

A

Sermon,

ADDRESSED TO THE

Bible Class and Sabbath School,

IN GRANVILLE, LORD'S DAY, OCT. 24, 1824:

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

LOUISA MARIA COOLEY,

DAUGHTER OF

JAMES COOLEY, ESQ.

WHO DIED ON THE NINETEENTH OF THE SAME MONTH,

AGED FOURTEEN YEARS.

BY TIMOTHY MATHER COOLEY,

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN GRANVILLE : MASS.

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'Tis the survivor dies."

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Rev. T. M. Cooley,

Dear Sir :--

In behalf of the young friends of our lamented Louisa M. Cooley, we respectfully solicit a copy of the Sermon delivered on the occasion of her death, for the purpose of publication.

TIRZAH PARSONS,
SUSAN COOLEY,
CALISTA BANCROFT,
ELIZABETH PARSONS.

Granville, 1st Nov. 1824.

My dear young friends :--

In compliance with your request, the Sermon is submitted to your disposal, with my earnest prayer, that the death of your beloved friend, and the following Sermon may promote your best good.

Your affectionate friend,
T. M. COOLEY.

Granville, Nov. 1, 1824.

SERMON.

ACTS xvii. 30. Last clause.

GOD NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERY WHERE TO REPENT.

THIS day closes the exercises of the Bible Classes and Sabbath School, for the present season. It would, on this occasion, be a grateful service, to recount the progress, which has been made, by this assemblage of children and youth, in treasuring up the sacred truths of christianity. But the mysterious and holy and affecting providence of God, has assigned to me a different service. One of your number, my young friends, is not in this world. One, who entered this school, full of ardour and expectancy, who has been with you from Sabbath to Sabbath; whom, but a short time since, we saw on one of these seats, and whom, we hoped to have seen, on this interesting occasion, is now in the grave, "and the spirit has returned unto God who gave it." You have stood at the bed of your dying friend;—heard her last words, or witnessed the last signals, after she could no longer speak;—you have followed in the funeral procession;—seen the opening grave, and taken your last farewell of

one you loved. You have done all for the deceased, which sympathy or affection could demand.

Think not, however, that you have no further concern in this affecting event. There is, in this sudden death, a monitory voice, which says to you, “Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” It is now my earnest desire, not to excite your natural affections and sympathies, but to awaken your immediate attention to yourselves, as sinners doomed to death. Especially, would I affectionately recommend to you the duty inculcated in these inspired words; “God now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

Here you will notice, 1. That the duty required is *repentance*. 2. That this is required of you, not by man, but by God himself. The infinite God who made and who can destroy you; who rules in Heaven, Earth and Hell—commands you to repent. 3. This duty is extensive. It is limited to no class of men whatever. Think not, my dear children, that you are exempted from this duty, because you are young. The obligation is universal. “All have sinned;” therefore “God commandeth *all men* every where to repent.” 4. The *time* is stated, precisely, when you must attend to this solemn duty. And it is not, next year;—or next month;—or next week; or, to-morrow:—But even “*now*, God commandeth all men to repent.”

This is a duty, emphatically taught by apostles and prophets, and by our Lord Jesus himself. Indeed, if departed spirits could revisit this world, and speak to you from what they had seen and felt; and warn you, by all the joys of the righteous, and by the endless miseries of lost sinners, what could they do more than to urge upon you the exhortation; “Turn ye. turn ye, for why will ye die.”

Could I now speak to you but one word, and your state for eternity depended upon the instruction now given, I should say—Repent. It was a remarkable saying of the Roman, when he was hastening to the city with corn, in a time of famine, “Our voyage is more necessary than our lives.” Is your breath, your very life necessary? Repentance and pardon are infinitely more necessary.

I hope, therefore, to engage your attention, while I shew I. The nature of repentance. II. The necessity of immediate attention to it.

I. Do you inquire, What is true repentance? This is indeed an inquiry of unspeakable importance. Some of you, I have no reason to doubt, can make it, with a desire to be instructed in the truth.

True repentance implies deep sorrow of heart for sin. Think not, however, that every kind of religious sorrow, will prove that you are now a penitent. There may be very bitter remorse for sin, and even deep conviction of guilt, without a single emotion of godly sorrow. You have read of Judas Iscariot. He was a very wicked man. In betraying his Lord and Master to his enemies, he was guilty of the basest act that could be committed. Upon reviewing his ungrateful deed, he felt such a pang of horror, as made him confess, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.” Another instance, we have in Felix the Roman Governour. While he was listening to the impressive preaching of St. Paul, as “he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled” in the presence of his own prisoner. But we have no reason to think, that Judas or Felix, though they were convicted of sin, ever felt the least contrition of heart, or brought forth fruits meet for repentance. Convictions, however deep and distressing,

are not conversion. Too often does the infatuated sinner stifle his convictions, and quench the Holy Spirit, and return to his sinful practices, with renewed strength.

The evangelical penitent, who has felt the power of renewing grace on his heart, beholds an infinite God, who is worthy of his supreme love. He beholds a law which is holy in its requirements, and just in its sanctions. In view of the purity of the law, and the glory of the divine character, his sins appear great beyond description. He wants language to express the feelings of his heart, for his ungrateful and unreasonable wickedness. His heart is melted into grief, because he has dishonoured God, broken his holy law, and crucified afresh, the Saviour of the world. Such as this was the penitence of the publican, who "smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner:"—and of the woman, who washed the feet of Christ with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Such too, the Holy Spirit informs us, will be the penitence of multitudes, in the Millennial day; "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for a first-born."

True repentance implies reformation of conduct, and attention to all the duties of a holy life. But I must tell you, my young friends, that not every instance of reformation, or attention to religious duty, is evidence of real and acceptable repentance. I can point you to the instance of Ahab, who "sold himself to do iniquity;" and yet there was a time, when "he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and fasted, and went softly." You have another instance in Herod the Great, who murdered the infants in Bethlehem. He was so deeply affected with the plain preaching and convincing example of John

the Baptist, that "he did many things and heard him gladly." But he was far from being a true penitent. He not only imprisoned John, but, at the impious request of his wife, he ordered him to be beheaded. Reformation is often but temporary. The common influences of the Spirit, or the pressure of afflictions, may impel unholy men to attend to the duties of religion, for a season. They may seem to promise fair, and to run well. But will they always call upon God? Without an effectual change in their moral feelings, will not duty soon become irksome? Will not the Bible be neglected, and the closet forsaken? How often do the fairest blossoms disappear, without bringing forth any fruit to perfection? Hear what God himself hath said respecting such inconstant worshippers; "O Ephraim what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew, it passeth away."

True repentance implies *universal* reformation. It is the forsaking, not of one sin, but of all sin. It is hatred of all sin, with a decisive resolution, to oppose and forsake it. Let it present the allurements of honour, pleasure or fashion, still it must be renounced entirely. There must be the cutting off of right hands, and the plucking out of right eyes, if they offend, or the whole body will be cast into hell. Whatever is an occasion of sin, "be it something as useful as a hand, as serviceable as a foot, as dear and precious as an eye," must be parted with, or you must perish.

The true penitent expects forgiveness only through Jesus Christ. He makes no account of his tears, duties or reformation, as the ground of acceptance. "Christ is all." His blood cleanseth from all sin.

Such a penitent, I can assure you, the compassionate Saviour will accept. He will speak to him in accents of

love; "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."

I hope, my young friends, you have understood what I have said to you respecting the nature of the duty in question. I shall now by the aids of the Holy Spirit,
 II. Urge the duty of immediate repentance.

Beware of flattering yourselves, that you are not sinners. Young as you are, and beloved as you are by parents and friends, you must know that you have often felt and acted wrong. The least self-acquaintance will convince you of sins innumerable. The Bible tells you, that "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil—that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart, is only evil continually." With such a temper of heart, you can neither please God here, nor enjoy Him in heaven. It is only by forsaking sin, and obtaining forgiveness, through the merits of Christ, that you can be happy or safe. This is your duty without delay, and to this duty would I most earnestly urge your immediate attention.

I. GOD HIMSELF REQUIRES IT.

The Great God who sees and abhors your sins, commands you to forsake them *without delay*. Look at the words of the text. "God *now* commandeth all men every where to repent." All his commands respect the present time, and the present feelings of your heart. To disregard the God that made you is ungrateful, and infinitely dangerous.

Are you tempted to put off this duty to "a more convenient season?" Felix did this, and perished. "Behold! now is the accepted time, behold! now is the day of salvation."

Does your heart plead for at least a *short* delay? Do you cry with the sluggard, "yet a little sleep, a

little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep?" Mark what follows; "So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." In this solemn concern, the least delay is at the hazard of your salvation. The king's business requires haste. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

2. I WOULD URGE YOU TO REPENT IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE YOU MAY DIE IMMEDIATELY.

You are not willing, I know, to risque the awful consequences, of dying the death of the impenitent sinner. However sweet sin is, however you spare it and forsake it not, can you indulge the thought, for a moment, of having it as your companion, in a dying hour? Does sin sometimes trouble you *now*? It will fill you with unutterable distress *then*. Who would not adopt the wish of Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

But remember, my friends, though you are young, you may die suddenly, and die soon. What promise can you claim of future months and years? Who can tell, that this week, or even this day, will not be your last? Have you made a covenant with death, or an agreement with hell? Your covenant with death shall be dis-annulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand.

"Death steals upon us;
Behind us digs a grave unseen."

Place yourselves in whatever situation you please, and there is not a moment in which death may not come to you, as it has to others in similar situations. Death may arrest you while guarded by the care of friends, or

in the unguarded hours of the sleep of midnight. Death may surprise you, while walking in the road or sitting in the house ;—while attending in the sanctuary, or while mingling with your companions in thoughtless recreations. “Man knoweth not his time ; as fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as birds that are taken in a snare, so is man snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon him.” If death may be near, and may come without warning, how important to be actually ready ! What infatuation to delay ! Think of the unhappy state of the rich man, who said with himself, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

3. I WOULD URGE YOU TO IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE, FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY.

Fearful indeed are the consequences of slumbering in impenitent security. Resolve to indulge a wicked heart a little longer, and no one can tell the result. You may purchase “the pleasure of sin for a short season,” with the price of your salvation:

Excuse yourselves from your duty to God for the present, and one of these two things will follow : Either you will repent hereafter ; or you will die without repentance.

Take the most favourable supposition, that, though you affront God by your delays and neglects for the present, he will yet give you repentance hereafter. In this case, you will pass a part of your life, without any true peace ; for “there is no peace, saith my God to the wicked.”—You live a stranger to the pleasant paths of wisdom. You will commit sins, with the intention to repent of them. You will neglect duties, which you in-

tend to wish, from your heart, that you had not neglected. This must shew the greatest folly imaginable. And besides, how will this increase the difficulty of your repentance? What pangs of sorrow will the sins you now commit, cost you? With what lamentation and weeping, will you have to tread back your wicked ways. "Then shalt thou remember thy ways and be ashamed, thou shalt never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, saith the Lord."

But let us take the other supposition, which, I must tell you, my dear little friends, is but too probable; that if you neglect religion now, you will neglect it forever, and die without hope;—that you will become dreadfully hardened in sin, and fill up your full measure of guilt, and prepare for a more affecting doom. In this case, who can tell the misery you will bring upon yourselves? Who can estimate the loss of the soul? Methinks I see some of you in this unhappy condition, on a death-bed. I seem to hear you lamenting a mispent life. "O that I had listened to the counsel of parents and teachers in the morning of life! Once I enjoyed a season for repentance; I made fair promises:—I thought I should keep them. Now I see nothing to reflect upon but wasted time—neglected duties and unpardoned sin. O that I could recall the months which I have devoted to vanity and pride."

I look forward to the resurrection morning, and I seem to hear you call to rocks and mountains to fall upon you and cover you from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

I look forward beyond the great judgment day, and I see you still existing, and suffering all the agonies of the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be

quenched.—“ From that world where ‘ hope never comes that comes to all,’ I seem to hear echoed in groans of unavailing anguish, ‘ *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.*’ ”

4. I WOULD URGE YOU TO IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE, FROM THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCES WHICH WOULD THEN FOLLOW.

Then will your sins be pardoned, and your souls filled with peace. Sin which has displeased God, polluted your soul, distressed your conscience, and made you afraid of death and of hell, will be blotted out forever. “ Death shot his sting into our Saviour’s side ; there left it ; there lost it.”

God himself will be your friend and Father. He will inspire your hearts with love to Himself, and give you many pledges of his love to you. The Saviour will take you into his arms, and carry you in his bosom. The Holy Spirit will dwell in you as your Sanctifier and Comforter and Guide. Angels will pitch their tents around you, and all holy beings will love you and rejoice in your salvation. And to crown all ; heaven will be your everlasting home, and Christ your everlasting portion. “ Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Finally. THE AFFECTING DEATH OF ONE OF YOUR NUMBER, IS A WARNING TO YOU, TO REPENT WITHOUT DELAY.

This is the voice of the Lord, calling each of you to repentance and to fruits meet for repentance. Whatever else you do, you will not observe this mournful event in a proper manner, if you do not humbly confess your

sins, and turn to Him from whom you have deeply revolted. There is a voice from that grave, which has been closed upon your lamented companion, which warns you to "prepare to meet your God."

LOUISA MARIA COOLEY, we shall see among these classes, no more. Her's was indeed a short life. "Her sun went down while it was yet" morning. Were I now to indulge my own partial affections, I could dwell on the many promising qualities, with which she was adorned. I could notice the sweetness of her disposition, her kindness and courtesy by which she won the affections of her intimate acquaintance. I could tell you, with what persevering diligence, she laid up in her mind, a rich treasure of knowledge.

But there are higher and nobler qualities than these, which we have reason to hope, were imparted to her soul, by the Holy Spirit of God. Our Saviour Jesus hath said "Ye must be born again." All have sinned. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Out of Christ, there is no salvation to any of the ruined family of man. During the last winter, when many in this place were roused from their stupidity, to the vast concerns of their salvation, our deceased friend was awakened to a sense of guilt and danger. She frequented the meetings for inquiry and prayer. She read the scriptures with interest and was not a stranger to the duties of the closet. She has from that time manifested a remarkable indifference to those vain objects which usually claim the affections of thoughtless youth. In her last short and distressing sickness, when first apprized of her danger, she felt no alarm. With every thing to allure her affections to the world, she was willing to die. Death had lost its sting. Patience and submission marked her course, down to the last moment of life. A celestial smile

rested upon her features, after the spirit had left its tenement of clay. “Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay.”

Farewell lamented child! We have committed thee to the grave, but in sure hope that thou wilt rise at the last day!—and with consoling hope that thou wilt rise to immortal felicity!

“The voice said, Cry, and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

Now, my young friends, will you prepare to follow? Will you listen to the warning voice of death? Will you repent—and repent immediately? The voice of your friend speaks to you from the grave, and warns you of your danger. Death is a plain and solemn preacher. He speaks to you in the tolling bell, the funeral procession, the pall, the coffin and the shroud. He speaks in such a manner that little children can understand him. He expects that you will regard him. But if you do not, he will speak to you at another time, and in another manner. He will address you at your bedsides; there you *will*—you *must* regard him. O that you might hear warning now, while there is hope,—while there is mercy. A dying moment *will* come. What if it finds you unprepared! What if you carry your unpardoned sins with you, down to the last moment of your life! In vain will you then cry,

“A little longer; yet a little longer;
O might we stay to wash away our stains.”

O that you might be wise now, and consider your latter end; that when death shall come, and terminate all opportunities and means of grace, you may be READY.

Suffer me, ye bereaved PARENTS, not only to sympathize, but to *mourn* with you; not only to mourn with you, but to direct you to the consolations of the gospel. The death of your lovely child, has inflicted a wound, which no earthly remedy can heal. It has occasioned a dark and cheerless void, which nothing on earth can fill. If parental affections, if human sympathies or human efforts could have averted the dart of death, we should not now have been lamenting together, the untimely departure of so much loveliness and worth. In this scene of dark and deep adversity, there is consolation, only in the divine Redeemer. He indeed can repair your loss, by supporting you under it. He too, can turn the affliction into an unspeakable blessing. While “you sorrow not even as others which have no hope,” may you give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Remember, that there is but a step between the living and the dead. By repentance and faith and prayer, may you and your dear surviving children, prepare for death and for heaven,—and “die *how* you will, *where* you will, and *when* you will,—for you to die is *gain*.”

AMEN.

