute ulla præditum Deum intelligere qui possumus ? *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. iii. sect. 15.*

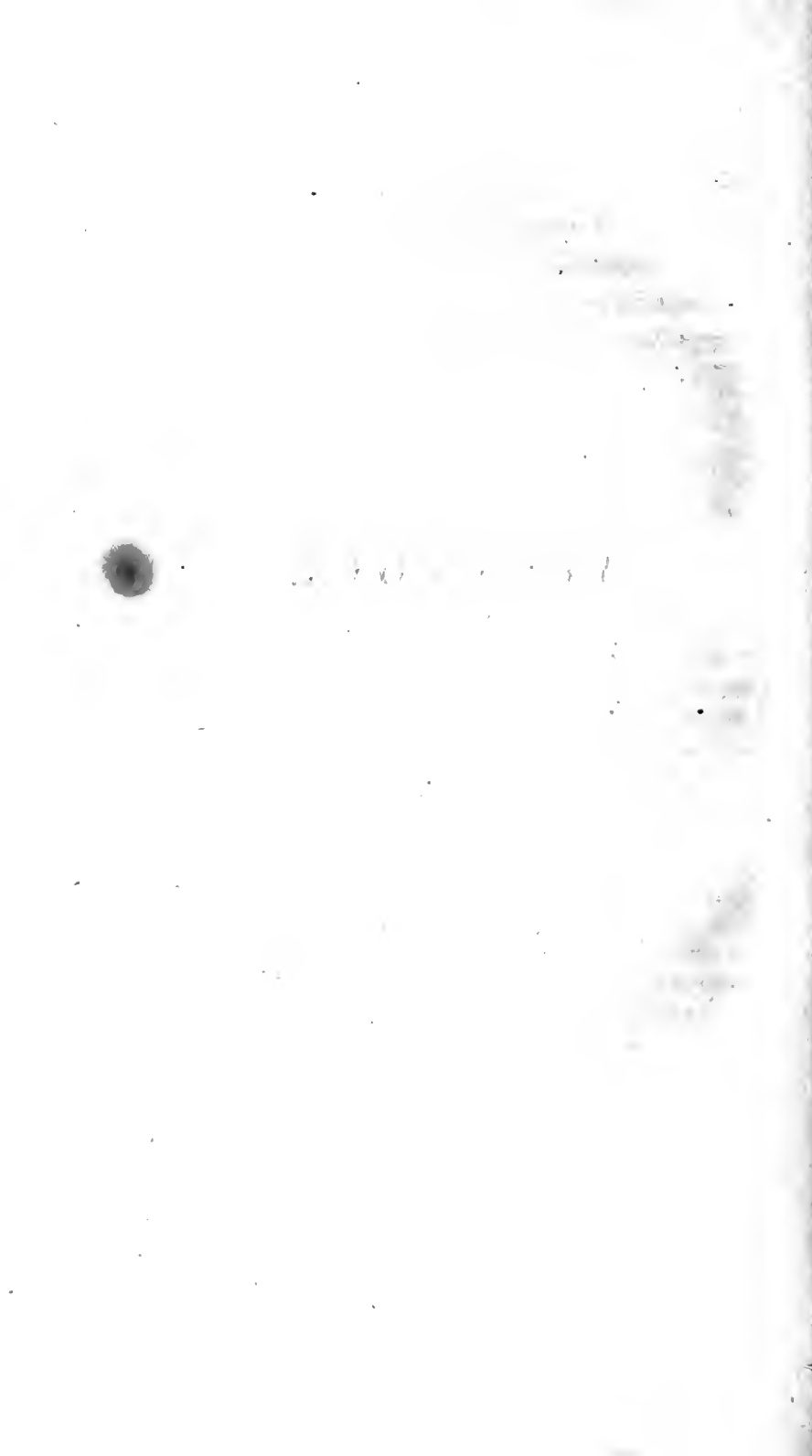
nation, and the decrees of God, by drawing the like absurd consequences, as Cotta doth against the possibility of his being endowed with reason and understanding, &c. our answer is the same as before mentioned. If these be supposed the very same in all respects when attributed to God, as we find them in ourselves, there would be some colour, from the absurdities that would follow, to deny that they belong to God; but when we only ascribe them to him by analogy, and mean no more than that there are some things answerable to them, from whence, as principles, the divine operations proceed; it is plain, that all such arguments not only lose their force, but are absolutely impertinent.

It is therefore sufficient for the ministers of the Church to shew that the established doctrine is agreeable to Scripture, and teach their people what use ought to be made of it, and to caution them against the abuse; which if they do with prudence, they will avoid contentions and divisions, and prevent the mischiefs which are apt to follow the mistaken representations of it.

§. 38. This is the method taken by our Church in her Seventeenth Article, where we are taught, that “predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation. And that the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, as well because it doth greatly establish their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love toward God. And yet we must receive God’s promises, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture.” Here you see the two schemes joined together: and we are allowed all the comfort that the consideration of our being predestinated can afford us: and at the same time we are given to understand, that the promises of God are generally conditional; and that notwithstanding our belief

of predestination, we can have no hope of obtaining the benefit of them, but by fulfilling the conditions. And I hope I have explained them in such a way, as shews them to be consistent in themselves, and of great use towards making us holy here, and happy hereafter.

APPENDIX.



No. I.

ON THE VARIOUS USES OF THE WORD "NECESSITY," AND THOSE OF THE SAME CLASS.

Words are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools.

HOBBS.

THE utmost precision in the use of the word necessity, and others of a correspondent meaning, is of so much importance, in discussing that which is the main subject of Dr. King's discourse, and so much of the unsatisfactory and perplexed character of almost every argument on these points, (not excepting some parts even of Dr. King's,) may be traced up to undetected ambiguity in that quarter, that it appears worth while to explain more fully than could be done in a note, the various senses of these words.

First, the original meaning of the word necessity appears to have been, "*an intimate connexion,*" or "conjunction;" as is indicated both by its etymology, as if from "*necto,*" and by the use of "*necessitudo,*" and "*necessarius,*" to denote close intimacy. Hence, food is called "necessary" to life, because of the connexion between the two; life never continues *without*, that is, *separately*, from food. And on the same principle we speak of the "necessity" of a *cause* to its *effect*^a. Death again is a matter of "necessity" to

^a That we are unable to perceive any *efficacy* in what are called "physical causes," to produce their respective effects, and that all we

man, because no man continues exempt from it. The truth of a conclusion follows "necessarily" from the premises, because their truth does not exist *separately* from that of the conclusion^b; they are never found to be true without its being true also.

It being a *constant* connexion that is expressed by "necessary," the word is commonly used, in *general assertions*, as nearly equivalent to "universal;" and "not-necessary," to occasional: for instance, a rupture of the spinal marrow "necessarily" occasions death; (that is, in *all cases*;) the inhabitants of hot countries are not necessarily negroes, (that is, not *universally*.) In this way, "necessary," and "not-necessary," may, with propriety, be applied to any *class* of things, in any *general* proposition: but neither of them can be thus applied to *individual* events; the assertions respecting which, being what logicians call *singular* propositions, cannot be *more or less general*, nor, consequently, can need or admit of any such limitation, as is expressed by "not-necessary." It would be perfectly unmeaning to say of any "singular" proposition, (for instance, the banishment of Buona-

do perceive (and consequently all we really indicate, in these cases, by the word causation) is a constant *conjunction*—a connection in point of time and place, is the doctrine not of Hume alone, (who has deduced illogical and mischievous conclusions from it,) but also of Barrow, and Butler, as well as D. Stewart.

^b In this case "necessity" is opposed to a *contradiction* and absurdity; in the former instances, to a *violation of the order of nature*.

There are several modifications of meaning comprehended under this first head, of which I am now speaking; but there is no need to enter into any full discussion of these beyond what concerns the main object proposed.

parte,) that it is true *without any exception*, or that it *admits of exception*. The words "necessary" and "not-necessary" therefore, when applied to individual cases, must (if not wholly unmeaning) be employed with some different view: thus we say, "the confinement of Buonaparte is "necessary," namely, "to the peace of Europe."

Secondly, our *attention* being most called to the connexion of such things as we may in vain wish or endeavour to separate, the word "necessary" hence comes to be *limited*, and *especially* applied to cases of *compulsion*; to events which take place either against one's will, or, at least, independent of it; to things, in short, which we have no *power* to prevent if we would, or to prevent, without submitting to a worse alternative^d. Hence we speak more especially of the necessity of death, because all animals *avoid* it as long as they are able; and of the necessity of throwing over goods in a storm, because it is what we are averse to in itself, and though we might refuse to do it, we could not, without incurring shipwreck. In this sense it is that necessity is pleaded, and allowed, as an *excuse* for doing what would otherwise be blameable. But in the primitive and wider sense of the word, it may be applied to cases where there is no *compulsion*, nor opposition to the will: for the close connexion, above spoken of, exists between the will of any agent and that which is conformable to his will: thus foreign luxuries are "necessary" for *grati-*

^d Hence ἀναγκαῖον, which is literally "necessary," is often so used as to be nearly equivalent to "unpleasant," or "disadvantageous."

fication to him who delights in them: and the word is often thus employed: only that, in this case, it is proper, in order to avoid mistake, to state *for what* they are necessary: they are not called simply "necessary," (which would imply that they were so in the secondary and more limited sense, which has been last mentioned, that is, independently of our will and choice,) but "necessary *for so and so.*"

Thus also we say, that whatever is willed by an omnipotent Being, "necessarily" takes place: not meaning that he is under *compulsion*, but merely that there is an universal connexion between the *power* to obtain the fulfilment of one's will, and the actual fulfilment of it.

From confounding together the primary and wider sense of "necessity," and that secondary and more limited sense, which implies compulsion or unwillingness, have arisen most of the disputes and perplexities that have prevailed on this subject*. Thus, Dr. Paley says, "in our apprehension, to be under a necessity of acting according to any rule, is inconsistent with free agency; and it makes no difference which we can

* If any one would see a specimen of the degree to which an intelligent writer may be bewildered, by not attending to the ambiguity of words, and by mistaking them for things, he will find a remarkable one (among many others) in a note by Law, the ingenious editor of Dr. King; (chap. v. §. 1. subs. 5. note s,) in which "certain" and "infallible" being regarded as properties of events themselves, (which is as if we were to consider "visible" and "invisible" as intrinsic properties of eclipses,) and being supposed to be inconsistent with freedom, and the words "may," "must," &c. being used without any steady attention to their ambiguity, the whole is involved in inextricable confusion.

understand, whether the necessity be internal or external, or that the rule is the rule of perfect rectitude^f."

It will be seen from what has been said, that I have regarded all necessity as *conditional*; that is, as implying always the connexion of one thing with another; so that whatever is said to be "necessary," is so called in consideration of something else: and this, I apprehend, is always the sense conveyed by the word, even when those who employ it are not distinctly aware of this; and hence springs much of the prevailing confusion of thought. Mr. D. Stewart has pointed out, what certainly men were not generally aware of before, that the "necessity" of mathematical truths is merely *conformity to the hypothesis*, viz. to the definitions. For instance, that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, may be spoken of in lofty language as an independent, eternal, self-existent, "necessary" truth; but this necessity is in fact merely the connexion between the *definition of a triangle* and the equality in question. So, the existence of the Deity is called "necessary;" an expression which, when it conveys any distinct idea at all, (which is not always the case with those who employ it,) signifies merely the connexion between the existing universe, and a Being who is the Author of it; the former idea is always, in a rational mind, accompanied by the latter.

Thirdly, There is also another use of the word "necessary" and of those connected with it: for, as it has been above remarked that our *attention* is especially *called* to those connections which we may vainly

^f Moral Philosophy, b. v. c. ii. p. 40, 41.

endeavour to destroy, so our attention is likewise particularly called to those connections which we *understand*, or at least are *aware of*[§]. And since of two things connected together, if the one which is the hypothesis or antecedent be given, the consequent is also given, it follows that *we know*, or are *certain* of, the consequent, when we know the hypothesis: and hence arises the confusion of *certainly* with “necessity;” the former of which belongs properly to our own *minds*, and is thence, in a transferred sense, applied to the *objects* themselves. When we know, first, the connexion between two things, (which is properly necessity,) and, secondly, the existence of one of them, we thence come to know “certainly,” that is, without any room for doubt, the existence of the other; which we sometimes therefore call “certain,” sometimes “necessary:” for instance, we say, such a district is “necessarily,” or is “certainly,” overflowed; because *we are certain*, first, that such a river has risen so many feet, and, secondly, that that rise is connected with the overflowing of the district in question.

Being thus accustomed to apply to those things especially the word “necessary,” which we *know* to be connected with and dependent on such others as we know to exist, we thus come to fancy a sort of coincidence between “necessity” and “knowledge:”

§ As “necessary” in the sense just above noticed, is opposed to “voluntary,” so in the sense I am now speaking of it is opposed to “accidental” or “contingent;” (words which, as has been formerly remarked, do not denote any quality in events themselves, but only the relation in which they stand to *our knowledge*;) neither of these two senses is, properly speaking, opposed to the primary sense of “necessary,” but rather they are *limitations* of it.

for instance, we say that a loaded die *must necessarily* turn up one particular side ; but that an unloaded one does not necessarily fall on one side rather than another : the one die therefore has turned up, suppose, a six, necessarily ; the other, *accidentally*.

In reality however, the only difference (as far as concerns the present question) is *relative to our knowledge* : the fall of the latter die being connected with, and dependent on, the various impulses it received in the box, &c. as much as that of the other, with the gravitation of the weight it was loaded with ; only the operation of the one influence was, or might be, *known* to us ; the other could not. Let it be borne in mind therefore, that when we say the cast of this die was not necessary, we only mean in fact (if we attach any precise meaning to our words) that we do not know *why* it was necessary ; that is, do not fully know the operation of the causes which produced it ; for scarce any one would say it happened without any cause at all ; and should he explain his meaning in saying this to be, that *if* the box had been shaken in some other way, the cast might have been different ; the answer is, that, on that principle, the other is not to be called necessary neither ; since *if* the other die had not been loaded, or had been loaded differently, the cast of that also would have been different. In neither case could the result have been other than it was, *supposing all the circumstances connected with it to remain the same*. When indeed we speak of events in which man's agency is concerned, as not necessary, and say that they *might* have happened otherwise, we sometimes mean that the agent acted not from *compulsion*, but

willingly, and had it in his *power* to act otherwise; sometimes, again, that we do not know, or did not know beforehand, what the compulsion was, or under what inducements he acted.

The word "necessary" then is used, first, sometimes to denote the universality or constancy of the connexion between any two things, and consequently, in any *general* assertion, to imply merely that what we say is true without any exception or qualification: secondly, sometimes to denote *compulsion*, or independence of our will: thirdly, sometimes to denote our *knowledge* respecting the matter in question, and our having no room for *doubt* about it.

What has been said may serve as a clue to explain the confused notions of many of the advocates for the system of necessity, and, I may add, of many of its opponents also. "If God foresees our actions," it is said, "they are necessary;" and if they are "necessary," we are not "free." Now in this second clause the word "necessary" is transferred to the secondary sense of "compulsory" or "involuntary;" whereas the "necessity" (if we choose to call it so) which is implied by the event's being *foreknown*, only means, if we employ the phrase with any kind of precision, the correspondence of that event to that knowledge^ε; its being such as it is known to be; so that "necessary," is here, merely equivalent to "real," in opposition to "ideal" or "imaginary." If, in any case, it *depends on us*^h to do, or to abstain from doing, any

^ε See Dr. Copleston's first Disc. p. 6, 7.

^h The Greek expressions *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* and *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* are more precise than those commonly employed in our language. Vide Arist. Eth. Nicom. b. 3.

thing, and we have a decided inclination—a predominant will, to do it, then it is (in the primary sense of the word) a “necessary” consequence that we do it; and whoever *knows* that we have this power and this will, knows that we shall do so: this knowledge implies necessity in one sense, but not in the other; it implies the connexion between the cause and the effect—between our power and our will, and a certain action; but not any compulsion and opposition to our will.

But if it be *impossible* for me to act otherwise than I do, which it is, if God foreknows my action, how can I be “free?” This is but the very same fallacy, in another form of expression; for “impossible” and “necessary” correspond throughout all their senses, and are constantly opposed: and as “necessary” is sometimes employed to denote compulsion to do any thing, so is “impossible,” to denote *restraint* or *absence of power* to do it; (which last indeed seems to be the original meaning of impossible;) but it is also often used, so as to correspond with another sense of the word “necessary” to imply merely the absence of all room for *doubt*, or (as we often express it) of all “chance” and “contingency:” for instance, we say, “such an one, since he possesses the utmost courage, will necessarily stand to his post;” or it is “*impossible* he should fly:” not meaning that he is under any *restraint*; so far from it, the very ground of our pronouncing it impossible for him to fly, is our knowledge that it depends on him to do which he pleases, and our knowing at the same time from his character, that he has no such inclination.

If then this be all that is meant when one speaks of the "impossibility" of a man's acting otherwise than he does, it is plain that it does not at all infringe on liberty; since it is evidently possible in the *other* sense, for instance, for the brave man to run away; that is, he has the *power* to do so, and may *if he chooses*: according to this sense of the word, therefore, we admit the position, but deny the inference. But if on the other hand it be meant that the divine prescience implies impossibility in the other sense, that is, implies that it is not in our *power* in any case to do either this or that, according to our choice, the answer is to deny the position; which rests, in fact, on the fallacy of ambiguity, and which contradicts the evidence of each man's consciousness.

Those who wish for a more full exposition of this ambiguity, and of the perplexities and confusion of thought which have arisen from overlooking it, may find the subject copiously and clearly treated in Tucker's "Light of Nature," chap. 26. But Dr. Copleston has condensed, with his usual perspicuous conciseness, nearly the very same explanation into the compass of a single page: "'Another important example of the same kind is in the use of the words *possible*, and *impossible*. These are equally ambiguous with the others, as being applied sometimes to events themselves, and sometimes used with reference to our conceptions of them—but of these it is observable that their *primary* and proper application is to events, their *secondary* and improper to the

¹ Copleston, p. 81, 82.

human mind. Thus we say that a thing is possible to a man who has the *power* of doing it—and that is properly *impossible* which no power we are acquainted with can effect. But the words are also continually used to express *our sense* of the chance there is that a thing will be done. When we mean to express our firm conviction that a thing will not happen, although there are *powers* in nature competent to produce it, we call it impossible, in direct opposition to those things which we are convinced *will* happen, and which we call certain. And thus there are many things which in one sense are *possible*, that is, within the compass of human agency, which again according to our conviction are absolutely *impossible*."

The same ambiguity which attends the words possible and impossible, belongs also to "may," "must," "can," and all words of that family: that is, they are sometimes employed when we are speaking of the power, or "want of power," to produce any effect, and sometimes, on the other hand, when we mean to express the constant or occasional "connexion" of any two things, or, *our* certainty or uncertainty respecting that connexion: for instance, in the former sense we say "the King '*may*' pardon all criminals;" and that "he '*must*' submit to sickness and death, like other men:" in the latter sense, that "either of two contending armies *may* be victorious;" and that he who is fainting with thirst in a desert and has no reason for abstaining, *must* eagerly drink when he comes to a spring. Now these being the very words commonly employed by writers to explain their meaning when there is any perplexity respecting the use

of "possible" and impossible," and yet being themselves liable to the very same ambiguity, it thus often happens that the confusion is increased by the very means used to clear it up. And this very confusion is often mistaken by the writers themselves for a sign of the profundity of their own speculations; they fancy the stream deep, because it is not clear; and not aware that they are bewildered in idle logomachies, exult in their own ingenuity, which is apparently developing important mysteries. Dr. Copleston accordingly expresses a very well grounded "apprehension of incurring the displeasure of those who, if my speculations are well-founded, will appear to have lost their time in logomachy, and to have wasted their strength in endeavouring to grasp a phantom, or in fighting the air^k."

The arguments and systems which have been thus reared, remind one of the fog-banks, which at sea so often delude the anxious mariner; he fancies himself within view of new coasts, with promontories, and bays, and mountains distinctly discernible; but a nearer approach, and a more steady observation, prove the whole to be but an unsubstantial vapour, ready to melt away into air, and vanish for ever.

And let it not be thought that when we have once clearly perceived and explained the ambiguity of any term, we are thenceforth safe from its influence: far otherwise: it is not without long and habitual attention to its different meanings, and assiduous vigilance in the use of it, that we can counteract the ever be-

^k Preface, p. xvi.

setting tendency to mistake, as Hobbes would say the "counters" for the "money," the *word* for the *thing*, and to fancy, while we are sliding insensibly from one meaning into another, that we are still speaking of the same thing, because we are employing the same sound.

But some may say, "have I the power of choosing among several motives, at once present to my mind? or *must* I *obey* the strongest? for if so, how can I enjoy free-will?" Here again is an entanglement in ambiguous words: "must," and "obey," and "strongest," suggest the idea (which belongs to them in their primary sense) of *compulsion*, and of *one person* submitting to *another*; whereas here, they are only used *figuratively*; the terms "weak" and "strong," when applied to motives, denoting nothing but their less or greater tendency to prevail (that is, to *operate*, and *take effect*) in practice; so that to say, "the stronger motive prevails," is only another form of saying, "that which prevails, prevails." "Must," again, denotes here no *compulsion*, but only, that it would be unmeaning and contradictory to call that the weaker motive, which (singly) prevails over another; and "obey" is used analogously only, to denote the conformity of the action to the will, which *corresponds* to the conformity of a servant to his master's directions.

We should recollect that when we speak of "inclinations," "motives," "will," "reason," "thoughts," &c. *operating* on the *mind*, we are not literally stating the fact; (as Locke imagined, in his system, of ideas, which is in truth a metaphysical theory built on a

figure of speech;) for all these are not *distinct things existing in the mind*, but states or conditions of the mind itself; so that it would be more correct, in philosophical discourses, to speak (as Dr. Beattie recommends) of "the mind desiring," "the mind willing," "the mind thinking," &c. than of "desires," "will," "ideas," &c. Now *compulsion* or *coercion*, in the literal sense, always implies *two* agents; whereas the mind, if we consider rightly, is but *one*: it is only by a metaphor that we are said to "compel ourselves," or to be "restrained by ourselves".

A man will often say indeed that he "*cannot help* doing so and so, though he knows it is wrong:" but this is a figurative expression; and it is of great importance in practice, steadily to bear in mind that it is so; for no man is blamed or punished (nor could be, to any purpose) for doing what he, literally, cannot help; whereas, when he follows his inclination in doing what he knows to be wrong, the common sense of all mankind has decided, and proved by experience, that it is just, or at least expedient, to punish him. That "necessity" can alone be pleaded as a justification, in which a man acts *against* his will.

In fact, there is no set of terms more ambiguous than "self," and the other equivalent expressions:

¹ This is illustrated in some degree by the varied use of "shall" and "will," according to the *person* in which they are employed. The practical mode (generally speaking) of conjugating them is, as has often been remarked, "I will, thou shalt, he shall," and "I shall, thou wilt, he will." See however the note on the words "will" and "shalt," p. 16, 17.

for instance, if I say that such a one "was afflicted with long illness—that he died—that he was buried in such a spot—and that I trust he is in a happy state," I speak of him in this one sentence in three different senses; namely, as the body alone, as the soul alone, and as the compound of the two. And moreover when we are speaking of the spiritual part, mind or soul, alone, we often reckon one of, what are called, the parts of this mind, as more especially a man's "self" than the rest; namely, the "reason" or "conscience;" for instance, we say, "this man (meaning his reason) has overcome his passions," or "is overcome by his passions:" never, that he "has overcome his reason," or, "is overcome by his reason." Yet on the other hand, we do sometimes say, that "he has stifled his conscience," or is "overcome by conscience." Let it however be steadily kept in mind, that all these are but *figurative* expressions^m; for we have no ground for supposing that any of these are literally parts of the mind, or things existing in it, but only states, and, as it were, *postures*, of the mind itself. For a man to complain then that he is not free because his conduct is conformable to his own charac-

^m The absurd theory of Realism, which attributes an independent real existence to genera and species, seems to have sprung from the undue influence on our thoughts, of this kind of language: "When any general idea," they said, "as, for instance, that of a triangle, is present to a multitude of different minds at once, there must surely be some *real thing* which all these minds are acting on." The answer is, that when two men are said to have the same "idea" in their minds, the true meaning of this expression is, that they are *both thinking alike*: just as when several men are said to be in one and the same bodily posture, this only means that they are all *placed alike*.

ter, and because he cannot voluntarily act against his own inclination, is (as Tucker remarks) the same absurdity as to "complain that he cannot walk without walking, or sit still without sitting still." He may lament indeed that his inclinations are not more virtuous, his disposition better *constituted*; and may be unable to comprehend how he should be responsible to the Author of his being"; and if he is practically sensible of the frailty of his nature, he may have the wisdom to apply for the sanctifying grace of God's holy Spirit, instead of perplexing himself with an insuperable difficulty: but this difficulty, however great, belongs not to the present question: the complaint cannot, without an abuse of language, be made of a *want of freedom*, since that want consists, according to the common sense of mankind, not in *following* our inclination, but in acting *against* it. If this principle be once given up, there is no stopping short of the most absurd results: for instance, I remember an ingenious disputant driven, in this way, to the conclusion, that "that being could alone be free, who should be the *voluntary author* of his own *first will*:" this he could not deny to be a palpable con-

ⁿ Or he may perhaps boldly and impiously complain of his Maker, if he be in the temper of mind in which Adam after the fall is represented by Milton:

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurred not to my being, it were but right,
And equal, to reduce me to my dust.

tradition in terms: so that it would follow, that the words "voluntary" and "free," and the corresponding terms in all languages, which have been employed by all men in every age, have no meaning whatever!

Let us not then be driven by any such metaphysical quibbles, to give up the plain, broad, and practical distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions; a distinction on which the whole conduct of life must rest, because it alone leaves an opening for the influence of admonition, exhortation, threats, promises, examples, &c.

If a man is likely to meet with any good or evil, in consequence of his being tall or short, his being born a negro or a white, his knowing this beforehand can make *no difference in the result*; if, on the contrary, he is likely to meet with any advantage or disadvantage in consequence of his being diligent or idle, virtuous or vicious, his knowledge of this circumstance *will* be likely to affect the result. This grand distinction, which is obvious to a child, is precisely all that we want for every practical purpose.

Let then necessarians of all descriptions but step forth into the light, and explain their own meaning; and we shall find that their positions are either obviously untenable, or else perfectly harmless, and nearly insignificant. If in saying that all things are fixed and necessary, they mean that there is no such thing as voluntary action, we may appeal from the verbal quibbles, which alone afford a seeming support to such a doctrine, to universal consciousness; which will authorize even those, who have never entered into such speculations as the foregoing, to decide on the

falsity of the conclusion, though they are perplexed with the subtle fallacies of the argument.

But if nothing more be meant than that every event depends on causes adequate to produce it, that nothing is in itself *contingent*, *accidental*, or *uncertain*, but is called so only with reference to a person who does not *know* all the circumstances on which it depends; and that it is absurd to say any thing could have happened otherwise than it did, *supposing all the circumstances connected with it to remain the same*; then the doctrine is undeniably true, but perfectly harmless; not at all inroaching on free-agency and responsibility, and amounting in fact to little more than an expansion of the axiom, that "it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be."

When however I say that the doctrine is harmless, I mean only to those who can keep their minds stedfastly fixed on this its true interpretation; for it is very liable to be misapprehended; and the errors thus produced are most mischievous. The generality of men, if told that any thing takes place necessarily, and could not have been otherwise, will be apt to consider this necessity as independent of the very circumstances which give rise to it; and to lose sight of the equal necessity of these. Thus it is that Mahomet seems to have taught predestination to his followers; and in this sense, it appears, on some occasions they practically adhere to it; as, for instance, in neglecting to take precautions against the plague. Thus also the vulgar among us will be apt to say, "If God foresees I shall be saved, I shall be, live how I may; if, that I shall not be saved, nothing I can do

will avail." They will often be unable to perceive that there is just the same connection between the conditions and the end, between our own efforts and our salvation, as there would have been, had no being existed who could foresee either. It is better therefore to tell them that their salvation is *contingent*; which is no deceit; for in fact it *is* so, in the only sense in which any *thing can* be contingent; that is, we are ignorant respecting our final doom, except so far that we know it rests with each man to accept the offers made, or to reject them, and that each will fare accordingly.

Nor would I say that it is expedient for any one, even of those who do *not* mistake the doctrine in question, to dwell very much, habitually, and exclusively, on this view of the Divine omniscience. The mind, which is chiefly devoted to such thoughts, is likely to lose its practical energies. We shall be going too far if we maintain, without any limitation, the maxim, that the knowledge of whatever is true can be no impediment, but rather an aid, to practice; this holds, in those truths only whose nature we can fully comprehend, understanding also the whole system of which they are a part. The contemplation of any truth that is *partially*, or that is *indistinctly*, known, may prove detrimental in practice: for instance, if a clown could be brought to believe that the *sun stands still*, without being also taught that the *earth moves*, he would, by the contemplation of this truth, be far more perplexed than before, since the vicissitudes of day and night would be quite at variance with his scanty theoretical knowledge.

In like manner, to contemplate very diligently and habitually the truth, that God has no passions—cannot literally feel pity for our sufferings, nor take delight in any glory we can bestow—cannot suffer any pain from our misconduct, nor be dependent for enjoyment and gratification on our praise and obedience—on many persons at least, might have an effect rather hurtful than salutary; not because the doctrine is not true, or ought not to be *believed*; but because it relates to so incomprehensible a subject, that it affords but a partial glimpse of the truth. In fact, though the Deity cannot have these passions, there must be something else in Him corresponding to them, and working analogous effects; and what that something is, we are not capable, in our present state at least, of fully comprehending: and till we are thus capable, to dwell very much on this partial and imperfect view of the subject may be inexpedient.

It were to be wished that Calvinistic writers would universally keep this principle in mind; which it must be acknowledged many of them have done, with most laudable caution; for which very caution, however, they have in many instances incurred censure.

And here it may be worth while to remark, that, in inculcating the duty of humility, there is an important distinction to be observed between two different offices of it, or, as some would express it, two different kinds of humility, which are not always found in the same person. The one consists in forming a modest estimate of one's own *individual* powers and worth, compared with that of the rest of mankind; the other, in not overrating the human facul-

ties—in estimating, as humbly as we ought, the powers and capacities of *man in general*. Now there are many who observe one of these rules, but violate the other: partly perhaps from not attending to the difference between them. A man may be entirely free from *personal* arrogance—from all undue pretensions to superiority over others—and may, so far, be justly regarded as a modest and humble-minded man;—and yet may err most grievously in exercising his faculties on subjects which lie out of their reach; reasoning and dogmatising on things beyond reason, and presumptuously prying into the mysteries of the Most High^o: nor will he be at all checked in this fault by any admonitions against despising others and overrating himself in comparison of them. On the other hand, a man may be personally arrogant, and yet form a just and modest estimate of the human powers; which appears to have been the case with Warburton.

On the whole, it may safely be asserted, that the two chief sources of error in theological and metaphysical discussions, are, *presumptuous speculation* on mysterious subjects, and inattention to the *ambiguities of language*.

^o Thus nullifying, in fact, the *duty of faith*, so much insisted on in Scripture: for, doctrines which can be fully comprehended and clearly explained, there would be no great virtue in believing. See Appendix, No. II.

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No. II.

ON DR. KING'S TREATISE OF THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat.

Gen. ii. 17.

THE very high terms in which I have spoken of Dr. King, and indeed the very circumstance of republishing this discourse, may seem to call for some notice of his larger work, on the Origin of Evil, by which indeed he is much better known. It may be expected, as that is so nearly connected in many points with the present work, if it be not republished at the same time, that either some analysis of the argument should be given, or at least some reason assigned for omitting it.

The fact is, that I cannot form the same high judgment of that work as of the one before us; nor can admit that he has accomplished the object proposed. That there is much ingenuity displayed in the conduct of that argument, and also a candid disposition, is undeniable, and is indeed what every one would confidently expect, who has perused the present discourse. But a treatise of that description, like an algebraical calculation, does not admit of many different degrees of value: if there be some such funda-

mental flaw in the argument as vitiates the whole system, the intrinsic worth of the materials is but trifling, when the edifice they belong to is overthrown.

Now in the opinion of the ablest and most candid judges, the origin of evil is a mystery still unexplained, and which most of them (I may add) think will ever remain so, to such creatures as we now are^a. To the authority of all these therefore I may appeal in support of my assertion, that there must be some flaw in the argument which professes to explain it. Mr. D. Stewart indeed acquiesces in the same mode of explanation as that adopted by Archbishop King, with the air of one who thinks it too obvious and easy to need much argument^b. "The question," he says, "how comes evil to exist?" resolves itself into this, "why was man made a free agent?" but he will not, I fear, find many, of even half his own depth of thought and sagacity, who will be so easily satisfied.

^a "That evil exists, and that God is not the author of it, although the author of every thing else, undoubtedly carries with it as great a difficulty as the other question we were considering." *Copleston's Discourses*, p. 93.

"The only solution of this difficulty I apprehend must be taken from the imperfection of our understanding; for we have observed in a former place, that infinite goodness and infinite power, considered in the abstract, seem incompatible: which shews there is something wrong in our conceptions, and that we are not competent judges of what belongs, and what is repugnant, to goodness. But God knows though we do not, and is good and righteous in all his ways; therefore whatever method he pursues is an evidence of its rectitude beyond all other evidences that can offer to us for the contrary." *Tucker's Light of Nature*, c. xxvi. p. 237.

^b See Stewart's *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, Part II. c. ii. §. 1. art. 2. p. 295—299.

Dr. King's argument is substantially the same; though he considers it as requiring an elaborate train of reasoning.

He endeavours to establish as the basis of his system, as far as regards moral evil, (what the majority probably would be disposed to admit,) that a greater sum of good is produced by the creation of agents acting freely and by their own will and choice, than could be, if none such existed. This being granted, he proceeds to argue that beings who have this free choice, (at least created, and consequently imperfect beings,) must needs be *liable to do wrong* : we need not therefore be surprised, under such circumstances, at the existence of sin; and moral evil being thus admitted, there would remain, to most minds, no difficulty in comprehending the existence of any other kind of evil. This I conceive to be (though I have not adhered to his arrangement) a fair account of the real sum and substance of the whole argument; several other expressions, which are introduced in the course of it, being in reality merely equivalent to that one, of "liable to sin."

Considering the eminent candour and good intention of the writer, the importance of the object he had in view, and, I may add, the satisfactoriness of his argument to many minds, it is not without sincere regret that I am compelled to state my conviction, that the whole argument rests on the use made (undesignedly I have no doubt) of ambiguous words. Truth however is not only intrinsically valuable, but is always in the long run expedient. That the detection of the fallacy which runs through this argu-

ment should be likely to lead some to a disgust for the religion itself, which they fancy to depend upon it, is what I should be inclined antecedently to conjecture, even if I had not happened to know by experience that such has been the fact.

The fallacy lies in the expression "*liable* to sin;" and there is a corresponding ambiguity in the words "must," "possible," "impossible," "contingent," &c. which are brought in to explain it; a circumstance which involves those who have overlooked the ambiguity in the first instance, in continually increased confusion the further they advance.

What this ambiguity is, I have already endeavoured to explain in the dissertation on the word "necessity." When it is said, that, for an agent to be free, and act according to his own choice, it must be "*possible*" for him to act wrong, and that therefore he must be "*liable*" to sin, &c. this is undoubtedly true, if understood to signify merely that he is left at full *liberty* to do what he chooses—that it must be in his *power* (and in that *sense, possible*) to do right or wrong—and that it must depend on himself, not on any external *compulsion*, how he shall act: but then this I fear does not explain the difficulty; which is not why men should have the power, but why they should have the will to do wrong, and why they actually do it.

But if when it is said that a free agent must be "*liable* to sin," it is meant that he must be such as may actually be expected to do so, this would indeed, if admitted, solve the difficulty; but it is in fact begging the question: nor is there any ground (in our pre-

sent state of knowledge) for admitting it. We can conceive a free agent, not indeed destitute of the *power* to sin, but destitute of the inclination, or having a stronger inclination to do right; and for such a being it would be in one sense possible, and in the other sense not possible, that he should do wrong. The whole argument in fact turns on this ambiguous use of the word "possible," and of those related to it. ° But then, it is said, "must not a created, and consequently *imperfect* being be liable to sin, if left free?" The word "*imperfect*," again, is no less ambiguous; if it be understood to mean *faulty*, *sinful*, and *frail*, the proportion is identical; but if by an imperfect being is meant merely one who has not the highest conceivable excellence of intellectual faculties—whose knowledge and whose power are limited, and who is subject to pain, &c. it does not appear how such imperfections are inconsistent with faultless morality: in fact, even in the world as it is, we do not find that those whose intellect is the highest, and who in that sense are the nearest to perfection, are always the most virtuous; many men of very moderate capacity come often much nearer to perfection in the performance of their duties.

That the *power* to do any thing does not imply that it may be expected actually to take place, and that consequently the power to do wrong, which a free being is implied to have, does not explain the actual existence of that wrong, is evident, if we either reflect on the difference of the senses in which "possible" is

° See c. v. §. v. subsect. ii. ¶ 14. of Dr. King's *Origin of Evil*.

used, or if we look around us at what is actually passing. For instance, are not mankind at full liberty, if they choose it, to quit their houses and clothing, and to crawl about among the brutes, and feed on the grass of the field? Surely it is in that sense "possible" for them to do so; that is, it depends on them whether they will do this or not: but does any one therefore expect that they will? On the contrary, every one would pronounce it to be "impossible;" that is, what can never rationally be looked for; because, though men have it in their power, they have no such disposition: they are not restrained by any compulsion from acting thus, but only by their internal conviction of the absurdity of it: and no one holds himself the less free, on account of his rejecting that absurdity. Now if we consider that sin is in truth a much greater absurdity, it is, as far as we can judge, conceivable (though it is but too much unlike what we are used to see,) that a being perfectly free might perceive as strongly *this* absurdity, and act as constantly on that perception, as men now perceive, and avoid, the absurdity of living like brutes.

If it be said that such a being would not be in a state of trial, we should remember that man cannot be, literally, tried by his Maker, (since trial, in the literal sense, always implies that he who makes the trial does not know the result:) but according to the principle so admirably laid down in Dr. King's sermon, that we are said by analogy to be in a state of trial, because as a master who is making trial of his servant, how he will perform his duty, *rewards* him if he does well, and *punishes* him if he does ill; so we

may expect to be rewarded or punished according as we choose to act well or ill, just as we should, if God were really uncertain how we should act^d. This analogous sense is the only one in which we can be said to be in a state of trial; and in that sense, such a being as I have supposed may be conceived to be no less in a state of trial. Nay, he might even be exposed to temptation; that is, might have some inclinations, which if gratified indiscriminately, and uncontrolled by reason, would lead to evil; but which his reason would always be strong enough so to control: just as a kind mother, (indeed almost every mother,) may be confidently expected, if she has but a scanty portion of food, to impart a portion of it to her child, though she not only has the power to let it starve, by attending only to her own supply, but also is solicited by hunger to do so.

In fact, there actually have been, and are, we trust, many, whose lives have been such, not indeed as to merit salvation, but to permit and ensure their attainment of it according to God's promises: though we cannot suppose but that these persons were ex-

^d It may perhaps be worth while to observe, that the word trial is employed in two senses; namely, with reference to the *future*, and to the *past*: we *make trial*, for instance, of a servant, to see what his conduct *will* be; (in this sense the word "prove" is more commonly used by our Bible-translators than "try;") and we *bring to trial* one of whom we would ascertain what his conduct *has* been. These two senses are perhaps sometimes confounded together, in our application of the word to God's dealings with mankind. It is a matter however of no practical consequence, provided we remember, that *analogically* the word may be thus so applied in both senses, but *literally*, in neither; since both senses imply *uncertainty* in the person who makes the trial.

posed to temptations, and tried, in the only sense in which a creature can be understood to be tried by his omniscient Creator.

But should it be said, that if the world were stocked with beings thus exempted, (though not by compulsion and restraint, yet by the strength of their reason and purity of their nature,) from all chance of sin, there would then be no room for the practice of what we now call virtue; this is most undeniably true, and ought studiously to be borne in mind. This truth cannot be better expressed than in the words of Dr. Copleston, which I will take the liberty of citing: "As without the presence of danger it is not easy to conceive any proof of courage, or of temperance without lust, or of obedience without temptation to *do* wrong, so there is no room for the exercise of forbearance, forgiveness, and generosity, without *suffering* wrong. Without pain and privation there can be no patience—without distress in others, no sympathy in ourselves—no occasion for pity, for relief, for succour, for consolation, for any of those acts of love and charity, which are perhaps the most efficacious towards our own improvement, and towards fitting us for the enjoyment of a higher state of being^c." And we had much better stop here, than attempt to pry any further into the inscrutable plans of the Deity. That it was impossible for man to be so constituted as to attain the highest happiness without this kind of moral discipline, I most firmly and reverently believe, simply because God *has* ordained

^c Page 60, 61.

things as they are, not because I can perceive *why* it was impossible: that any such sinless being as I have above supposed, actually exists, or can possibly exist, I am far from asserting: "To suppose that kind of moral excellence, which leads to higher and higher degrees of happiness, to be attainable without previous trial, may, for aught we know, be as absurd as to suppose a circle with unequal radii; and to suppose *trial* without *evil* seems to be equally absurd:" all I contend for is, that *we* cannot *perceive* or *prove* (as Dr. King maintains we can) any thing contradictory in such a supposition; and that, *for aught we know*, such an agent might be as free as ourselves. But that there is some good reason for our not having been so constituted, though that reason is not known to us, is a doctrine in which I most humbly acquiesce; and surely it is better frankly to acknowledge our ignorance, provided we do so in patient humility, not suffering it to lead us to irreverent objections and arrogant scepticism, than to dogmatize concerning mysteries beyond our reach, and bewildering ourselves and others with the subtleties of logomachy, lay the foundation of incurable and most mischievous perplexity, to those who shall in time perceive the failure of our attempts to explain what we profess to regard as explicable.

There is no kind of wisdom more valuable, and unfortunately none more rare, than the right estimate of the weakness of our own faculties, and of the limits of our knowledge: nor can reason be

ⁱ Cop'leston, p. 61.

better employed than in deciding where her operations must be stopped.

Nescire velle quæ magister optimus
Docere non vult erudita inscitia est.

But so far are men in general from perceiving this, that they are apt to consider him as the wisest, who professes to explain the most, and him as the most ignorant, who is the most ready to confess his ignorance; and what is still more remarkable, they are usually less offended with one who professes to understand what they cannot, than with one who confesses his inability to understand what they profess to find intelligible. In the former case, they flatter themselves that they may hereafter understand the matter as well as he does; or that they *might* do so, if they would devote their attention to it; in the latter case, they feel galled by a sort of insinuated reproach, as if they were obliquely accused of satisfying themselves with an unsound explanation, and either stupidly overlooking, or insidiously disguising, their own ignorance.

I fully expect therefore to incur more censure from many bold explainers, that if I had advanced the most rash hypotheses, and ventured on the wildest speculations: but I hope to have credit with the moderate and candid, (even if they think they can comprehend what I have acknowledged to be beyond my reach,) for a sincere desire at least “to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.”

It is painful to be obliged to bring a charge of any thing like presumptuous speculation against such an

author as Dr. King; whose present discourse contains perhaps the most forcible and judicious cautions against it that are any where to be found. But candour compels me to admit, that the very rules he has here so admirably laid down, are but too often transgressed throughout his treatise on the origin of evil. To take one passage (and one out of many) as a specimen, let the judicious reader, who has perused the foregoing discourse, decide for himself whether the principles laid down in it are not violated by such language as the following. “ We have seen in the former subsection, that some things are adapted to the appetites by the constitution of nature itself, and on that account are good and agreeable to them; but that we may conceive a power which can produce goodness or agreeableness in the things, by conforming itself to them, or adapting them to it: hence things please this agent, not because they are good in themselves, but become good because they are chosen. We have demonstrated before, how great a perfection, and of what use such a power would be; and that there is such a power in nature appears from hence, namely, we must necessarily believe that *God* is invested with it.

“ II. For in the first place, nothing in the creation is either good or bad to him before his election, he has no appetite to gratify with the enjoyment of things without him. He is therefore absolutely *indifferent* to all external things, and can neither receive benefit nor harm from any of them. What then should determine his will to act? Certainly nothing *without* him; therefore he determines himself, and creates to

himself a kind of appetite by choosing. For when the choice is made, he will have as great attention and regard to the effectual procuring of that which he has chosen, as if he were excited to this endeavour by a natural and necessary appetite. And he will esteem such things, as tend to accomplish these elections, good; such as obstruct them, evil^k."

^l It is not to the argument of the foregoing passage that I am at present wishing to call the reader's attention, but to the confident tone in which it treats

^k Dr. King, c. v. §. 1. subs. 4. p. 284.

^l The peculiar notions of Dr. King respecting *free-will*, although he builds much upon them, I have not thought fit to examine, because it appears to me, that if all he says concerning it be admitted, (keeping clear however of the ambiguity of the word "possible,") we should not be the nearer to a solution of the difficulty in question. Of the existence of "free-will," in the popular sense of the word, no rational doubt can be entertained: it is applied, I apprehend, to those cases where a man acts agreeably to his wishes, in contradistinction to those where he chooses the least of two evils: for instance, if a soldier puts his captives to death by the order of his commander, though he himself would rather have spared them, he is a *free agent* indeed, for he might submit to be punished himself instead of obeying; but he is said to act *against his will*: but if he exercises the same cruelty without any orders, he is said to do it of his own free-will. Dr. King however uses the term in a widely different meaning, and one to which I must confess I have never been able by the most patient attention to attach any precise sense.

But be this as it may, if this "free-will of indifference" take place only when we choose between two or more objects, of which neither has any claim to a preference; as, for instance, which of two duplicate copies of the same book we shall read in; then as there is no right or wrong in the choice, this will not explain the origin of moral evil: but if it be contended that a man is ever led, by this free-will, to do what he knows to be wrong, without any other, or any other adequate, temptation, so far is this from explaining the difficulty, that (if we admit the

of the nature and workings of the Divine mind, as if we were capable of forming distinct notions on such a subject.

The same air of confidence appears in numberless other passages of the same book; though no one has given a more judicious and forcible warning against it than the author himself. This should teach us not to rest satisfied with having merely *admitted*, once for all, but also to *keep steadily in view*, the necessity of a most reverent and trembling caution and self-distrust, when we speak of "the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God." Dr. Copleston's very just remark on the presumptuous language of another writer, is but too applicable in this case also: "the boldness with which things that the angels desire to look into, are in this manner treated, as if they were the proper subject of human augmentation, is no slight evidence of the unsoundness of those opinions which it is employed in supporting^m."

I cannot dismiss the subject without a few practical remarks relative to the difficulty in question.

First, let it be remembered, that it is not peculiar to any one theological system: let not therefore the Calvinist or the Arminian urge it as an objection against their respective adversaries; much less an objection clothed in offensive language, which will be

fact) our astonishment is naturally increased at the existence of such a depravity of disposition as can thus prefer evil for evil's sake. But Dr. King appears to be throughout entangled in the ambiguity of the words "possible," &c. which he seems never clearly to have perceived, or at least not to have already kept in view.

^m Copleston, p. 98.

found to recoil on their own religious tenets, as soon as it shall be perceived, that both parties are alike unable to explain the difficulty; let them not, to destroy an opponent's system, rashly kindle a fire which will soon extend to the no less combustible structure of their own.

Secondly, let it not be supposed that this difficulty is any objection to revealed religion. Revelation leaves us, in fact, as to this question, just where it found us: reason tells us that evil exists, and shews us how to avoid it: revelation tells us more of the nature and extent of the evil, and gives us better instructions for escaping it; but why any evil at all should exist, is a question it does not profess to clear up; and it were to be wished that its incautious advocates would abstain from representing it as making this pretension; which is in fact wantonly to provoke such objections as they have no power to answer. In truth, revelation cannot fairly be complained of for not solving the difficulty: its object is manifestly not to gratify speculative curiosity, but to meet the wants and guide the conduct of believers: now, supposing the same actual existence of evil, it does not appear how an explanation of its origin should be requisite in order to instruct us in guarding against it. And this actual existence of evil, if admitted at all as an objection, must lie no less against natural than against revealed religion. Now the plain common sense and good principle of every right minded man will guard him against admitting it as an objection to religion universally; or at least such an objection as to justify atheistical doctrines: for,

Thirdly, our notions of the moral attributes of the Deity are not derived (as Dr. Paley contends they areⁿ) from a bare contemplation of the created universe, without any notions of what is antecedently probable, to direct and aid our observations. Nor is it true (few indeed would now, I apprehend, assent to that part of his doctrine) that man has no moral faculty—no natural principle of preference for virtue rather than vice—benevolence rather than malice; but that being compelled by the view of the universe to admit that God is benevolent, is thence led, from prudential motives alone^o, to cultivate benevolence in himself, with a view to secure a future reward. The truth I conceive is exactly the reverse of this; viz. that man having in himself a moral faculty^p, or taste, as some prefer to call it, by which he is instinctively led to approve virtue and disapprove vice, is thence disposed and inclined antecedently, to attribute to the Creator of the universe, the most perfect and infinitely highest of beings, all those moral (as well as intellectual)

ⁿ "The proof of the divine goodness rests upon two propositions, each, as we contend, capable of being made out by observations drawn from the appearance of nature," &c. &c. *Paley's Nat. Theol.* c. 26.

^o "We conclude, therefore, that God wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures. And this conclusion being once established, we are at liberty to go on with the rule built upon it, namely, that the method of coming at the will of God, concerning any action by the light of nature, is to enquire into the tendency of that action to promote or diminish the general happiness." *Paley's Moral Philosophy*, vol. i. b. ii. c. v. p. 79. See also c. 5. b. i. and c. 3. b. ii. of the same work.

^p Whether we regard this with Dr. Butler, and Mr. D. Stewart, as an original faculty—one of the simple principles of our nature—or with A. Smith, as resulting necessarily from the original and universal principle of sympathy, is of no practical consequence in the present discussion.

qualities which to himself seem the most worthy of admiration, and intrinsically beautiful and excellent: for to do evil rather than good, appears to all men (except to those who have been very long hardened and depraved by the extreme of wickedness) to imply something of weakness, imperfection, corruption, and degradation. I say, "*disposed and inclined,*" because our admiration for benevolence, wisdom, &c. would not *alone* be sufficient to make us attribute these to the Deity, if we saw *no* marks of them in the creation; but our finding in the creation many marks of contrivance, and of beneficent contrivance, *together with* the antecedent bias in our own minds, which inclines us to attribute goodness to the supreme Being^a—*both these conjointly*, lead us to the conclusion that God is infinitely benevolent, notwithstanding the admixture of evil in his works, which

^a "The peculiar sentiment of approbation with which we regard the virtue of beneficence in others, and the peculiar satisfaction with which we reflect on such of our own actions as have contributed to the happiness of mankind; to which we may add, the exquisite pleasure accompanying the exercise of all the kind affections, naturally lead us to consider benevolence or goodness as the supreme attribute of the Deity. —In this manner, without any examination of the fact, we have a strong presumption for the goodness of the Deity; and it is only after establishing this presumption *a priori*, that we can proceed to examine the fact with safety. It is true indeed, that, independently of this presumption, the disorders we see would not demonstrate ill intention in the Author of the universe; as it would be still possible that these might contribute to the happiness and the perfection of the whole system.—But the contrary supposition would be equally possible; that there is nothing absolutely good in the universe, and that the communication of suffering is the ultimate end of the laws by which it is governed." *Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, part ii. c. ii. §. i. Art. ii. ¶ 287, 288. page 208.

we cannot account for. But these appearances of evil would stand in the way of such a conclusion, if man really were, what Dr. Paley represents him, a being destitute of all moral sentiment, all innate and original admiration for goodness: he would in that case be more likely to come to the conclusion (as many of the heathen seem actually to have done^r) that the Deity was a being of a mixed or of a capricious nature; an idea which, shocking as it is to every well-constituted mind, would not be so in the least, to such a mind as Dr. Paley attributes to the whole human species. To illustrate this argument a little further, let us suppose a tasteful architect and a rude savage to be both contemplating a magnificent building, unfinished, or partially fallen to ruin; the one, not being at all able to comprehend the complete design, nor having any taste for its beauties if perfectly exhibited, would not attribute any such design to the author of it, but would suppose the prostrate columns and rough stones to be as much designed as those that were erect and perfect; the other would sketch out in his own mind something like the perfect structure of which he beheld only a part; and though he might not be able to explain how it came to be unfinished or decayed, would conclude that some such design was in the mind of the builder: though this same man, if he were contemplating a mere rude heap of stones which bore *no* marks of design at all, would not in *that* case draw

^r In consequence, partly, of the depravation of their moral faculty, partly of the gross ignorance which kept out of their sight so much of the beneficent contrivance to be perceived in the universe.

such a conclusion. Or again, suppose two persons, one having an ear for music, and the other totally destitute of it, were both listening to a piece of music imperfectly heard at a distance, or half drowned by other noises, so that only some notes of it were distinctly caught, and others were totally lost or heard imperfectly; the one might suppose that the sounds he heard were all that were actually produced, and think the whole that met his ear to be exactly such as was designed; but the other would form some notion of a piece of real music, and would conclude that the interruptions and imperfections of it were not parts of the design, but were to be attributed to his imperfect hearing: though if he heard, on another occasion, a mere confusion of sounds without any melody at all, he would not conclude that any thing like music was designed.

The application is obvious: the wisdom and goodness discernible in the structure of the universe, but imperfectly discerned, and blended with evil, leads a man who has an innate approbation of those attributes, to assign them to the Author of the universe, though he be unable to explain that admixture of evil; but if man were destitute of moral sentiments, the view of the universe, such as it appears to us, would hardly lead him to that conclusion.

The defect which I have noticed in Dr. Paley's "Moral Philosophy" is now pretty generally acknowledged: but it is not so generally perceived that his "Natural Theology" is (as it could not but be) infected with the same: and that by this means he has left a flaw in that, otherwise most admirable argument.

In defence of the justness of these conclusions, which have been drawn respecting the divine benevolence, it is worth while to observe that they derive no inconsiderable weight from *Authority*; i. e. from the authority of mankind at large, considered as rational beings. Who are those that consider their God or Gods as malevolent, or as capricious, and subject to human passions and vices? The rudest and stupidest and most degraded savages. Now we judge of what is bitter and sweet, by the taste, not of a feverish patient, but of one in the most perfect health: we call that good music, which is approved by those who have cultivated and brought to perfection the musical faculty: and we reckon *that* the proper and natural mode of growth and produce of a plant, which it exhibits, not in the *greatest number* of cases, but in the soil and climate best adapted to it, and such as are best fitted to bring it to perfection. It is without good ground therefore that the savage life is called a state of nature*: civilization is rather the natural state of man, since he has evidently a natural tendency towards it. And it would be most extravagant to suppose that his advance towards a more improved and exalted state of existence should tend to obliterate true and instil false notions. Those therefore must be the natural sentiments of man, which are the sentiments

* It is remarkable that savages are so far from leading a *natural* life, that they scarcely ever suffer even the human form to attain its fair and natural proportions, but disfigure and mutilate it by some devices of their own; either compressing the skull, flattening the nose, elongating the ears, crippling the feet, or lattooing the skin, &c.

of *civilized* man. The Mahometan nations, who are considerably advanced in civilization, give a far more amiable representation of the Deity than the rudest Pagans: but the fullest conviction of the most sublime and perfect moral excellence in the Author of the universe, is the most completely established among that portion of the human race who possess the most knowledge, intelligence, and cultivation. Surely it is in this way that an appeal to the reason of mankind ought to be conducted; viz. not collecting the votes numerically, but looking to the judgment of the wisest and best: and an appeal so conducted must have very great weight with every rational mind.

Fourthly, the doctrine of man's responsibility is not impaired but rather confirmed by resting it, not on presumptuous explanations of the divine justice, but on its true basis, viz. first, the natural and, as it may be called, instinctive principle of conscience; which leads all men (and led even those of the heathens who thought nothing about the divine justice) to feel self-reproach, and self-approbation—an inward sense of their own ill-desert or good-desert, for certain actions, respectively, even where they have no clear expectation of punishment and reward. Secondly, the analogy of nature, so well pointed out by the great Butler; which leads us to conjecture that, as a general rule at least, virtue will always lead to the greatest share of happiness, and vice, of misery. Thirdly, and chiefly, the express declarations of Revelation, which, though it does not give any explanation *how* man comes to be responsible, is so clear as to the

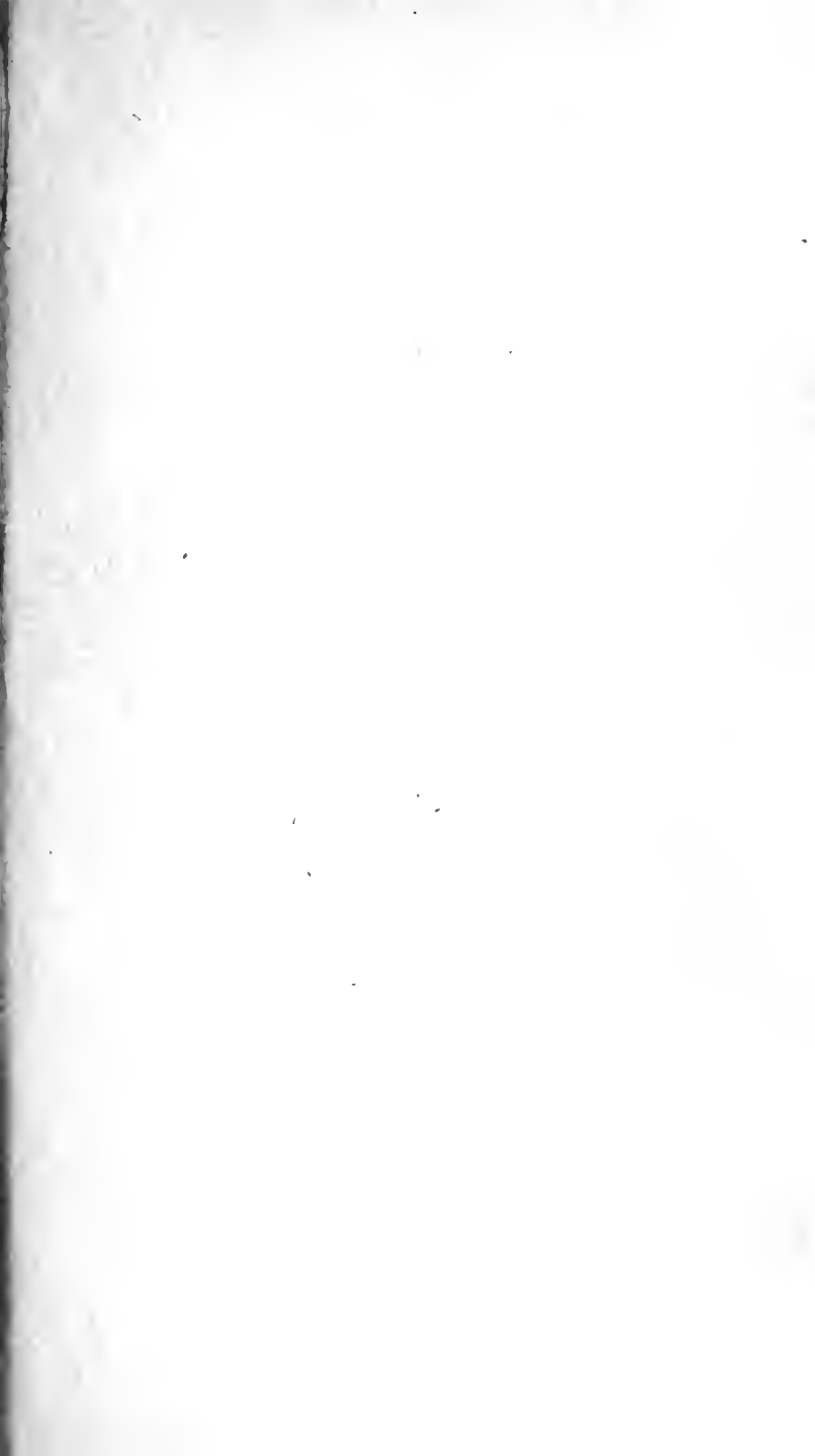
fact, as to leave no rational doubt in the mind of any one who believes the Scriptures'.

Lastly, let the preachers of the Gospel bear in mind that the object of that Gospel is not to explain the causes of moral evil, but to remedy its effects. Let them, after being satisfied that the Scriptures are the word of God, seek for such instruction respecting his nature, and his dealings with man, as *they* afford". Let them remember, themselves, and sedulously warn their flocks, that it was the craving after FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE which expelled our first parents from paradise; a temptation which still besets their posterity. Let them remember, that though Scripture invites enquiry into questions within the reach of our faculties, (for our Lord bids the Jews "search the Scriptures," to ascertain when He were indeed the foretold Messiah,) it demands faith, implicit faith, in mysteries which it does not attempt to clear up; and insists on faith as the fundamental point of religion. Let them shun those therefore who profess, by simplifying and explaining these mysteries, to make faith *easy*, and

* "When this author (Edwards) asks, 'How can men know they shall be rewarded or punished in a future state but from the consideration of God's justice?' I answer confidently, we know it from the Scriptures, and we could know it in no other way." *Copleston*, p. 139.

" "Let us keep to Scripture: and Scripture so understood will never lead us beyond our depth. It is only by going out of Scripture, by building theories of our own upon subjects of which we must have an imperfect knowledge, that such apparent contradictions are produced. If we set up these notions of our own as the standard of faith, and require a peremptory assent to all the inferences which appear to flow from them, we quit the true, the revealed God, and betake ourselves to the idols of our own brain." *Copleston*, p. 141.







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Discourse on predestination.

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