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**The Works Of the late Right Honorable Henry St. John,
Lord Viscount Bolingbroke**

In Five Volumes, complete.

Bolingbroke, Henry St. John

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LXXVI.

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these scriptures were writ, compiled, or published. In the former, we are told that he designs to exercise our faith, which is the angular stone of every instituted religion: in the latter, that he was pleased to speak according to vulgar error, that he might be the better understood; as if the supreme intelligence, the God of truth, could stand in need of an expedient to which no philosopher would think himself reduced.

LXXVI.

IT is strange to observe that such a writer, as archbishop KING, should recommend his favorite analogy as the proper, and necessary, the usual and general method of teaching, and instructing mankind, and of leading them to knowledge, after he has assumed over and over, that all our knowledge of the divine nature and perfections rests on these notions solely, and can be carried no further. When we are instructed by analogy, by comparison, by figure in one word, on other occasions, it is in order to arrive at the knowledge of matters knowable. Knowledge that was to rest in these, would not be deemed knowledge, nor even that which we might think we acquired by reasoning from them; for demonstration cannot arise from real and much less from assumed similitude nor figure. It must be established on intuitive, or sensitive knowledge. The reason is obvious. Similitudes may be assumed, and figures employed falsely. We must go beyond them, and reason independently of them, to know whether they lead us to truth, or not; for the anger of God may be as improper an image, as that of his hands and feet, and there may be, as doubtless there is, in one representation no more proportion, nor resemblance, than in the other. Analogy consists of some similitude and some diversity. As fast as we perceive this similitude

similitude and this diversity, it may help us to prove; but of itself, and without this comparison, which cannot be made when the object is unknown, it can neither prove, nor help us to prove. The right reverend author I have quoted so often is fond of an example or two, one of which turns against him, and the other makes nothing for him.

To the man, who is a stranger to any country, we produce a map of it. The map is only paper and ink. It is not the country, it has very little likeness to the country; yet this analogy gives him notions, and as much knowledge of the country as serves his present purpose. Now in the first place, tho it be true that the map gives him the notion of a new country, it is equally true that the map gives him no new notion. He knew what mountains, and valleys, and lakes, and rivers are, before he saw the map; and all he learns by it is, that there are such in this unknown country: so that the comparison shews, much against the intention of the writer, if it shews any thing, that the human passions with which we were acquainted long before the analogical map was spread before us, are the same in God that they are in us. The strokes and lines of the map do not shew us Highgate, nor the Thames; the mountains may be higher, the rivers deeper, but they are mountains and rivers still, and the nature and the face of the country are much the same. In the next place, the map was made by persons who had been on the spot, or by the communication of exact memorials from them, and they to whom it is of the utmost consequence to know this knowable country may resort to it, and verify or correct the map, instead of trusting to men who know the country no better than they do, or who may have an interest to deceive them.

ANOTHER example is taken from our sensitive knowledge of outward objects. The sun, for instance, gives us by his effects the ideas of light and heat; but what they are in themselves, or what the physical nature of the sun is, we know not. Just so, the direction of God's providence in the government of the world gives us the ideas of anger and revenge; but what these are in themselves, or what the moral nature of God is, we know not. This comparison may seem plausible perhaps to some persons. But it will not hold. Whatever light and heat are in themselves, the simple ideas that we distinguish by these names are raised by the action of the sun immediately, and uniformly. But the complex ideas of anger and revenge are not so raised by any act, or direction of providence. Disagreeable sensations, or pain may be immediate effects of such acts or directions; but the moral causes of these are of our own invention. They are not uniformly assigned neither, as they are not immediately, nor determinately known; for the same appearances which are ascribed to God's anger or revenge by one man, and at one time, will be ascribed to his justice, or even to his mercy, by another man at the same time, or by the same man at another time. In all these cases, the physical causes are alike unknown in themselves, and in the manner of their operations. They are determined only by their effects. Now to argue, that, because we admit these, which are so determined, we ought to admit moral causes, which are not so determined, is something too sophistical. To conclude this head by bringing an example against analogy much more to the purpose, than those that are brought in favor of it: the man who was born blind imagined, most analogically, a similitude between the sound of a trumpet, and the scarlet color. He substituted the idea he had for that he had not, and reasoned from thence just as well about
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scarlet,

scarlet, as some men reason from their ideas of anger and revenge about the moral causes that are latent in the divine mind.

It is said that we can have no direct knowledge of the nature of God: which is true in this sense, that all the knowledge we can have of this kind is derived originally from his works, and the proceedings of his providence. All the ways of acquiring a more direct knowledge by archetypal ideas which we discern in an intimate union of the human with the divine mind, by the irradiations of mystic theology, or by the inward light of quakerism, and several more, which the phrenzy of metaphysics, not very distant from that of enthusiasm, has invented, are too ridiculous to deserve the regard of common sense. But tho we have not, in any of these ways, a direct knowledge of the nature of God, yet we are not reduced to know nothing of him except by analogy. If the first principles of our knowledge concerning him be reflected, as we have just now said, yet it is real. It is carried into demonstration, and is therefore direct likewise, if we may be allowed to call any knowledge by demonstration direct. What we can see of him within the extent of our horizon, we see clearly. He judged this sufficient for us, he gave us to see no further by that lamp of reason which he has lighted up in our minds; and with this, little as it is, we ought to be content. But the divines, spoken of here, light up their dim taper of analogy, pretend to shew us the shadows of objects they cannot discover, and bid us be content with this. They go further. They assert that this is sufficient for us, and tho true religion be the most reasonable service, they make it the most unreasonable servitude: for thus they argue*. "Men ho-

* KING, ubi sup.

“ they could not distinguish from another man, if they met
 “ him. Let us suppose God to be such a prince literally, as
 “ he is represented analogically. Let us suppose him to love
 “ those that obey his orders, and to be in rage and fury against
 “ the disobedient. Can we doubt that he who believes this
 “ will be saved by virtue of that belief?” Thus you see that
 they make at last even their own analogy unnecessary. We
 may conceive him, by their leave, under all the gross and re-
 pugnantly images that have been employed to represent him in
 the Jewish scriptures. We may conceive him to be a mighty
 king, that sits in heaven, and has the earth for his footstool,
 from whence all things that can happen are in his view. Or
 we may conceive him, like an eastern monarch, carried about
 in his palanquin, neither seeing his subjects, nor seen by them,
 familiar with a few of his favorites, terrible to all the rest of
 his people, and known only by the pomp with which he is
 served, and by the severity of his government*. The man
 who thinks that every circumstance in the mosaical history of
 the creation and of the fall is to be understood literally, should
 think, indeed, that every representation which the scriptures
 make of God is to be understood in the same manner; since
 there can be no reason given against interpreting some of these
 circumstances literally, and some figuratively, that will not
 hold against interpreting some of these passages one way, and
 some another. To be consistent, he should disclaim the ana-
 logy he contends for; and then nothing more will be wanting
 to answer all the ends of artificial theology, than to assume
 on such premises, that they who minister in holy things are
 the omrahs, the vizirs, and the bassas of this mighty king,
 whose commands they publish, interpret, and execute, or
 cause to be executed; rather than his ambassadors: by assuming

* Vid. KING in his serm. on Gen. ii. 16, 17.

which

which latter character they may seem to lessen over modestly the dignity of their own order, and to raise that of the laity too high.--But I am ashamed to have said so much on this subject.

LXXVII.

I MIGHT have concluded sooner, that an analogy arbitrarily assumed is not sufficient to excuse the literal attribution of those human passions to the divine nature, which are the disgrace of ours; that there is little or no difference in reality between one and the other of these attributions, whatever there may be in appearance, to an inattentive or prejudiced mind; and that anger and revenge were ascribed by the jews to the Supreme Being as literally as compassion and mercy, as literally as injustice in this life is ascribed to his providence by atheists and divines, or the justice of it in another is asserted by the latter. The false conceptions, and the licentious reasonings about the divine nature and providence, that have been mentioned, as well as many more, proceed chiefly from the doctrine which teaches that the moral attributes are the same in God as they are in our ideas, that the eternal reason of things, by which he acts, is open to all rational beings; and consequently that we are competent judges of his moral proceedings towards us, since we are competent to determine what his moral character requires. But these false conceptions and licentious reasonings may proceed likewise from the analogical doctrine, as contrary as it appears to the other; for by ascribing to God not human notions and passions, but something, whatever it be, equivalent to these, KING might, tho he does not, reason as dogmatically as CLARKE, a priori, from what the creator and governor of the world ought to do
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