

who have understood the real value of this forbearance !

One great injury done to moral reasoning has arisen from an attempt to assimilate it too closely to the method of the exact sciences. By confounding moral with physical causation, and by considering moral motives as the necessary precursors of un-deviating moral consequences, men have contrived to reach the most revolting and unnatural conclusions. They have denied to man all freedom of will, and liberty of action ; and bound him up, physically and morally, in the fetters of an unrelenting fatalism. We know nothing of the inner movement of the soul except by consciousness—by reflecting on what passes within ourselves. In this way we learn that, within certain limits defined by the condition of our being, we have freedom of will and liberty of action ; and our moral sense falls in with this belief, and teaches us that we are responsible for our choice between good and evil. Practically at least, we know that we are free, and the sophistry of man can never make us part with this knowledge*. To pretend, by any subtleties of inductive proof, to reach a psychological conclusion that interferes with those first elements which we know by internal consciousness, is not one atom less absurd, than it would be for a mechanical philosopher to mock us with the pretended proof of some physical law, while the law itself was falsified by the evidence of direct experiment.

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* Connected with this question the Reader is requested to consult Butler's Analogy, Chap. vi. *Of the opinion of Necessity, considered as influencing Practice.*