

PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN MEETING AT  
THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

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THE SUBSTANCE OF

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN GRANVILLE, (Mass.) LORD'S-DAY,  
MAY 20, 1810,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

NANCY TINKER,

WHO DIED IN THE TRIUMPHS OF CHRISTIAN HOPE,  
MAY 18TH, AGED 13 YEARS.

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BY TIMOTHY M. COOLEY,  
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*“ Smitten friends are angels sent on errands full of love,  
“ For us they languish, and for us they die,  
“ And shall they languish, shall they die in vain !” ....YOUNG.*

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1811.

## FUNERAL SERMON.

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### 2 SAMUEL XII. 23.

*But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.*

**A**FFLICTIONS, sorrow and death, are the common lot of all the human family. David, the man after God's own heart, was raised from a shepherd's tent to the throne of Israel, but even in this elevated condition, the arrows of the Almighty reached him. His palace afforded no security from death. The youngest in his family, an infant scarcely a span long, was smitten with disease, and lingering for a while gave up the ghost.

*Now the child is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again?* We are to pray and fast for our children, while they live, but when dead, they are no longer the subjects of prayer.

*I shall go to him to the state of the dead. I shall go to him in heaven. I shall go to him to the judgment-seat, where we shall be judged, according to the deeds done in the body.* The words may imply either of these three things, and I shall embrace the last sense, and attempt to improve this funeral occasion, by illustrating this impressive truth, That parents will meet their children at the day of judgment.

I. In what manner? And

II. For what purposes will parents and their children meet at the day of judgment?

I. The meeting of parents with their children will be exceedingly different from their interviews here on earth.

Here they meet to make provision for the wants of the body; but no such wants attend them there. Mouldering bodies will be raised to immortal life, in a new condition. No hunger, nor thirst will then distress them; no food nor raiment will be requisite, to nourish or to cover them. "In the resurrection they are as the angels of God in heaven."



Parents now meet their children in a preparatory state, but then in an unchanging state. They are now on probation, the proper subjects of instruction, counsel and prayer. Pious parents collect their offspring around them, to teach them the truths and duties of Christianity, and impress them with a sense of the worth of their souls. These means they use, because their hearts are susceptible of change—a change from supreme hatred to supreme love to God—a change which will fit them for the society and joys of heaven. But they will meet at the future tribunal, in a state unchanging and unchangeable. There will be no conversions then; no place for repentance, though it be sought for carefully and with tears. “He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is holy let him be holy still.”

Parents and their children meet in this world to worship an unseen God, but they will then meet in the full presence of the visible Deity. “No one hath seen God at any time, nor can see him and live.” But at the judgment of the great day, they will not only see God and each other, but they will see Him with a full view of his great and terrible majesty. “Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him.”

When families shall be reassembled at the tribunal of heaven, no one will be slumbering or sleeping. In their religious interviews here on earth, luke-warmness and indifference are often apparent. What discouraging inattention is manifest among children, under the pathetic expostulations of parental faithfulness! When parents instruct, how slow are they to learn the mysteries of godliness. When they advise, how inattentive to their counsel! When they persuade, how unwilling to yield to motives drawn from the realities of the world to come! And when they warn them, how fearless of danger! Even parents as well as children, are liable to rest contented with the forms of godliness, while strangers to its power. In those seasons which are externally devoted to prayer and praise, the fire often goes out on the domestic altar. But there will be no inattention, when parents and their children shall meet before God hereafter. Saints and sinners will be all attention to the amazing objects which will then pass in review before them.

II. For what purposes will parents meet their children at the day of judgment?

Every family has distinct and mutual concerns in this probationary state, which immediately relate to the business of the judgment day. They will then meet, to render an account of all their deeds towards each other. Much of our conduct is confined within our domestic walls. Here we begin to live; here we spend a great proportion of life; here we die. Here we find most of the duties we owe to God, and to our fellow creatures. Here parents are either faithful or unfaithful in the immense charge of religious education; here children are either submissive, obedient and pious, or disobe-



dient, stubborn and profane ; here brothers and sisters either promote or discourage in each other, the great work of salvation. All these things will be brought into judgment.

Parents and children will meet at the last decisive day, to hear their final sentence. When their doom is pronounced and sentence executed, how will earthly connections be sundered ! How will those who have been united by the bonds of nature and affection, be removed to a returnless distance from each other ! How rending is the thought, but how will the reality wring the human soul with anguish, when parent and child, husband and wife, brother and brother shall separate to meet no more for ever ! Or is there no separation likely to take place ? Shall we all in a body be acquitted in that day ? Are all the members of our respective families prepared for such a glorious sentence ? Happy then are we, and for ever happy. But will the most liberal charity allow us to indulge a hope so pleasing ? Oh, no. We are not all good. Many children, many parents, and perhaps whole families, have all their work of repentance yet to do. And may the Holy Spirit work effectually on every heart. May the Lord “ turn the hearts of parents to children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for himself.”

### IMPROVEMENT.

The conduct of parents and children towards each other will be attended with eternal consequences. Their interviews though short are lasting in effect. They do much, very much towards forming the character of the rising generation. They have a tendency either to reform and sanctify our children, and fit them to become seraphs in heaven, or to harden and blind their hearts and prepare them for an eternity of sorrow.

“ God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” It will then be known who among us have been faithful, and who have been neglectful in the sacred duties we owe to God and one another. Relatives will then reproach and accuse each other for being accessory to their eternal ruin. Children, whose everlasting interests have been neglected, and who find themselves undone, will then fly to parents, not with looks of joy and gratitude, but with anguish and despair, and reproach them with their cruelty and neglect. Then will they be heard to say, “ O my parents, how could you adorn my body, while my immortal soul was miserable, blind and naked ? How could you behold my levity, my undoing sins, my neglect of repentance and prayer, without counsel or reproof ? Now I am lost ; lost without hope ; lost by your neglect.” Reproaches of this kind will be heard at the day of judgment. And what confusion will cover the faces of those who have brought forward a lovely family to inherit an eternal curse ! How can they then behold their offspring whom they have destroyed by neglect, or corrupted by an



evil example ! How many thousand stings will then pierce the souls of unfaithful parents, and their ruined children !

*“ In gloomy orbs, their trembling eyes will roll,  
“ And tell all worlds the anguish of their soul.”*

But let us bring to view a different scene. Contemplate the happy meeting of pious families at the day of judgment. Hear children acknowledging the care and fidelity of parents in their religious education. Hear them declaring with what tenderness they prayed for them, and wept over them. Hear them recount those interesting seasons, when a pious mother led them to her closet, and with eyes full of affection, pressed them to love and fear God, and with a heart ready to break, and a voice sweeter than

*“ Ten thousand harps that tun’d  
“ Angelic harmony”——*

called down upon them blessings from on high. Hear them pour out their gratitude and praise to the Judge of all for these blessed means of their salvation. Cases of this kind without number, will be disclosed, when parents and their children shall meet at the day of judgment. And could we all meet our children in this happy condition, with what composure could we behold their dying agonies, and resign them to the grave !

We will turn our thoughts to the child, whom we have just now committed to the ground. In speaking of the dead our words should be few, and they should be the words of truth. If we are not much deceived, there were many things in this departed youth, which demand the attention of the living. From a child thirteen years old, there is generally little expected, and little realized ; but here we find an exception. Here we meet with an instance of one, who had but just left behind her the years of infancy, speaking and acting like a Christian of mature age. Christians have gone from the bed-side of this languishing youth, refreshed with her humble and spiritual conversation, and ashamed of themselves in the lustre of this babe in Christ.

She possessed, by nature, a sedate, humane and affectionate disposition, and wore a constant smile, which scarcely disappeared, after her countenance was covered with the shades of death. She was never known to speak a falsehood, and she felt it a severe correction, and would sometimes burst into tears, to be told she had done a wicked deed.

In the fifth year of her age, she was offered up to God, in the sacrament of Christian baptism. Of how much importance this dedication might have been to her precious soul, is not for mortals to determine. It was a subject on which her own mind had been considerably exercised, even at this early period of her life. One Lord's-day returning from the house of God, where she had seen this ordinance administered, she enquired with much engagedness,



whether she had been baptized? On being told she had not, she enquired the reason, and dwelt upon the subject with a concern, which indicated, at least, a reverence for the institutions of religion.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” The great worth of an early religious education, is evident from the concurring testimony of the sacred scriptures, and universal experience. In this respect the deceased was richly favoured. She was blessed with parents, who gave religious instruction to their children, and felt in some measure the worth of their souls. It was her delight to receive instruction, and she was a constant attendant, on those seasons, when children and youth were catechized in public. Many pious hymns and portions of scripture, were treasured up in her memory. Her mind was richly furnished with religious knowledge.

After all that could be said concerning the natural or acquired endowments of the deceased, if nothing more could be added, we might, with the pious Watts, pour forth a “lamentation over an amiable youth falling short of heaven.\*” *Nature* refined, instructed, and even dedicated by the sacramental seal, is but *nature* still. A sedate mind, a pleasant countenance, an amiable disposition, a rich store of useful knowledge, are not the qualifications for admission into the kingdom of glory. “Ye must be born again.” The amiable as well as the rough, the infant sinner, as well as the veteran, who has whitened in his guilty career, “must be born again.” Our hopes that this child is now a pure and happy spirit in heaven, will bear an exact proportion to the evidence she exhibited, that she was the subject of a change of heart.

In the beginning of the present year, (1810) there commenced a pleasing and encouraging attention to religion in some parts of this place, and the enquiry with a number has been, what shall we do to be saved? This reformation has extended to some of every age, old and young and even to children. The deceased was not indifferent to this blessed work of the Spirit of God. She said one night to a pious old gentlewoman she used to sleep with, “I shall not sleep much to-night, I am so distressed for my sins that I cannot sleep.” One day when her parents were gone to a lecture, she read to a younger brother, a passage in one of Russel’s sermons, where he describes eternity. After reading the description, she descanted upon it, in such a moving and impressive manner, as is not to be easily described or forgotten. Returning from a conference, she made the following serious remarks to one of her companions. “We must all die. We don’t know who will die first. Perhaps it will be myself. We don’t intend to go to hell, but we must if we don’t repent and reform.”

“Perhaps it will be myself.” There was something in this expression doubtless beyond the knowledge of the speaker. This *perhaps*

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\* An allusion to one of Watts’ Sermons.



this *may be* has proved a solemn reality. In the month of April she was seized with a wasting disease, which in six weeks and four days broke down a vigorous constitution, and brought her to the end of life. He who has all hearts in his hands, was pleased, in the early part of her sickness, to "light up a ray of hope, serene, mild and cheerful as the garden of Eden, in her anxious soul." When she was first told of her danger, her reply was "Don't be concerned for me, I am going to live with Christ which is better than all."

As the violence of the disorder increased, she gave increasing evidence that the love of the dear Redeemer was the ruling passion of her soul. To her minister who visited her, she said that she loved Christ more than father or mother or brothers or sisters. And being asked a few days before her death, whether the excellency she saw in Christ would compensate for her bodily distress, she exclaimed in an imperfect sentence, "O yes, thousands of thousands of thousands;" by which it was understood that she would represent the inexpressible beauty of Christ. Her love to the divine character made her, in a measure, lose sight of all other objects.

Prayer was her delight and her prayers were pertinent, solemn and affectionate.\*

She had a strong hope of heaven and strong desires for the salvation of others. Many of her youthful visitants, received some pious words from her lips which were "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Submission to the will of God under sufferings, and in the near prospect of eternal scenes, is a very consoling part of experimental religion. This alone will disarm death of his sting. This young Christian discovered a sweet and submissive temper, through her distressing sickness, and in view of the gradual, but certain approach of death. When others wept for her she pleasantly re-

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\* She made the following prayer a few days before her death. "O most merciful Father, wilt thou be pleased to look down in mercy upon us this morning. We thank thee that our lives are spared to behold the light of another day. O Lord, be pleased to shower down thy spirit in a plentiful manner. Wilt thou be with this youth on a bed of languishing, and if consistent with thy will, raise her to health, but above all have mercy on her never-dying soul. Enable her parents to give her up to God. May she live to be an ornament to thy church here in this world. O Lord, wilt thou have mercy on sinners, open their blind eyes that they may see the situation they are in.—Wilt thou have mercy on the sick and distressed, and comfort mourners. Wilt thou fit the living for life and the dying for death. O Lord, if consistent with thy will, raise me up to health to be a member of thy visible church in this place, not my will but thine be done."



proved their tears. To a weeping friend she said, "Don't pity me." To a relative who stood weeping by her bed, she said with a smile; "Can't you give me up to God?" The next day she called her into her room, and said, "How do you feel now, can't you give me up to God? He will do us no injustice."

She was naturally timid, and much affected with the death of others, but grace triumphed over her natural timidity, and smiles were on her pallid cheeks, while she spoke of her own dissolution. Just before her death, her father said to her, "Do you think you are dying?"—"I hope I am." At another period, when she was thought to be dying, and her brothers and sisters were called to her bed, addressing each of them separately, she said, "I am going to live with God. You must mind your parents, and seek an interest in Christ. I am going to die, and be buried, and you must go to my funeral." To the youngest she said, "Phinehas, you will never remember Nancy." May God remember him.

About ten days before her death, between twelve and one o'clock at night, when sleep was upon all except this child and her attendant, she sung an hymn ;

*"Jesus my all to heaven is gone,  
He whom I fix my hopes upon," &c.*

She was heard by some of the family in adjoining apartments, and before she had concluded this joyful solemnity, several of them united with her in the alleluias of that delightful hymn. O my Saviour ! thou wast not displeased, when children in the temple cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.

Friday morning May 18th, it was apparent that she was struck with death. Mortification was seen on some parts of her body, but a sweet smile of peace in her countenance. She repeated the following lines,

*"Then will I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found ;  
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,  
And say, beh'ld the way to God."*

Nothing now remained but to dismiss the soul from "its clay tenement." Restless, and filled with pain, she was silently waiting for the angel of death. Being removed from one bed to another, one said to her, "You can get a little sleep." "NO. I SHALL SLEEP NO MORE TILL I SLEEP IN JESUS." Soon after this, without a struggle or a groan, she "SLEPT"—We believe she "SLEPT IN JESUS."—Scarcely a tear was shed on the occasion—For who could weep, to see a youthful Christian, ripened by the grace of God, *fall asleep* in the Saviour's arms !

*"Now mounting she soon will descry,  
The regions of pleasure above ;  
Her spirit triumphing shall fly,  
And dwell with her Saviour above."*



The PARENTS of the deceased have a claim to our sympathy, counsel and prayers. For many years your family has been mercifully spared, and death has not entered your windows. You have met together morning and evening, and all your children have been with you. But death has made a great change. One is now gone, and left a blank which can never be filled.

And "is it well with the child?" Has she done with sin, and pain and sorrow; and gone, as she said "to live with God?" How then can you wish her back again, or for a moment entertain a desire, that what God hath done should be reversed? Though she is lost from your family, she is not lost from the great family of God. She lives, and you will see her in that day when parents and their children meet, and when pious parents and pious children meet to part no more. You have reason to mourn, and much reason to be comforted. The amiable and pious Cowper said, "That those who were prepared to die were eminently prepared to live." Such persons are both an ornament and a blessing, to our families. If our children become pious, we want them with us, and yet we can more cheerfully part with them. The piety of the child increases your loss, and immensely increases your consolation. We sensibly feel that your disappointment is great, and your grief pungent. We commend you to the blessed Jesus, who "can speak a word in season to the weary and the heavy laden." He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and why should we wish to go to heaven in any other way than that which he hath consecrated and endeared by his own example? May you possess a liberal portion of *his* spirit, who said, "The cup which my heavenly Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The grace of God can turn this affliction into a blessing. Be exhorted to humble yourselves before him, and in due time he will lift you up. Make it your care to become well prepared for that momentous day when you will meet this and your other children, at his tribunal. Use every hopeful mean to promote the salvation of your family, and may a blessing attend your endeavours.

The CHILDREN who have now witnessed the death and burial of a sister, must not be forgotten on this occasion. We mourn with you, and we will endeavour to pray for you. We advise you to remember the dying words, prayers and example of your departed friend. She will speak to you no more, and what more could she say, if permitted to speak!—You hope your little sister has gone to be associated with the spirits of just men made perfect. And does she not desire to see you following her to the world of glory? And do you wish, when you die, to go and join her society? Do you desire to die in peace, and enter into peace in heaven? You must then forsake all your sins and repent of them—You must become the true friends and followers of Christ. "Behold! now is the accepted time, behold! now is the day of salvation."

The great God will take notice what improvement you make of this death. It is the loudest call that has ever reached your ears,



and Oh, that it might reach your hearts. The warnings of your dying sister *must not be forgotten*. Be advised to read and pray. Love God and honor your parents. Love one another. Think much of death, and “put not far away the evil day.” Be wise and you will be happy. Listen to the counsel of Christians, and follow their pious example, and you shall be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

The CHILDREN and YOUTH in this congregation are taught by this death, that they are not too young to die, nor too young to make their peace with God. Death is diminishing your circles, and peopling the burying ground from your numbers. Many of your age have gone to the world of spirits, and you are “drawing after them.” Do not undertake to extinguish serious thoughts by rushing into sinful amusements. These are costly pleasures which are purchased with the blood of your souls.

Christ died for you, and he lives again. Heaven is a blessed place, and thither he will bring all the virtuous. You have just seen your Nancy buried, and you know how cheerfully she died. Has she gone to heaven? She beckons you to follow her.—Dear children, “prepare to meet your God.” And when the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and parents and children shall meet at the judgment day, may you all be admitted into that “rest which remaineth for the people of God.”

AMEN.