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S E R M O N

DELIVERED APRIL 18 1803,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

Mrs. Mary Dana,

CONSORT OF REV. JOSEPH DANA D. D.

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH

IN IPSWICH ;

Who died April 13, in the 53^d year of her age :

BY DAVID TAPPAN D. D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN HARVARD COLLEGE.

" The sweet remembrance of the just
" Shall flourish, when she sleeps in dust."

C A M B R I D G E ,

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BY W. HILLIARD.

1803.

TO the much esteemed Consort of the Deceased, and the bereaved Children ; to her Relatives and Christian Friends in Ipswich, and elsewhere ; and to all, who have requested the following publication ; this Discourse, suddenly written, and sent to the press without transcription, and almost without correction, is respectfully inscribed, and at the same time committed to the public indulgence, by their affectionate friend, and servant in Jesus Christ,

THE AUTHOR:

JOHN xi. 11.

“OUR FRIEND——SLEEPETH.”

WHAT a great and endearing character does the kind Redeemer here give of his deceased servant! *A friend of Christ and his people* is a title, which includes the most exalted and lovely qualities, the most honorable and blessed condition. What an amiable and happy family was that of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus; who were affectionately united, not only to each other by nature and religion, but to Jesus Christ by holy love and fellowship; and who all shared his complacential and distinguishing regards! “Jesus,” we are told, “loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” Agreeably, when the brother was visited with a threatening disease, the sisters sent this message to their common Master and Friend, “Lord, behold he, whom thou lovest, is sick.” They fondly hoped that the tender affection of Jesus would bring him speedily to their house, and with him the desired blessings of health and joy. But Christ, whose thoughts were not as their thoughts, saw fit to deny their eager wishes, expectations,

and prayers. He treats the afflicted family with apparent neglect. He suffers his sick friend to languish and die. How mysterious this behavior at the moment ! Yet how glorious, how kind and consolatory in the issue ! Let me lead you, my brethren, to the tomb of this dead follower of Jesus ; let us mingle with the mourning throng around it. Behold the divine Savior manifesting *first* his amiable tenderness, as a man, by weeping over the grave ; and then his power and glory, as God, by calling back the dead into instant and vigorous life. Conceive, if you can, the transports and embraces, the grateful wonder and praise, that ensued !---Having taken this cursory view of the affecting narrative before us, we will give our special attention to the words of the text---*Our friend sleepeth* ;---Not *my*, but *our* friend ; the common friend of myself and you.

We are led FIRST to contemplate real Christians, as *the friends of Christ*. I call you not *servants*, but *friends*, says he to his disciples. Friendship implies mutual affection, a union of heart and of interest. The love between Christ and believers is reciprocal. His affection to them is eternal and unchanging, disinterested and sovereign, expensive and beneficent, transcendent and glorious. His love has expiated their guilt by offering up his life ; it has subdued their hearts by the mighty influence of his spirit ; it has thus brought them to due returns of love, and formed them into fit objects of his divine com-

placency and communion. Thus an intercourse of friendship is begun, and gradually advances between them.

In particular, the friends of Christ enjoy a *free access* to his presence. His heart is ever open to their persons and wants; while their hearts are habitually disposed to resort to and confide in his friendship, as their best and sure resource on every occasion! They rely on his affection for a favorable construction, or a generous forgiveness of their failings, and a kind acceptance of their humble repentance, after they have broken their friendly engagements. On his part, He is ever ready to pity and to bury their lamented follies and even affronts. He apologizes for them, even when they have no excuse for themselves; as he did for his sleepy disciples in the garden of Gethsemane; “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Christ and his friends have also a mutual sympathy both in sorrow and joy. “In all their afflictions he is afflicted.” In all the persecutions, they suffer, he is persecuted. Hence he said to Saul, that famous persecutor of his church, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me”? His tender sensibility to the distresses of his servants, even when those distresses are the immediate fruit of their own guilt is strikingly displayed in his kind and speedy message to his disciples after his resurrection. “Go,” says he to Mary Magdalene, “go, tell my disciples and Peter,

that I am risen ;” that is, hasten to my disconsolate brethren with the joyful news. Though they all deserted me in my late extremity ; yet fly to comfort them with the assurance of my resurrection and undiminished affection. Especially tell *poor Peter* that I am again alive, and am still his friend, notwithstanding his reiterated and aggravated denial of his Lord. Thus Christ, like a friend indeed, tenderly feels for, and solicitously comforts his disciples in their sorrows. He likewise partakes in their prosperity. He delights in their graces, their good works, and their spiritual enjoyments, as his own fairest production and likeness, and as eminently conducing to his honor. He accepts the least token of christian kindness shown to them, as offered to himself ; and in the day of judgment will publicly declare that those, who from gospel motives have fed and clothed, visited or sheltered the meanest christian, have done these kind offices to Him. What generous, what divine friendship is here ! On the other hand, true believers take a lively, a supreme interest in the honor and kingdom of their Master. They pungently feel every reproach or injury, offered to his personal or mediatorial character. They seek and enjoy the prosperity of his church above every private interest or felicity. The habitual language of their affections and pursuits is, “ if Christ be magnified, if his empire be enlarged and perfected, if I may be a humble, an everlasting instrument and monument of his glory, I am made forever.”

Further, there is a mutual communication; and, if I may so speak, a confidential interchange of secrets between Christ and his people. As none knows the secrets of a man's mind but his God, his conscience, and *his friend*; so good men are honored by their Lord with this peculiar mark of friendship. Thus Jehovah freely entrusted his two friends, Abraham and Moses, with his secret counsels; he conversed with them, as a man speaketh to his friend. We also find that Christ unbosomed his heart to his disciples; that he unfolded to them many things, which were hidden from the rest of the world. This in a happy degree is the common privilege of the saints; for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." To them are promised the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name, which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth. Every true believer has communications of grace and comfort from his heavenly Friend, to which the world is a stranger. He has likewise much important business to transact with his Redeemer, of which no mortal is witness. He pours forth every secret of his heart into the divine bosom with unsuspecting and delightful confidence. He repairs to the *wonderful Counsellor* for advice in every important and difficult case, and derives from his Word and Spirit the most safe and satisfactory direction.

Finally this divine friendship is *constant* and *persevering*. Whom Christ loves, he loves to

the end. He does not, like hollow pretenders, desert his friends, when they most need his soothing presence. No calamity, nor disgrace, nor even unallowed or repented sin, can separate them from his love. Their affection to him is also a flame, which never totally expires. It is one of the high and peculiar excellencies of the New Covenant, that it secures the standing of all, who have heartily embraced it ; for Christ has engaged never to turn away from them, nor suffer them to depart from him.

Having contemplated the blessed union between Christ and his people, we are led

SECONDLY to remark that those, who are friends to Jesus, are likewise *friends to one another*. Lazarus was the common friend of the Savior and his disciples. As all real christians are united to one Head, and are fellow members of one body ; as they have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one hope ; as they are partakers of one spirit, which is a spirit of love ; as they jointly profess a religion, which is one great manifestation and enforcement of love ; as their Master prescribed holy friendship, as the distinguishing livery of his servants ; as he urged it upon them by his own sublime example ; as he made it a leading object of his last intercessory prayer, that they all might be one, as He and his Father are one ; and as their future blessedness will eminently consist in the perfection of this sacred union ; we hence see the

strong connexion between friendship to Christ and brotherly affection to his followers. Agreeably in the Apostolic age, when the principles of the gospel exerted their influence in the most pure and vigorous manner, we are told that "the whole multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul." Nor was their christian friendship an idle or rapturous feeling. It was all energy and activity; it was a living spring of kind and useful conduct. This practical friendship to the members of Christ, which ministers to their temporal and spiritual wants, or the neglect of it, will be made the grand criterion, by which our character and fate, as his friends or enemies, will be decided in the day of retribution. It concerns us then; in the view of that day, to ask ourselves, whether we resemble the lovely family recorded in this chapter; whether, like Lazarus, we show our love to Jesus by exercising an amiable spirit towards all his disciples; whether our religion has softened our hearts and manners into tenderness and sympathy, patience and forgiveness; and at the same time exalted them into self denying and active benevolence to all around us, especially to those, with whom God has intimately united us in domestic, civil, or religious society. What ornaments and blessings to the church and the world are those professors, who thus blend christian sweetness and kindness towards men with humble and fervent piety to God! What a loss do the interests of humanity and of religion sustain by their removal! This brings us to observe

THIRDLY, that the friends of Christ and his people *die* as well, as others. Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*. Only two of God's servants have ever been exempted from this great law of mortality. As the best saints have been and still are sinners; justice dooms them to die. Death, if I may so speak, like a mighty furnace, melts down and purges away their remaining dross; it refines and spiritualizes both their bodies and souls, and thus makes them fit subjects of that kingdom, which flesh and blood, which moral infirmity and corruption, cannot inherit. It conforms the members to their Head by conducting them to heaven through the same rough passage, by which he ascended to glory. The death of the saints likewise furnishes a glorious opportunity for Jesus, their almighty Friend, to display his power, his merit, and his triumph in their future resurrection to eternal life. In the mean time it consigns their bodies to a place of security and repose, which he has perfumed and consecrated for them by once resting in it himself. It conveys their weary souls to his arms, to be kindly sheltered and fostered in their naked, disembodied state, till the day of their complete salvation shall arrive. The removal of Christ's friends from our world is also a just punishment, and is often made a salutary discipline, to its surviving inhabitants. When such holy and useful persons are cut off, especially in the midst of their years, it may be emphatically said,

“For us they languish, and for us they die.”

Their death as well, as their life, is full of solemn instruction to the living.

A FOURTH OBSERVATION from the text is, that death does not dissolve the union between Christ and his members, nor between his living and deceased friends. Christ calls Lazarus his and his disciples' friend, even when he was dead. Does not this fairly lead us to remark in the first place, that the friendship between Christ and his saints outlives the dissolution of their bodies, and flourishes to eternity? The imperfect union, begun in this life, will be completed in the next. In heaven they behold his glory in an immediate, perfect, constant, and satisfying manner. They see in him every thing, which tends to inflame and to gratify their love. They are entirely delivered from those wrong dispositions, those gross and frail bodies, those tempting objects and companions, which in this world greatly hindered, interrupted, or marred their spiritual views, affections, and enjoyments. How uninterrupted then, how pure and beatific will be the intercourse between Christ and his friends in heaven! They will be perfectly like him both in holiness and bliss, because they shall see him as he is. They will be eternally swallowed up in the infinitely bright and cheering beams of his favor. They will be forever receiving, enjoying, and reflecting the manifestations of his glory, and the communications of his love. While death thus consummates the union between the glorified Head and members;

it improves the friendship between living saints, and those, who are dead. We grant that death dissolves those ties, and extinguishes those affections, which are carnal and earthly ; but those, which are truly christian and spiritual, are above the reach of external or local events. Both reason and experience assure us, that distance of place or of time cannot destroy the bonds or the existence of love. If I can cherish an intercourse of thought and affection with a friend in a distant country, why not in a distant world ? What is there in nature or Scripture, which forbids the supposition, that our ascended friends feel a more pure, refined, and vigorous affection for their late pious companions on earth, than they could do in this imperfect state ? On the other hand, saints here below still love their fellow saints in heaven. Their hearts ascend with them on the wings of faith and delightful contemplation. They feel unutterable pleasure in thinking and conversing on their past excellencies and services, and on their present exalted felicity. They anticipate with unspeakable joy the blessed hour, when they shall rejoin their company, and mingle with them forever in heavenly friendship, conversation, and praise. O who can imagine the surprise and transport, which will attend the meeting of pious intimate friends in the world of glory ! If virtuous friendship yields such noble pleasure here ; what will it do in the region of perfect, evergrowing love and joy !

A FIFTH REMARK suggested by the text is, that death is but a *sleep* to the true servants of Christ. "Our friend *sleepeth*." The word *dead* sounded too harsh, to be connected with so dear a name. The death of Lazarus was a sleep in a peculiar sense, because he was to be soon awakened to a second life on earth. And why should not the believing hope of a resurrection to eternal life in heaven make that glorious event a near and even present reality to the dying faint, and his surviving friends? Why should not this blessed hope render it easy and pleasant to put off the body to die, as it is to put off our garments for the purpose of sleep? Does not the believer at death fall asleep in Jesus? Does he not rest in his bed from the toils of the past day, in order to be recruited against the morning of the resurrection? Does he not enjoy a final repose from labor, from pain, from every kind and degree of suffering? Will he not shortly awake refreshed and invigorated? Will not his body arise from its slumbers strong, spiritual, beautiful, immortal? In the lively anticipation of this approaching scene, may not the christian exultingly say to the tomb, which holds Christ's sleeping members, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust."

SIXTHLY, the text further intimates that the death of good men is *an object of Christ's peculiar notice and superintendence*. Though he was visibly absent, yet he was present in spirit with Laza-

rus, directing and witnessing his sickness and decease, and immediately notifying his death to his disciples. He is also present, as a friend, at the dying bed of every christian, adjusting each circumstance of that solemn scene for his own glory, and for the best good both of the departing saint, and of godly survivors. Even human friendship engages our kindest attentions and offices to sick and dying connexions. And will the divine friendship of Jesus to his own people allow him to desert them in the agonizing hour? It cannot be; for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." While his providence tenderly orders the time and manner of their dissolution; his gracious presence sooths their expiring agonies, and illumines before them the dark vale of death; his ministering angels convoy their separate spirits to glory; his own kind hand opens to them the celestial gates, and seats them in those mansions, which his love has prepared.

OUR LAST REMARK is, that *surviving Christians should take a mournful and religious notice* of the death of Christ's friends and their own. Our Savior informs his disciples of the decease of Lazarus, on purpose that they might suitably feel and improve it. Accordingly it roused in them ideas and affections of a tender and serious kind; it made one of them even wish to go and die with him. Both nature and grace, both human and divine friendship, teach us to mourn the loss of amiable and pious connex-

ions. We owe this tribute to ourselves and our children, to the memory of the dead, and the bereaved interests of the living. We owe it to God, who expects us to feel his chastising rod. We owe it to the example of Jesus, who wept over his dead friend. We owe it to the religion, we profess ; which seems clad in mourning on the removal of its faithful votaries, and which on such occasions not only permits and regulates, but enjoins and improves our most tender and sympathizing emotions. Above all we ought to notice these dispensations in a manner truly solemn and practical, by comporting with their high and merciful intentions ; by improving them to the great purpose of exercising and increasing our humble and entire resignation to God ; our fervent gratitude for the loan and continuance of the blessings, he has now recalled ; our abhorrence and dread of those sins, which have forfeited these blessings ; our earnest pursuit of that holiness, which these chastisements are eminently fitted to promote ; our disengagement from a world, which is made more poor and desolate by every bereavement of this kind ; our affection to, and meetness for that better country, which is proportionally enriched and endeared by every beloved Christian, who is translated to it.

God grant that we may all notice the tender scene before us in the manner now described ! The recent engagements and fatigue of the speaker prevent him from paying that full trib-

lute to his late dear and much respected *christian Sister*, which his judgment and heart would have prompted. On receiving the mournful intelligence of her death, the words of our text seized his mind, as a compendious and striking description of our departed friend. She was, my fellow christians, to the eye of charity, the common and ardent friend of us and our Master. The God of nature and grace had eminently tuned her soul to the soft harmony of love. Her heart, in an early period of life, was hopefully brought to embrace that religion, which eminently consists in divine love and its amiable effects. This heavenly seed, being thus early sown in so kind a soil, yielded for a long time the most pleasant fruits. It imprinted on her spirit and countenance, on her language and deportment, the very soul and expression of christian piety and goodness. It convinced, I believe, every person of moral discernment among her associates, that she had been with Jesus; that she had caught the devout, lowly, and benevolent spirit of his doctrine and example. She evidently delighted in the character of God and his Son, as displayed in the Gospel. She loved the doctrines of grace, and that inward, humble, and practical godliness, which these doctrines promote. Her pious and benevolent ardor did not consist and evaporate in dry speculation, or in rapturous sensibility. It was a judicious and steady, a cordial and active principle. It shed its influence and lustre on her common actions. It made her uniformly good in every relation, em-

ployment, and condition of life. It gave a spiritual direction to her numerous friendships. As her warm and open heart formed her for this refined species of intercourse ; so her christian spirit induced her early and assiduously to cherish a confidential intimacy with pious and congenial souls, especially among her own sex. She earnestly promoted and attended religious meetings, composed of such friends. Her epistolary as well, as verbal correspondence with a number of these christians eminently breathed, and tended to promote, the spirit of religion: She greatly assisted and comforted her Consort not only in his temporal concerns, and in the support and education of their common family, but in his christian and pastoral profession, particularly by her tender and judicious discourse with young women and others in this place, when under serious impressions. For such discourse she was peculiarly fitted by her discriminating judgment, especially on religious topics ; by her long personal acquaintance with the power of godliness ; and by her intimate converse with the Scriptures, and with chosen experimental writers. In short, her christian love embraced in a fervent and open manner all the friends of Christ, especially his pious ministers. Many of these will never forget her affectionate esteem, her cordial hospitality, and her edifying conversation. Indeed she evidently loved and valued every human creature, and, according to her ability, sought the temporal and eternal hap-

pinels of all. She endured the frequent corrections of her heavenly Father with exemplary submission and complacency. With a composed and ready mind she met the approaches of the last enemy ; and one of her latest petitions, which she uttered with emphasis, was, *that she might glorify God to the last.*

While our hearts, my brethren, deeply sympathize with the mourning family in the loss of such a partner and mother ; let us mingle our praises with theirs for the many precious ingredients, which sweeten this bitter cup. Let us unite with our *Rev. Brother and Friend* in blessing God for the christian temper and pattern, by which his grace adorned the dear Deceased ; and for the distinguished opportunity, which the surviving partner now has, of honoring his profession and his Master, and of edifying the world, especially his beloved children and people, by displaying a bright example of that spirit, and of those consolations, in the midst of sorrow, which he has so frequently and so tenderly recommended to others. That treasure of christian sentiment and experience, which he has been accumulating for so many years, will supply him on this occasion with a better fund of pertinent reflection and comfort, than any thoughts, which the preacher can suggest. But his affectionate tears, prayers, and thanksgivings in behalf of his bereaved, yet highly favored Brother, are a debt, which he will not, and cannot withhold.

The *children of the mourning family* must feel this solemn occasion with peculiar force. It was no small recommendation of their late Parent, that her wife and impartial affection was an early and lasting cement between her own offspring and those of a former marriage ; and that it likewise attached the endeared friendship and confidence of the numerous friends and relatives of her amiable predecessor. Indeed my respected and beloved friends, it would have been strange, if the examples and efforts of such parents, as you have enjoyed, had failed to unite you both to them and to one another. You will bless God for enabling you, in this and many other ways, to comfort and reward the maternal friend, you have lost. While your filial hearts rise up, and call her blessed, may you piously contribute to the solace of your bereaved Father by transcribing, and holding up to his view, the image of her virtues. While you hearken to his living instructions, you will, I hope, never forget nor forsake the law of your Mother ; but will “ bind it about your necks, and write it on the tables of your hearts.” Often bring up to your tender recollection her spirit, her actions, and counsels, as an additional argument in favor of experimental religion ; as a winning recommendation of it to your early choice, to your highest affection and pursuit. I pray God, that all the children of that favored house may religiously improve their past and present christian advantages ; that they may all

inherit the character and blessedness of the Redeemer's friend ; that they may, in their present or future spheres of life, be instruments of spreading this divine temper and felicity ; and that, as they have been their parents' dearest hope in this world, they may " prove their joy and crown in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming."

The *members of this christian church and society* will strive to animate and comfort their afflicted and beloved Minister by their kind attentions and prayers, by their serious and edifying regard to his public and private addresses. You will permit me, my friends, to remind you that the spectacle of stupid and dead souls, perishing under the means and offers of salvation, is unspeakably more distressing to a good Minister, than the dead body even of a bosom companion, who has hopefully died in the Lord. If therefore you feel any tenderness for your Pastor, or compassion for yourselves ; fulfil his joy, and insure your own, by complying with his message, and by studiously following those, who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises. Let *female professors* of religion in this place, especially those, who intimately knew and loved the Deceased, aspire, like her, to adorn their sex and profession by a meek and quiet, a kind and condescending, a thankful and seriously cheerful spirit. Thus may they convince all around them that vital religion is the most beautiful and comforting thing in the world.

FINALLY the subject and occasion affectingly instruct us all, both ministers and people, that a friendly union to Christ, to his interest and people, is the whole duty and happiness of man. Every thing else is a fleeting shadow, a refuge of lies. Let those, therefore, who are strangers to this divine friendship, who are destitute of its holy exercises, enjoyments, and hopes, "acquaint now themselves with God, and be at peace." By sincere repentance and faith, by christian love and good works, let them begin and improve that happy intercourse with Christ, which will triumph in death, and advance through eternity. How dreadful to die without this passport to future bliss ! How dreadful to be stripped of earthly friends and joys, and to have no Friend in heaven, to receive and to bless us ! Do ye not, my fellowmortals, hear a voice issuing from the death bed, the coffin, and the destined tomb of our deceased Sister ? Does it not loudly echo that inspired admonition ? " This I say, Brethren, the time is short ; it remaineth that they, that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it ; for the fashion of this world passeth away. Arise ye therefore, and depart ; for this is not your rest."



Monumental Lines by J. D.

By Jesus and his friends below'd,
And in affliction's furnace prov'd,
Her soul went forth to meet her Lord,
Her flesh, at rest, waits his reviving word,
Blest be that heart of love, that virtue pure,
And long their sweet remembrance will endure.

The Female Pilgrim.

"Whither go'st thou, Pilgrim Stranger,
Passing thro' this darksome vale?
Know'st thou not 'tis full of danger,
And will not thy courage fail?"

"Pilgrim thou dost justly call me,
Wand'ring o'er this waste so wide,
Yet no harm will e'er befall me,
While I'm blest with such a guide."

"Such a guide! no guide attends thee,
Henceforth thine my fears arise;
If a guardian power befriends thee,
'Tis unseen by mortal eyes."

"Yes, unseen, but still believe me,
Such a guide my steps attend;
He'll in every strait relieve me,
He'll from every harm defend."

"Pilgrim, see that stream before thee,
Darkly winding thro' the vale:
Should its deadly waves roll o'er thee,
Would not then thy courage fail?"

"No, that stream has nothing frightful

There my pilgrimage will end."
Like I gaz'd: with speed surprising,
Down the gulph she plung'd from sight;
ring still, I saw her rising,
As an angel cloth'd in light. —