

CHAPTER IV.

The Power and Operation of Habit.

1. WE have as yet been occupied with what may be termed the instant sensations, wherewith morality is beset in the mind of man—with the voice of conscience which goes immediately before, or with the sentence whether of approval or condemnation, which comes immediately after it; and latterly, with those states of feeling which are experienced at the moment when under the power of those affections, to which any moral designation, be it of virtue or vice, is applicable—the pleasure which there is in the very presence and contact of the one, the distaste, the bitterness which there is in the presence and contact of the other.

2. These phenomena of juxtaposition, as they may be termed; these contiguous antecedents and consequents of the moral and the immoral in man, speak strongly the purpose of Him who ordained our mental constitution, in having inserted there such a constant power of command and encouragement on the side of the former, and a like constant operation of checks and discouragements against the latter. But, perhaps, something more may be collected of the design and character of God, by stretching forward our observation prospectively in the history of man, and so extending our regards to the more distant consequences of virtue or vice, both on the frame of his character and the state of