

it. Every special inclination has its special and counterpart object. The object of the inclination is one thing; the pleasure of gratifying the inclination is another; and, in most instances, it were more proper to say, that it is for the sake of the object than for the sake of the pleasure that the inclination is gratified. The distinction that we now urge, though felt to be a subtle, is truly a substantial one, and pregnant both with important principle and important application. The discovery and clear statement of it by Butler may well be regarded as the highest service rendered by any philosopher to moral science; and that, from the light which it casts, both on the processes of the human constitution and on the theory of virtue. As one example of the latter service, the principle in question, so plainly and convincingly unfolded by this great Christian philosopher in his sermon on the love of our neighbour, strikes, and with most conclusive effect, at the root of the selfish system of morals; a system which professes that man's sole object, in the practice of all the various moralities, is his own individual advantage. Now, in most cases of a special, and more particularly of a virtuous affection, it can be demonstrated, that the object is a something out of himself, and distinct from himself. Take compassion for one instance out of the many. The object of this affection is the relief of another's misery, and in the fulfilment of this does the affection meet with its