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**The tears of Jesus an example for Mourners.**

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**S E R M O N**

PREACHED JULY 15, 1839,

IN THE MEETING HOUSE IN GREENWICH, MASS.,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

**Miss SARAH ANN FRANCES POWERS,**

**Who died July 13, 1839, aged 18 years.**

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By **JOSEPH H. PATRICK,**

Pastor of the Congregational Church in Greenwich.

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To which is added,

A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE TO THE AFFLICTED PARENTS,  
FROM THE YOUNG LADIES' LITERARY SOCIETY.

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WORCESTER:

PRESS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SPY,

1839.

The following discourse at the urgent request of the friends of the deceased, has been put into their hands for publication particularly for their gratification, without any pretensions to merit, or wish for authorship—having been written in great haste, at the short notice of the morning of the same day upon which it was delivered. May it prove to be a consolation to the afflicted friends, and a timely warning to the youth and all others into whose hands it may fall, to prepare for a sick and dying bed, while they enjoy the distinguished blessings of health and a day of probation. This shall ever be my earnest prayer.

J. H. P.

## S E R M O N .

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JOHN 11: 35.—“Jesus wept.”

THOUGH tears, in themselves considered, are entirely destitute of moral worth, yet under the various and distressing ills of this life, they may be shed, when the effect proves to be in some measure a relief to the afflicted and heart-stricken children of men.

How wonderful does the grace of the Lord Jesus appear in placing before us his own example on this subject. When he saw Mary weeping for the loss of a beloved brother, and likewise those sympathizing Jews that came with her, he, too, felt the tear start—which was not only a warrant to others to weep for the loss of friends, but a sure testimony of his most affectionate regard for the deceased. That brother was greatly endeared to his sisters, not only on account of the natural ties that bound them together, but more especially on account of his piety. Jesus mingled his tears with the pious company who stood around his grave, mourning not only for the absence of his society, but also to lament the loss of his prayers and his co-operation with them in the extension of his kingdom upon the earth. It must therefore be considered no ordinary privilege, that Christ has furnished us with his own example, by which we are allowed to give vent to our sorrows, under the afflictions and trials of life, with our tears.

And such is the affecting character of the solemn occasion, which has called us together at the present time, that the most endeared of earthly friends cannot refrain from shedding the tears of grief and anguish over the lifeless remains of a well beloved youth, who has so recently fallen by the hand of the great Destroyer, and is now separated from the fond embrace of doting parents, beloved relatives, and a numerous circle of other acquaintances.

That this very affecting and solemn providence may be used and improved for the benefit of the living, and more especially by the youth and others in this place, will depend on the following considerations :—

1. It should awaken in the minds of the living, a deep and heartfelt sense of their frailty and mortality. We have just seen a blooming youth cut down by the fell destroyer, whose remains are now before us, and are soon to be consigned to the narrow house appointed for all the living. It has been proved by repeated experiments, that the most powerful remedies and the most skilful physicians are unavailing to remove fatal maladies, or ward off the stroke of death. We find, too, from painful experience, that there is no order in death. He takes the most lovely and amiable as often as he does others who are less respected and honored, proving most clearly, that no age or condition is exempt from his merciless grasp. Therefore, let all the living deeply feel that the sentence of death rests upon them, as the debt due to their sins, and let them weep the tears of true penitence before God ; and the result cannot fail to be most happy upon their future lives and prospects, furnishing them with the most important and timely preparation for their own departure.

2. This solemn providence suggests to us the nature and power of human sympathy. The sorrows inseparable from

this vale of tears are not without their consolations. What can be more grateful to the feelings of mourners than to realize that they have beloved friends who participate with them in their trials and distresses? Besides, they have a Great High Priest who can be touched with their infirmities. And when they participate deeply in the spirit of the gospel under their afflictions, how consoling it must be to their hearts to know that there is one at the right hand of God who is afflicted in all their afflictions—even that Jesus who wept at the grave of Lazarus. They may well feel their hearts cry out within them, and their tears may flow in abundant profusion, when they behold their beloved friends laboring under great difficulty in respiration while the “king of terrors” is performing his awful work; and yet, when they feel as his servant did under his trials, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good,”—their tears are not without their peculiar consolations. They are attended with holy submission to the will of Him who has afflicted them.

3. This solemn providence exhibits in the most affecting view, the nature and power of the social principle under the ills of life. We see it in the example of our Saviour, in the case of Lazarus, his sisters, and those pious Jews. When they saw the tears that were shed around his grave, “Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.” They were surprised that he should manifest such peculiar attachment to one who was no way related to him: yet, that attachment was founded on a higher relation than blood. It was the relation of a disciple and a fellow heir of heaven. Who would be surprised to know that those who have been greatly endeared to each other, not only in the social relations of life, but also by the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, should call forth floods of tears when any of their number are removed from them by reason of death?

How delightful does that intercourse appear, which existed between Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Jesus? There were cords of love that united them in the most endearing of all relations. These were the bonds of the everlasting covenant which God has made and confirmed to all his children. Such affections know no abatement or end.

But the same love that bound these friends together has frequently had a similar effect on others of a kindred spirit. The social principle when it is under the controlling influence of the love of God, serves greatly to strengthen and advance the welfare and happiness of society.

Such was the character of the beloved youth whose lifeless remains are now before us, that those who had been acquainted with her, found in her, the amiable disposition, the kind and accommodating spirit, which must always sweeten her memory to those dear friends who may now, with mournful recollections, look over past scenes in which they once mingled with great pleasure.

Here we see the sad work which death has occasioned in the removal of an only daughter, whose moral worth is now deeply felt by these heart-stricken parents. The social tie that is combined in the name of that beloved youth is sun-dered forever. The rose that bloomed so fair, has faded. Those eyes that once beamed with life and intelligence, are closed in the solemn silence of death. The tongue, upon which dwelt the law of kindness, has ceased to communicate with mortal worms. All that was once dear to fond parents, kind relatives, and beloved friends, only exists in their memories. The last struggle of life, with all its attendant circumstances, remains only as the memento of what she once was.

The youth, whose funeral solemnities are now passing before us, was attacked with a most violent epidemic \* on the

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\* The canker-rash.

last day of April. On that very evening did her voice mingle with the choir, which, on the present afflicting occasion, is called upon to sing in mournful strains in honor of her memory.

If, therefore, Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, over departed worth, may not you, while you call to mind the great loss which you have sustained in the removal of a beloved friend and an intelligent youth?

But first of all, let these parents whose hearts now bleed at every pore, find ease and relief from the consideration that God, the righteous disposer of all events, has afflicted them.

You have had much to cheer your hearts, not only in the reflection that your daughter was naturally amiable, and always cheerful to minister to your wants when she enjoyed health and strength, but that you have been permitted to see with what remarkable patience she endured her very long and distressing illness, even till the last struggle was over.

And when, too, you have had the peculiar satisfaction of seeing her in the latter part of her illness in the perfect possession of her reason, and of hearing her express to you her own views and feelings in relation to her departure from this world, with a humble hope of heaven in view, may you not have for yourselves, under these circumstances, great consolation in her death? May you not hope, she has gloriously triumphed over the last enemy, and that she has gone to heaven, beyond this valley of weeping?

It is justly due to the memory of the deceased, to say that she left her testimony not only to her parents, but to many others who were permitted to visit her during her illness, to the importance of the Christian religion, as the great and indispensable preparation for a happy death.

There was a very visible change wrought in her mind during her sickness, which we have reason to hope has re-

sulted in the renovation of her heart and a joyful preparation for death. As an evidence of this, she did not fail to warn her friends and associates who visited her during her sickness, to prepare for death. She would call individuals to her bed-side as they came into her chamber, and taking them by the hand, would urge them most earnestly to "become good." She used this very easy and comprehensive phrase, which, indeed, expresses every thing necessary to make the moral and religious character of any one all that God requires it to be.

And here let me say to the youth present on this very solemn and affecting occasion, that your friend and associate, "though dead, yet speaketh." Yes ; she speaks to you by the mournful appendages with which you are now surrounded. Your tears may freely flow at the sad recollections of departed worth. To-day, you deeply feel that you can "mourn with those that mourn, and weep with those that weep." But do not, I entreat you, forget to shed the tear of penitence for yourselves.

It is not my design, here, to eulogize the dead. Let her own life and experience speak for her : and if it may be regarded and improved as the Lord most evidently designs, it will be followed with great blessings ; not only to the bereaved parents, but to all that numerous circle of friends in which she was once accustomed to move with great pleasure.

Let the Literary Society \* of which the deceased was an active and prominent member, take home to their hearts the instructions which this solemn providence is designed to impart. You have experienced the loss of a most valuable

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\* She was one, who, with a number of other young ladies in this place, conceived the design to unite together in the formation of a society for social and intellectual improvement, which went into successful operation some over a year since, called the *Calliopean Society*.



and beloved member. It is the first death that has occurred among your numbers since you were organized into a society ; and it shows in a language too emphatic to be misunderstood, that what you do for your own, or others' good, must be done quickly. You have no better prospects of life or health before you, than the deceased had when she used to meet you in your social discussions. Humanity, natural sympathy, and above all, the high esteem in which you held the deceased, may cause your tears to flow freely. But that will not prepare you for the peaceful end of the righteous, unless your tears shall flow from real and pungent sorrow for your sins. Let your hearts this day feel the full force of this solemn providence, as coming to you directly from the hand of God, and it will not fail to direct your attention to the great concerns of eternity. Let not her dying admonitions be forgotten. They were given you in the greatest kindness and faithfulness. Her greatest desire was, that all the members of the family to which she belonged, and all those, likewise, who visited her in her sickness, might become Christians and prepare to meet her in heaven. Will you not improve this solemn call yourselves ? When you may hereafter meet in your social discussions to improve your minds, forget not to do it in the fear of God. And let not this solemn providence pass away with your tears. But let it sound in your ears, from day to day,—prepare, prepare for eternity ; for the “ night of death soon cometh, wherein no man can work.”

The choir of singers, also, of which the deceased was a distinguished member, may see to-day how easy it is for the power of disease to cut short their brightest hopes and their most flattering prospects. Your voices, which unite to-day in mournful strains,—

“ Dearest sister, thou hast left us,  
Here thy loss we deeply feel,” &c.—

may soon be hushed in the silence of death. How soon it may be said of you, as it may now be said of her, "The place that she once knew she shall know no more forever!"

But we behold the bereaved parents, more deeply interested in the passing solemnities than any others can be. Tears can scarcely give relief. Your heavenly Father has put into your hands the bitter cup of affliction; but still, may you not drink it, since he only wounds to heal his faithful friends? He has assured you that he does not grieve or afflict the children of men willingly, as though he took pleasure in their sufferings and sorrows; but he does it from the consideration that he sees and knows just what they need. Therefore, you may be certain that it is a friend, and not an enemy, that has caused you to pass through the dark waters of affliction.

Take home to your bosoms the instruction which this heart-rending trial is designed to impart; and let the dying counsels of your daughter be safely laid up in your memories, that you may, in accordance with her most ardent wishes, be prepared to meet her in heaven. Let this solemn lesson which God is giving you to-day, excite you to great faithfulness toward your surviving child, that he, too, in accordance with the ardent desires of his departed sister, may become good, and thus be fitted to meet her in glory.

The aged grand-mother of the deceased, who for weeks watched with painful solicitude the progress of that disease, which has at last resulted in the death of her beloved grand-daughter, may ask the solemn question, Why was it not I? You have lived to see the parting scene, and to be a witness for God of his goodness and grace many years among the living, while great numbers much younger than yourself have "gone the way of all the earth." May the small remnant of your days be spent in the service and enjoyment of your covenant-keeping God, that your sun may go down in peace, your eyes having seen the great salvation.

The aunt of the deceased is likewise called upon, by this deeply afflictive providence, to consider the great uncertainty of life and the certainty of death. You beheld the rose, that bloomed so full of promise upon the cheek of your beloved niece, soon fade away under the wasting and paralyzing influence of disease. Having enjoyed all the intimacy and friendship of a sister with her, you are now filled with grief and anguish of spirit while you deeply deplore your great loss. How sadly are those calculations that were made between yourself and the deceased, entirely reversed and defeated. Her heart was once elated with joy at the thought that she expected to accompany her beloved aunt to the region of the south.\* But, alas ! instead of participating in that pleasure, you are now made to feel the sad regret of a final separation from her society on earth. O that you may enjoy the high and happy privilege of meeting her in heaven, where we have reason to hope she now lives and sings.

I cannot close these remarks without making a solemn appeal to all the youth present on this mournful occasion.

You behold one, who was in the morning of life, with no ordinary personal and mental accomplishments, now placed before you in that coffin, soon to be laid in the cold grave. Will you go and view her death-pale visage, and follow her lifeless remains to the grave, and yet make no inquiry about the needful preparation for eternity ? Can you think that your mountain will still stand strong, when you see others much stronger and healthier than yourselves, fall directly by your side, no more to rise till the second coming of Christ ? Let it be your first care to attend to the one thing needful ; and do not be encouraged to think you shall find leisure to prepare for eternity upon a sick and dying bed.

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\* She was expecting to accompany her aunt to the south in the autumn of the present year.

There was nothing that the deceased so much regretted, as to think she had not attended to the needful work of her salvation when she was in health. And as she manifested a most ardent desire for the spiritual good of her acquaintances, she was very solicitous they should attend to this important subject without the least delay. Often did she urge them to become good now. But she has ceased to speak to you only in the solemn appendages with which she is surrounded. Your characters will soon be formed and fixed for a long eternity. And that eternity, too, to which you are hastening, will be in exact accordance to the moral character which you are forming in relation to it. "Remember, therefore, now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them."

## LETTER OF CONDOLENCE.

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GREENWICH, JULY 25, 1839.

DEEPLY AFFLICTED FRIENDS,—

At a meeting of the Young Ladies' Calliopean Society, held Wednesday, July 13, 1839, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted :

WHEREAS, we have this day received the painful intelligence of the dissolution of Miss SARAH ANN FRANCES POWERS, late member of our society ; and, whereas, we feelingly shed the sympathizing tear with her bereaved parents, at this afflictive dispensation of Divine Providence, *Therefore, Be it Resolved,*

1. That we manifest our high regard for the deceased by attending the exercises of the funeral, and by following with the mourners, the remains of our departed sister to the cold and silent grave, the place appointed for all the living.

2. That our dress shall consist of an uniform of white, with a badge of crape upon the left arm.

3. That each member shall bear with them a sprig of myrtle—the emblem of love—to consign to the grave as the last sad tribute to departed worth.

4. That in order the better to express our sympathy with the parents, a committee of three be chosen, to address to them a letter of condolence.

We, the undersigned, in the performance of the painful duty devolving upon us, to express the deep sorrow we feel with you in the removal by death of your beloved daughter—to us an affectionate sister,—feel deeply the insufficiency of language to express our sympathy, or compute the loss which you, and we as a society and as individuals, have sustained.

Not long since, she stood with us over the crystal fount of nature, gazed upon its illimitable depths, and drew from its inexhaustible fulness, those sublime truths of science, which gave her so much delight, and found, in her expansive mind, room for luxuriant growth. The thought that she can no longer mingle with us in our intellectual past-time—no longer walk with us in the sunny heights of literature—opens in all our hearts the secret cells where sorrow sleeps, and fills our souls with sadness. At the same time we rejoice in the evidence she has left us, that she is now bending over a purer fount than that of nature, and studying the sublime and delightful science of salvation. As fade the green leaves and beautiful blossoms of summer, so has our beloved Sarah Ann faded and died in youth's blossoming season.

We witnessed, with pain, the paralyzing hand of disease, chilling the warm current of life, till, one by one, the symptoms of life disappeared, and the paleness of death came over her pleasant countenance. We saw her loved form consigned to mingle ashes to ashes, and dust to dust; yet, though her voice is hushed in the silence of the grave, its music still floats on every breeze and gentle zephyr, and imprints its language on every shrub and flower.

Though she rests beneath the clods of the valley, and her light tread is heard no more in our loved association—though her spirit has returned to God, she will ever live in the memory and affections of those who enjoyed the pleasure of her society, and whose admiration and esteem she never failed to win by her amiable deportment and unassuming manners. Yes, deeply will we treasure in our hearts, the remembrance of the virtues of her, who, we trust, is exalted to the city of the great, and is quenching her thirsty soul in the crystal fountain prepared for all the faithful.

Mysterious was that providence, which so early removed from her sphere of usefulness, one, whose talents and moral

worth gave such promise of good. Yet we have the assurance, that He, whose wisdom is infinite, doeth all things well ; and though he lay his hand heavily upon us, and fill our aching bosoms with bitter anguish, by removing even our most valued treasure, it is that he may make room to deposite more durable and satisfying riches.

The connections of the departed Sarah Ann, who witnessed with what gentleness, patience, and resignation she endured a long and severe illness, have cause for exercising the same grateful emotions of thankfulness, which she exercised not only to God, but to all who administered to her wants, that she has left us so much evidence that she has gone to enjoy eternal felicities at His right hand.

But we feel while we attempt to administer consolation, that we, too, need a consoling friend. When we call to mind her last hours, it arouses feelings which words cannot describe, nor the pen delineate. The closing scene of her whom we loved in health—whom we almost adored in sickness—whose memory will be held sacred until we are consigned to the dust—is still before the eye of our minds. That holy calm which was visible until her last expiring breath, creates in our minds a kindred calm, and we exclaim to our repining hearts, “ Be still, and know that it is God.”

As we follow her pure spirit in imagination, as it left its lovely cage, we rejoice that we have a sister in heaven. When we weep over her dust, our hearts are wrung with the keenest anguish at the thought, she can never more cheer us by her smiles ; but we seem to hear a still small voice whispering, Lovely sleeper, you are not doomed to spend an eternity in the grave. No, our dear Sarah Ann will rise incorruptible, for death is swallowed up in victory. We feel as though she was removed far from us ; still we know not but her pure spirit hovers near, and is commissioned, as

a guardian angel, to watch over the peaceful slumbers of you, her afflicted parents. If so, she is not lost to you : and while we would fain indulge the hope, let it console your aching hearts, to fancy her sainted spirit with God, who is every where present, but to us, frail worms of the dust, invisible.

We, her companions and associates, shall be permitted to enjoy her society no more on earth, yet we hope to draw lessons of wisdom from this afflicting dispensation of that God, who “ moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform ”; and though we cannot divine the cause, we hope feelingly to adopt the holy resignation of Job, and say, “ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.”

May it be our greatest desire so to live, that when the messenger of death shall lay his paralyzing hand upon us, we may be enabled to manifest the same patience, gentleness, and resignation which she manifested, that we, like her, may be permitted to warn those around us, that they, too, must die and return to dust, and that they only can hope for pardon through the blood of Christ, which alone “ cleanseth from all sin.” And it is our united wish that you may be prepared to meet your affectionate daughter, and we our much loved associate, in the bright world above, where the blighting finger of sickness, pain, and disease, no more shall trace the polished brow or ruby lip—where sorrow’s tear no more shall bedew the bright expressive eye—where the kindred tie no more shall be broken, and the bitter pang of separation no more be known and felt.

In behalf of the Society,

Yours, with the deepest feelings of sympathy,

EMILY POMEROY,

MARY E. EARLE,

SEMIRA P. NEWTON,

} *Committee.*