

the sin that doth most easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

It appears to afford a natural proof of this doctrine, in other respects so conformable to the feelings of the heart, that our virtuous departed friends are represented in our imaginations after death, in a form no longer compatible with the feelings of familiar and unawed affection with which we approached and conversed with them, while they were in the body; they no longer appear to the mind, as inhabitants of earth, but as denizens of heaven—as celestial immaterial spirits, as pure angelic beings, purged from all the stains of earth, and shining with unspotted and divine lustre. Those errors and blemishes, which are inseparable from humanity, in this life, death seems to cover with oblivion; and if we were eager to recal them it seems in a manner impossible for our heart to do so. On the other hand, whatever they possessed of good or amiable comes forth, as it were, from their sepulchre; lives and blooms to our memory and our heart; it makes a deeper, and more delightful impression, than the actual view or feeling of their living virtues. Surely this effect of death, by which it thus hallows, thus canonizes in our imagination, the departed objects of our love, is not without some high moral purpose in the plan of Heaven. The frailties and the faults which our hearts thus refuse to recal from oblivion, may we not regard as blotted from the record of Heaven, and may we not confidently accept this intimation of our hearts, as a sure token of the Divine mercy and forgiveness exercised towards the departed objects of our love. When we feel them rising to our memory, no longer in that form and aspect which they wore on earth, but in one which awakens a pure, a holy and reverential, but not less true and tender affection than the living object inspired, may we not, humbly trusting in the mercy of God, through the merits of our Redeemer, be permitted to conclude that they are what they now seem to the mind's eye, like the angels of God in Heaven. I do not think that there is either superstition or enthusiasm in this reasoning. But should this conclusion appear unreasonable or presumptuous, we may at least be assured that such a tendency of our minds must be contrived by the author of our frame, for wise and good ends. Our hearts are not touched with such fine emotions, but to some fine issue. In thinking of the dead, it is only their virtues that we can recal, it is only what was fair and good and heavenly, that can be evoked from the tomb—to teach us that virtue alone survives the dissolution of our mortal bodies—that the friends we have lost, have bequeathed to us, as the only valuable inheritance, they could transmit, the memory of their virtues, to be cherished in our hearts, to be imitated and followed in our lives. In living friendships it is virtue alone which forms the pure, essential, vital spirit, the true, the