

placed above the other in the future kingdom; they cannot touch in the least the ardour of their friendship. The inferior person will feel a just and pleasurable exultation in the dignity of his friend, and of course be always ready to meet him with joy; while, on the other side, celestial dignity will delight to condescend, and to impart his lustre and felicity to the object of his ancient regard. True piety will always be the same. The best Christians, whatever be their station or their mental accomplishments, are the most simple, benignant, and condescending, simply because they are the best, because they have most of the temper of their Saviour.

Though no doubt heaven will be a state of activity in endless forms of service and achievement, there will also be a large portion of repose: "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." Whatever will be the employments of the state, the long leisure of immortality will afford ample time for the indulgence of friendship wherever the affections may lead.

And may we not also be permitted to suppose that the benignant Saviour, who has felt the affections and preferences of friendship on earth, and who will probably retain them forever, and who will preside over the arrangements of eternity—may we not suppose that he will show peculiar indulgence to this most felicitous affection, and so dispose of friends through his celestial empire as to allow them free and delightful intercourse for ever? I have no doubt that he will do this.

Thus, you perceive, there is solid and ample ground for cherishing this most soothing anticipation. But to what extent may this anticipation be indulged? Will our intercourse be continued with all pious friends, or only with some of them? I believe the answer of the heart to this question will be the true answer: Where you wish it to be continued, there it will be. The friendship of heaven will, from the very nature of friendship, be a matter of choice, or rather, an adherence to our present choice.

The affectionate veneration for wise and excellent parents, and the love of their society which nature inspires and piety confirms, will continue for ever. The relation betwixt them and us can never be dissolved, never be forgotten. And as the relation itself is immortal, the tender instincts and attachments resulting from it will also be immortal. Your parents will be as much your parents a hundred millions of long ages hence, in fact and in feeling, as they are at this hour. Their care and love in training us to wisdom and piety, when the supreme value of these results shall be fully perceived, will indefinitely enlarge the sum of our obligations, and ren-

der them more precious and venerable for ever. Then, children in their turn become parents. This gives rise to a new affection, which also, from the nature of the case, must continue through eternity. This opens a beautiful view of the richness and variety of celestial love—love for glorified parents; love for glorified children—in all who are thus blest on both sides of their being.

Whether the tenderness of personal attachment shall be continued in the world to come, when the constitution of our nature shall be changed, seems at first sight the most difficult point to determine in the whole enquiry. The difficulty arises from its being a mixed affection. The inferior ingredients of the tender affections, and the alliances to which they lead, having answered their purpose will be finally extinguished in death; but it, appears to me certain that the mental affinity, the tenderness of spirit, the intercourse of soul with soul, which are more or less experienced in all happy cases of this sort, will remain as some of the finest elements of the life, and will form a high and everlasting endearment betwixt those who were united in the days of time. Milton was as great a philosopher as a poet. His views of human nature and the social affections were the most exalted that ever were formed. To any one who delights to study the social constitution of our race, what eloquent wisdom there is in the following lines:—

"Hail, wedded love * * *
* * * by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known."

And can it be supposed that an affection which produces a measureless flow of good on earth will lose all its charms with the extinction of life and do nothing to augment, the happiness of eternity? It is commanded to those who bear this relation, at least on one side, to love each other, "as Christ has loved his Church." The love of the Saviour is an immortal love; and this seems to convey an intimation that the other will also be immortal.

How infinitely solemn are these friendships of personal tenderness! They are frequently so slight and inscrutable in their commencement that no human thought is fine enough to trace them to their origin. The original fountain lies remote and concealed, among the shades and mysteries of our wonderful nature; no intellectual Bruce has ever penetrated to their source. But, like the Nile, they flow on and bless, and sometimes desolate. They may flow to bless or desolate for ever.

Do you put this final question of the whole subject,—“Who, among all the friends I have