

riority of the existent economy of things, over that speculative economy into which these theorists would transform it ; or, in other words, would prove by how mighty an interval, the goodness and the wisdom of God transcended both the goodness and the wisdom of man.

9. The whole of this speculation, if followed out into its just and legitimate consequences, would serve greatly to humble and reduce our estimate of human virtue. Nothing is virtuous but what is done under a sense of duty ; or done, simply and solely because it ought. It is only in as far as this consideration is present to the mind, and is of practical and prevalent operation there—that man can be said to feel virtuously, or to act virtuously. We should not think of affixing this moral characteristic to any performance, however beneficial, that is done under the mere impulse of a headlong sensibility, without any sense or any sentiment of a moral obligation. In every good action, that is named good because useful to society, we should subduct or separate all which is due to the force of a special affection, that we might precisely ascertain how much or how little remains, which may be due to the force of principle. The inferior animals, destitute though they be of a moral nature, and therefore incapable of virtue, share with us in some of the most useful and amiable instincts which belong to humanity ; and when we stop to admire the workings of