

PART I.

ON THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST GENERAL ARGUMENT.

On the Supremacy of Conscience.

1. AN abstract question in morals is distinct from a question respecting the constitution of man's moral nature; and the former ought no more to be confounded with the latter, than the truths of geometry with the faculties of the reasoning mind which comprehends them. The virtuousness of justice was a stable doctrine in ethical science, anterior to the existence of the species; and would remain so, though the species were destroyed—just as much as the properties of a triangle are the enduring stabilities of mathematical science; and that, though no matter had been created to exemplify the positions or the figures of geometry. The objective nature of virtue is one thing. The subjective nature of the human mind, by which virtue is felt and recognised, is another. It is not