

CHAPTER II.

On the special and subordinate Adaptations of external Nature to the moral Constitution of Man.

1. WE have hitherto confined our attention to certain great and simple phenomena of our moral nature, which, though affording a different sort of evidence for the being of God from the organic and complicated structures of the material world—yet, on the hypothesis of an existent Deity, are abundantly decisive of His preference for virtue over vice, and so of the righteousness of His own character. That he should have inserted a great master faculty in every human bosom, all whose decisions are on the side of justice, benevolence, and truth, and condemnatory of their opposites; that he should have invested this conscience with such powers of instant retribution, in the triumphs of that complacency wherewith he so promptly rewards the good, and the horrors of that remorse wherewith He as promptly chastises the evil; that beside these, He should have so distinguished between virtue and vice,* as that the emotions and

* Butler, in Part I, Chapter 3d of his *Analogy*, makes the following admirable discrimination between actions themselves and that quality ascribed to them which we call virtuous or vicious. —“ An action by which any natural passion is gratified, or fortune acquired, procures delight or advantage, abstracted from all consideration of the morality of such action, consequently the pleasure or advantage in this case is gained by the action itself, not by the morality, the virtuousness, or viciousness of it, though it be, perhaps, virtuous or vicious. Thus to say, such an action or course