

be applied by the theologian. It is well known that sharp discussions not unfrequently occur respecting the meaning of the language of the ablest divines after their decease ; and they are charged with teaching contradictory principles. It is well known, also, how great complaint is often made, by controversial writers, of the misunderstanding of their views by their opponents. But how seldom do discussions of this sort occur respecting the meaning of eminent mathematicians, natural philosophers, and naturalists ! Nor does this result from entire unity of views, and the certainty of every principle discussed in these sciences. But it springs mainly from the definiteness and precision of the language which is employed. Take botany or chemistry, for example : how can men be in doubt about the meaning of a sentence, when almost every word in it has a settled and usually a single sense ? I do not suppose that equal precision could be introduced into theology, because it treats of natures more subtile than those of physical science. But I suggest whether divines, in the definition of their terms, might not advantageously consult the directness, singleness, and precision of physical science more, and the wariness, subtlety, and equivocal senses of metaphysics less. I fancy that in the style of Dr. Chalmers, which, although sometimes too stately, is always clear, we have an example of this improved phraseology. I doubt whether posterity will hesitate much as to the meaning of his writings ; and perhaps the unsanctified ambition of the earlier periods of his ministry, which led him to devote so much time to mathematics, chemistry, and natural history, will be thus overruled to the benefit of theology.

Every true philosopher, no less than the religious man, should be desirous that his pursuits may accomplish the most possible for the good of society ; for benevolence is a duty of