

"him to consider whether *he* does not hold that *all* reason is bound  
 "by the law of contradiction as expounded in sec. 28. Of course, if  
 "we may assign to intelligence universally *any one* necessary condi-  
 "tion of thought and knowledge, the whole question is at an end,  
 "and must be held to be decided in favor of the views of this sys-  
 "tem." As this is the only passage in the Institutes where any  
 thing having the semblance of argument is advanced in support of  
 the principle that all intelligence is governed by certain necessary  
 laws, it merits special examination. In the first place when Pro-  
 fessor Ferrier affirms that it would be wrong to exclude any possible  
 thinking from the operation of the laws in question, because they are  
 necessary laws, this remark has plainly no force as an argument ; for  
 the very point in dispute is whether there are any such necessary laws.  
 Again, it is said that the opposites of these laws involve contradic-  
 tions. But how so ? In what way is it a contradiction to hold that  
 knowledge in God may be something so entirely different from  
 knowledge in us, that they cannot be designated by any single no-  
 tion ? Let us consider what Professor Ferrier means by a contra-  
 diction. He means that which no intelligence can possibly conceive.  
 Matter, for instance, according to him, is a contradiction, it is non-  
 sense, it is an absurdity, because *per se* it is incapable of being con-  
 ceived by any intelligence. On what grounds then is it asserted that  
 knowledge essentially different from ours—so different as not to ad-  
 mit of being brought under any common law with ours—is a thing  
 inconceivable by any intelligence ? Though it may be inconceivable  
 by us, this will not entitle us to pronounce it inconceivable absolute-  
 ly. But Professor Ferrier gives an example in which he thinks it  
 plain that a necessary and universal law of intelligence is expressed ;  
 and he argues that if one such law can be apprehended by us, others  
 may be so likewise. The example is the law of contradiction—that  
 a thing must be what it is—that A is A. But what a gross fallacy,  
 to cite a logical principle in illustration of a question of Real Being !  
 Granting that by no intelligence can the law of contradiction be  
 conceived untrue, what does such a concession amount to ? To  
 this and nothing more—that where a thing is conceived (in any  
 sense of the term), the conception is exactly what it is. But does  
 this in the least degree go to prove that there cannot be knowledge  
 or conception so radically different from ours, that the two do not  
 admit of being designated by any common notion ? "Of course,"  
 says Professor Ferrier, "if we assign to intelligence universally *any*  
*one* necessary condition of thought and knowledge, the whole ques-  
 tion is at an end." Not so, by any means—if a logical principle is