

object of this affection, and least taken up with the reflex consideration of the pleasure that he himself has in the indulgence of it. Yet this prevents not the pleasure from being actually felt; and felt, too, in very proportion to the intensity of the compassion; or, in other words, more felt the less it has been thought of at the time, or the less it has been pursued for its own sake. It seems unavoidable in every affection, that the more a thing is loved, the greater must be the pleasure of indulging the love of it: yet it is equally unavoidable, that the greater in that case will be our aim towards the object of the affection, and the less will be our aim towards the pleasure which accompanies its gratification. And thus, to one who reflects profoundly and carefully on these things, it is no paradox that he who has had doubly greater enjoyment than another in the exercise of compassion, is doubly the more disinterested of the two; that he has had the most pleasure in this affection who has been the least careful to please himself with the indulgence of it; that he whose virtuous desires, as being the strongest, have in their gratification ministered to self the greatest satisfaction, has been the least actuated of all his fellows by the wishes, and stood at the greatest distance from the aims of selfishness.*

7. And moreover, there is a just and philoso-

* The purely disinterested character of a right religious affection might be proved by these considerations.