

theories, on the nature of virtue, a clear, nay, a cumulative argument for the virtuous nature of the Godhead.

21. The painful suspicion is apt to intrude upon us, that virtue may not be a thing of any substance or stability at all—when we witness the confusion and the controversy into which moralists have fallen, on the subject of its elementary principles. But, to allay this feeling, it should be observed, in the first place, that, with all the perplexity which obtains on the question of what virtue, in the abstract or in its own essential and constituting quality, is—there is a pretty general agreement among moralists, as to what the separate and specific virtues of the human character are. According to the selfish system, temperance may be a virtue, because of its subservience to the good of the individual; while by the system of utility it is a virtue, because through its observation, our powers and services are kept entire for the good of society. But again, beside this controversy 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