

which relates to the nature of virtue in itself, and which may be termed the objective question in morals—there is a subjective or an organic question which relates, not to the existence, but to the origin and formation of the notion or feeling of virtue in the human mind. The question, for example, whether virtue be a thing of opinion or a thing of sentiment, belongs to this class. Now, in regard to all those questions which respect the origin or the pedigree of our moral judgments, it should not be forgotten, that, while the controvertists are at issue upon this, they are nearly unanimous, as to morality itself being felt by the mind as a matter of supreme obligation. They dispute about the moral sense in man, or about the origin and constitution of the court of conscience; but they have no dispute about the supreme authority of conscience—even as, in questions of civil polity and legislation, there may be no dispute about the rightful authority of some certain court, while there may be antiquarian doubts and differences on the subject of its origin and formation. Dr. Smith, for example, while he has his own peculiar views on the origin of our moral principles, never questions their authority. He differs from others, in regard to the rationale, or the anterior steps of that process, which at length terminates in a decision of the mind, on the merit or demerit of a particular action. The rightness and the supremacy of that decision are not in the