

disabuse them of their errors. Happy the man, who has the talent of executing the task with the perspicuity, the force, and the familiar illustration of Dr. Warton, who, in his conference with Mrs. Milton (an inmate of an almshouse within his parish, and a sour disciple of the Geneva school), thus admirably handles the topic of God's foreknowledge as it is connected with the free agency of his rational creatures, which Mrs. Milton thought incompatible altogether with the divine prescience.

"I endeavoured to clear up the difficulty in the following manner. Looking through the window I saw one of the old women at the pump, which stood in the centre of the court-yard, and I asked Mrs. Milton who it was?—"It is Mrs. Callender," she answered.—"And what is she doing?" I asked again.—"She is filling her tea-kettle," she said.—"Are you quite sure of it?" I asked once more.—"Yes, sir," she replied, with surprise at my question;—"I cannot possibly be mistaken I am perfectly certain about it."—"Very well, then," I said, "here is a circumstance, which you know certainly and infallibly: does your certain and infallible knowledge of the thing make Mrs. Callender do it?"

"No, to be sure," she answered, "it cannot."—"And yet," I said, "if she did not certainly do the thing, you could not certainly know it?"—"Very true," she replied.—"Do you understand, then," I inquired, "that it is her doing the thing which makes you infallibly know it, and not your infallible knowledge of it, which forces her to do it?"—"I do understand," she said, and I think I understand also what you are driving at. But knowledge and foreknowledge, Sir, are very different things."

"Be patient, Mrs. Milton," I said, interrupting her, "be patient, and we shall come to that in a moment. Look again, and tell me what Mrs. Callender is doing now."—"She is going back to her house, Sir," she answered, "with her tea-kettle full of water."—"And do you know," I inquired, "what she will do when she comes there?"—"Yes," she replied, "that I do very well. It will be her tea-time in half an hour; and so she will put her kettle on the fire immediately."—"Here, then," I said, "is a circumstance which you foreknow; but you will hardly tell me, I should think, that good Mrs. Callender does not put her kettle on the fire of her own free will, and uninfluenced by you."

"She was staggered at first; but, soon collecting herself, she answered,—"I was too hasty, Sir, in saying that I knew very well what Mrs. Callender was going to do. It is likely, indeed, that she will put her kettle on the fire; but she may set it down, and do something else first; or, for what I know, Sir, she may drop down dead as soon as she crosses the threshold."

"She may, undoubtedly," I said, "and this glorious sun, which now shines so brightly through your window, may rise no more; but you have the greatest human certainty, that the sun will rise to-morrow, without your foreknowledge, however certain, causing it to do so. Thus in the case of Mrs. Callender, &c. &c. &c.*** If you were like God, you would be absolutely certain, and could have the most perfect foreknowledge; but Mrs. Callender would do exactly what she intended to do, uninfluenced by your foreknowledge; which is entirely confined to yourself, and has nothing to do with her."—Vol. ii. p. 208.

"Without doubt," continues Dr. W. "we are here in a state of trial, and are accountable beings; which could not be the case, if we were not free to act. Our actions would be the actions of Him, who ordained them; our sins would be his; and if this be not blasphemy, when spoken of God, I know not what is blasphemy."—Vol. ii. p. 210.