

which flows from the Throne of the Eternal. Those whose eyes we closed in death—whose languid parting smile—whose tender feeble embrace—whose pale emaciated form—touched our hearts with the emotions, at once, of love and of sorrow, are now beheld again—with rapture and exultation are beheld—escaped forever from pain and woe—endued with life immortal, and crowned with unfading glory! It is a beautiful and pleasing idea, which some good men have fondly entertained, that the spirits of our virtuous departed friends are commissioned by heaven to watch over us, and to attend us as our guardians so long as we survive on earth—and if we may not indulge this pleasing idea—if we deem it inconsistent with their state of blessedness, to be conscious of all that we are—of all that we sin—of all that we suffer here below—we shall find a resource and a refuge to our hearts, in the doctrine which I am now endeavouring to establish and illustrate, namely, that the affections and friendships of earth are transplanted into heaven, and there become perfect and immortal as their objects.

Did we not know, into what errors and absurdities men have fallen, in opposition to the plainest and most express declarations of Scripture, we should feel astonished, not to say shocked, by the opinion of those who allege, that Scripture bears an evil aspect towards friendship and the natural affections.

It is only a natural inference from this to conclude that they shall have no place in heaven. But so far is it from being the fact, that Scripture has discountenanced friendship and private affection, that the reverse is the truth. It has given us many tender and sublime examples of pure and devoted friendship, and in the brief notices which it affords of a world to come, we have direct intimations so plain and striking, that it is truly marvellous they should escape the observation of any reader—that the chief part of the happiness of that state will arise from society and friendship, and from the renewing and perfecting of those ties, which have been dissolved for a little, by the hand of death. What else can be the scope and import of the Apostle's consolatory exhortation, addressed to the Thessalonians—"But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning those that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also, which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him." What does this imply, if it does not intimate that we shall be reunited with our friends and brethren—departed in the Lord—after a short separation; that we shall recognise them, and be recognised by them—that our joy shall be full and everlasting—that the seeds of affection, which were planted on earth, shall ripen and bring forth the fruits of immortality. We are not ignorant that there are many questions, connected with this interesting subject, which curiosity may prompt, but to which presumption alone would attempt to reply. To the wise, the humble, the good, the general truth will be sufficient, that we shall have our