

With the affectionate
regards of the Author

No Cause to Mourn for the Pious Dead.

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SERMON

PREACHED AT HONOLULU, MARCH 6, 1841,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

ANGELINE L., WIFE OF S. N. CASTLE.

AN ASSISTANT MISSIONARY

OF THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

Sandwich Islands.

BY REV. RICHARD ARMSTRONG.



HONOLULU:
[Published by Request.]
1841.

S E R M O N .

JEREMIAH 22: 10.

“Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him.”

IT has long been customary on the death of our friends, to improve the mournful event, by a discourse appropriate to the occasion. In accordance with this excellent usage, and with a desire to improve by this solemn scene, I have selected the above passage of scripture as the foundation of my remarks.

The text refers to the death of king Josiah, a monarch highly distinguished for his piety and wisdom, and for the many memorable events that occurred during his reign. He ascended the throne of Judah when he was only eight years of age, about 640 years before the coming of Christ, and at once began to exhibit those pious and virtuous principles which marked the whole course of his useful career. But though, both great and good, Josiah had to meet the common destiny of all mankind. Nei-

ther his piety nor his royalty could shield him from the shafts of death. He fell by the hand of his enemies at Megiddo, in the 39th year of his age, leaving the world with a high reputation, deeply lamented by his subjects, and an elegy was written on his death by the prophet Jeremiah. The pillar of Judah had now fallen, and the ruin of the kingdom began. Shallum, the son of Josiah, succeeded to the throne, but being a wicked youth he was doomed to live and die a captive in Egypt, whither he had been taken by Pharaoh-necho, and from whence he never returned to his own land.

The prophet, therefore, tells the mourning people of Judah, that they need not bemoan the fate of their pious king, for he had been taken from the evil to come, and had gone to join the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven. They had rather cause to mourn over his infatuated son, who had brought such a direful calamity upon his own head.

The sentiment of the text then on which I propose to dwell, is this, *we have no real cause to mourn for the dead who die in the Lord.*

In attempting to sustain and illustrate this doctrine, we shall confine ourselves to two topics:

I. The pious dead are at once removed from all the evils of this present world.

II. They go at once, on leaving the body, to a place of perfect and eternal happiness.

I. The pious dead are at once removed from all the evils of this present world.

Those who die in the Lord are said to rest from their labors, evidently implying that in this world they do labor: and is not this in accordance with the experience of all who live godly in Christ Jesus? The children of this world have comparatively few struggles or trials while in the body, and the reason is, they float with the current. Their treasures are all here below, and here are their hearts also: they love the world and the things of the world; their plans and wishes coincide with the course of this world. Therefore they meet with little opposition. Not so with the Christian. In the world he must have tribulation, because the entire course of this world is at variance with a life of faith. He must strive against its false principles and wicked practices, just as the ship at sea must contend against the winds and the currents that would carry her to destruction. There is no exception to this remark. Offences must come, and therefore this world to God's people is a vale of tears. It was so to good Josiah, to devout David, the unflinching Daniel, and heroic Paul; it was so to the beloved one whose remains lie before us. But if she died in the faith of the gospel, as we have good reason to hope, her happy spirit

is now and forever will be free from all opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil. The whirlwinds of slander, malice or persecution may play over her grave, but over this barrier they can never pass.

Temptations constitute another source of trial to the believer in this life. They are spread on every hand; even the choicest blessings, husbands, wives, children, with all the endearing ties of friendship may become snares to the heart and cheat it away from God. The fashions and maxims of the world, the attractions of wealth, the fear of man, dread of danger, poverty, persecution or suffering, and last, though not least, the malice of Satan, all combine in a degree greater or less to tempt the believer and oppose the soul's progress towards the skies. But this source of vexation also ceases when the soul leaves the body. Temptation can only come to the gate of death.

I might mention also the infirmities of the body. O how many and various are the aches, and groans, and ills, and toils, that fall to the lot of most persons in this world. No class of men is exempted from them, especially during the closing periods of life. Then it is that our strength becomes labor and sorrow; the grasshopper becomes a burden, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Even the duties of religion, once a source of the purest enjoyment, become a toil through the weakness of the flesh. The history of some persons from

the cradle to the grave, is nothing but a history of suffering. Of this the deceased had much to endure; disease fastened upon her in the prime of life and usefulness and in an unexpected manner, about a year and a half ago, and since that time her days and nights have been spent in weariness and painfulness. She could have exclaimed with Job, "Have pity, have pity upon me, oh ye my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me!" Often have my sympathies been moved at the sight of her sufferings, her breathing difficult, her countenance distorted by pain, yet tranquil and lovely as the twilight of evening. But the tabernacle in which she groaned is dissolved, and she has rested from her labors. If she is with Christ she has no more to suffer forever. How consoling this reflection to her surviving friends.

I mention again, that believers at death are released from their own remaining depravity.

We are no advocate for the doctrine of perfection in this life. We believe it to be a false doctrine. The most exalted saint upon earth is not entirely free from sin while in the body. It cleaves to us like the spot to the leopard. From the world he may retire, but from his own wicked heart he cannot escape. Hence the most holy men, are often heard to exclaim, in bitterness of soul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" The following language of the poet touching this topic is neither extravagant nor unscriptural:—

"I'll introduce thee to a single heart:
 A human heart: we enter not the worst;
 But one by God's renewing spirit touched;
 A christian heart, awaked from sin.
 What see'st thou here? What markest? Observe it well—
 Will, passion, reason; hopes, fears; joy, distress;
 Peace, turbulence; simplicity, deceit;
 Good, ill; corruption, immortality;
 A temple of the Holy Ghost, and yet
 Oft lodging fiends; the dwelling place of all
 The heavenly virtues ———
 And yet the common haunt of anger, pride,
 Hatred, revenge, and passions foul with lust;
 Allied to heaven, yet parleying oft with hell."

Mrs. Castle spoke of her inward sense of sin to the last. It occasioned her many struggles and much grief. She knew her heart was deceitful above all things, and might after all not be right with God; it would wander and grow stupid when it should be full of faith and the Holy Ghost. But how consoling the reflection, that so far as believers are concerned sin dies with their bodies. Into that pure world where they go sin can never enter to distress, mar, or disturb. There the weary are at rest. No foul passion, no hateful lust, no corroding remorse, no pricking conscience, not a trace of moral pollution can cleave to the believer after his last breath is drawn. Surely then we have reason to be comforted at the death of christian friends. Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him, for the dead in Christ are delivered from all evil.

"Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot cure."

II. Our second topic of remark, is, that the dead in Christ go at once to a place of perfect and eternal happiness.

I say a place, because heaven is a *place* as well as a state; where that place is, I pretend not to define. "I go to prepare a place for you," says Christ to his disciples. This is also evident from the fact that the human nature of Christ still exists, and must be now in some particular place, for a human body cannot be every where. Now wherever the Savior has gone to erect his throne; wherever that same body is which was nailed to the cross, there is the *place* that is called heaven, and that is the place to which the pious dead go immediately on the dissolution of the body. Thither went the spirit of the penitent thief on the very day of his crucifixion. That is the home of the saints, their Father's house. That is the place for which the Apostle was willing to be absent from the body that he might be present with the Lord.

Heaven then is a place, and O what a place it must be! Selected, purchased, and fitted up as the palace royal of the King eternal himself! What a place must that be, on which the mind that conceived and created all things, has expended its utmost skill and power in preparing, adorning, gilding, and furnishing as the everlasting abode of all holy beings of all ages and all worlds. There they are congregated and congregating to enjoy forever all the blessings which the power, treasure and love of

God himself, is capable of affording them. If it is in the power of God to make a place of ineffable glory and happiness, then heaven is such a place. We associate with the Paradise of the first Adam, every thing that is beautiful and lovely. It must have been a spot of wondrous beauty. But what was that compared with the Paradise of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven? The earthly Canaan was a goodly land; in the midst of it stood the city which was beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, but what were the attractions of the earthly to those of the heavenly Canaan?

Now into that blessed place, city, country, wherever located, the souls of those who die in the Lord, do ascend immediately on the death of the body. This is proved beyond controversy by the account of the penitent thief, by the Apostle's declaration, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and also by that sweet passage, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, *from henceforth.*" Mark the words *from henceforth*, that is, from the moment the soul leaves the body.

But it may be profitable to go a little more into detail, and attempt to point out wherein the happiness of heaven consists. The theme is so delightful that one is not soon tired of it, but I feel entirely unable to do it justice, or even to throw my own conceptions of it on paper.

I. The souls of believers are supremely happy in heaven, because of the entire absence of every thing that can annoy, distract, or give pain. Of all the evils that afflict us here below, not one can enter there. The foundations of that city are so strong, its walls are so high, its gates are so secure, its atmosphere so salubrious, that no evil, moral or physical, can ever gain admittance there. In heaven there is no night, no darkness, no ignorance, sin or misery. The glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. So there is no sun to scorch by day, nor moon to be clouded by night. The saints and angels there dwell in everlasting light.

Neither is there any curse in heaven. Jesus has taken away the curse from his own people. Neither is there any death, no coffins, shrouds, mourners or funerals. Death has been swallowed up in victory. Neither is there sorrow or crying, for Jesus himself has dried up all their tears. In fact, there is nothing there to cause weeping; and will any weep without a cause?

But the best of it all is, there is no sin in heaven. That accursed thing could creep into the earthly Paradise and poison every source of human happiness, but nothing that worketh abomination, or is unclean, can ever scale the walls, or unbar the gates of the heavenly. There is there no Canaanite in the land to be thorns in the eyes of the inhabitants. Were

sin even as a grain of mustard seed to enter heaven, it would be no longer heaven. Who but a devil, would not wish to live where there is no sin? where every being and every thing is just as they should be, absolutely holy, altogether perfect? Where every faculty of the soul is exercised just as God would have it? Unspeakably blessed must be those who are in such a state.

But seeing that from the heavenly state is excluded every thing that can annoy, or create misery, it may be inquired, what is there present to make the inhabitants so supremely happy? The inquiry may be satisfied by showing that the chief source of their happiness is the presence of Christ, the Lord of all. To be with Christ in heaven is everywhere spoken of in scripture, as only another name for the perfection of happiness. There can be no heaven where Christ is not, and wherever he is there can be nothing but heaven. To be with him, that they might behold his glory, was the richest privilege he could offer his disciples; and when he said to the penitent thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," he promised him the highest honor and felicity in his power to give.

Now it is easy to imagine how the presence of Christ can impart the purest and sweetest enjoyment, just as the presence of some important character in a given society imparts life; and vigor, and joy and happiness to all its

members. Take Leigh Richmond away from his family circle, and it was as though the sun had set at noon, while his return to smile upon his lovely children, was as though the sun had risen at midnight. So, only in a far higher degree, does the presence of the Lamb who sits in the midst of the throne, make all the inhabitants of that blessed world happy as they can be made. Let me illustrate this a little farther.

1. The souls of those who have passed into glory are allowed to gaze directly and immediately upon the face of Jesus *just as he is*; and the beatific sight is never obscured or interrupted. While in the body, as the Apostle tells us, they behold his glory as in a glass darkly, but then face to face. Upon the Father none can look directly and immediately. He is the invisible God. The glory of the Father is seen only through the Son, and all the inhabitants of that bright world can and do look directly upon the effulgent, ineffable glory of the exalted Redeemer. He stands out before them in the full orbéd splendors of his regal state, as the unclouded natural sun on his meridian stands out to the gaze of mortals here on earth, and sends life and light through all this lower world. They see him as he is, with his glorified body that was once marred by wounds and covered with gore. They see him in the greatness of his majesty, the almightiness of his power, and the tenderness of his

love. This it is that swells their bosoms with extatic delight:

“They mount, they fly, they shout, they sing,
They make the heavenly mansions ring.”

Hallelujah to the Lamb, for ever and ever, is the burden of their song, as they gaze with unobstructed vision upon Him that sitteth in the midst of the throne.

2. The redeemed in heaven not only see the Savior as he is, but they are like him.

They begin to assume his likeness in this world, “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.” But the likeness is never perfected until they see him as he is. Remaining sin will obstruct the process: our views of Christ are too dim and distant. But cast the redeemed soul into his presence, and all distance at once ceases, all sin is annihilated, and the soul receives his most perfect image. The saints are taken so near to him, their affections are so drawn out to him, they are so locked in the embraces of his love, as at once and for ever to annihilate every thing that does not accord with his own divine nature. Then when they have his likeness they shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. O how bright they must be! Can there be any attainment equal to this, to be made like the King Eternal? It is not in the power of the human

mind to conceive of a state of existence more exalted than this. Shall we then weep and bemoan those who have gone up so high? Surely not.

3. The spirits of the pious dead are admitted into close and endearing fellowship with Christ in heaven. While on earth this fellowship was necessarily interrupted and unsatisfactory, because it is founded on faith, and not on sight. The delighted Mary was not allowed to touch the Savior after his resurrection. "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." But in heaven it is not so. There all distance ceases. The Savior's true followers sit down in his presence, not as servants but as friends and companions, where they converse with him without reserve, and enjoy all the friendship, gentleness, sweetness and meekness of his loving heart. They live with him there as the bride of a Prince goes in and out before her husband, rejoicing with him in his royal honors, pleasures and possessions. Whatever is his is theirs. He puts his own new name upon them: he clothes them in his own livery: he imparts to them his own nature. He gives them all he has, and himself too. For them he suffered the death of the cross: for them he fought single-handed against all their enemies; for them he purchased heaven, as their final home. To look upon them is his supreme delight. As he overcame and sat down with the Father on his throne, so have they overcome

and sat down with him on his throne. Having suffered with him they also reign with him. O what a blessed thing it must be to go to heaven! Who would bemoan the fate of those who have gone thither?

Then to all this we must add the happiness that flows from a society of innumerable perfect beings. I say *innumerable*, for there are more holy beings in heaven than any arithmetic can number. There are more redeemed souls there than there ever have been human beings on the earth at any given time. They amount to ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. So there is no want of society in heaven, no want of friends, no complaint of loneliness; "There connections are formed which will never be broken; we shall meet with friends who will never die." O the rivers of pleasure that must gush forth from heart to heart, where the affections are so pure, tender and immutable; where friends are so numerous, so perfect and so dear!

But after all we can form no adequate conceptions of the blessedness of departed believers; for we know not what we shall be, and never can know until these tabernacles are dissolved and we are admitted within the vale, to see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

There is one more thought which is necessary to give due force to those which have been presented, that is, that the happiness of heaven is *eternal*. That is a kingdom that can nev-

er be moved; that is a state which can never change, except from good to better, from high to higher, from glory to glory.

We now pass on to make a few obvious reflections on this subject:—

1. Christians may cheerfully endure all the toils and ills of this life, until their change come, Yes, my beloved brethren, the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed. Press on, then for your reward is exceeding great.

2. We should be reconciled to the loss of christian friends. Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him, for the dead in Christ are blessed. O we will not be sorrowful over much for thee, dear departed one! We need thy pure example; thy husband needs a companion, and thy daughter a mother, but still we would not call thee back; thy gain is exceeding great; thou wouldst not come back again from that bright world, and take up this mouldering clod, for a universe of worlds. If thou sleepest in Jesus, sleep on, we would not wake thee, nor weep overmuch for thee. Rather would we weep for ourselves, and for an ungodly world, which like wicked Shallum, has gone away from its Maker, and will not return.

It may be reasonably expected that we offer a brief tribute to the memory of our departed sister, whose remains lie before us.

Mrs. ANGELINE L. CASTLE was born in Sudbury, Rutland County, Vermont, Oct. 25, 1810, making her age on the day of her decease 30 years, 4 months and ten days.

She was the child of pious parents, who trained her up in the ways of religion, and she became a hopeful subject of renewing grace in the year 1829. Her mind soon became interested in the condition of the heathen, and she longed to be employed in imparting to them the blessings of Christianity. To prepare herself for more extensive usefulness, she gave herself up for a season to the work of acquiring a good education, as well as cultivating those moral virtues, which not only adorned her character as a Christian lady, but sustained her heart under all the trials of life. In these pursuits she was evidently successful. Endowed by the God of nature with a good understanding, a sound judgment, and an amiable temper, the acquirements superadded by study and the acquisition of knowledge, fitted her in a high degree, to become an agreeable companion and a useful helper in any benevolent enterprise.

In the fall of 1836 she was united in marriage to Mr. Castle, and sailed shortly after for the Sandwich Islands, in the Bark Mary Frazier. Many were the mementos of kindness and esteem received from her companions and friends in the hour of separation. She seems to have been a young lady that was greatly be-

loved by the companions of her youth. One of them expressed her affectionate regard in the following lines:—

“And shall we keep thee here? Keep thee when Christ
Commands? Commands, “go teach all nations;”

No; go dear sister,

No; much as thee we love, and much as we

May need thy pure example, we will not

Detain thy footsteps on Columbia’s shore;

No; go dear sister and erect the cross,

Where superstition long has held her sway.”

Our limits will not allow us to prolong the extract.

On her arrival at the Islands she entered at once with alacrity upon the duties of her station. While her health and strength would permit she taught a school of girls, in whose welfare she felt a deep and tender concern, and who are now among the mourners present. But God in the exercise of his sovereign and inscrutable will, had another place and other pursuits prepared for his beloved child. Disease fastened its ruthless grasp upon her mortal body, at an unexpected time, and in an unexpected manner, and she has passed away like the fragrant lily that has been nipped by the frosts of winter.

I need not dwell upon her sojourn among us. It has been short, pleasant, painful and useful. Of her industry, alacrity, intelligence, amiableness, prudence and piety, many of us have been witnesses. I never heard a syllable spo-

ken to her disadvantage by any one. She loved the people of God and the cause of the Redeemer, and did what she could to promote the welfare of both.

The closing scenes of her life were marked with calm resignation, unshaken faith, and a comfortable hope of a blessed immortality. At times she felt a trembling in view of death; she would also complain of stupidity of mind on divine things, and severe conflicts with sinful suggestions, which gave her some alarm. She was aware of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and therefore ceased not to be jealous of her own. She loved to have it probed thoroughly; she examined it most carefully from day to day by the word of God, and with the calm deliberation of a philosopher. She said to me one morning, "I may be deceived, but if I do not love my Savior and his followers, I don't know what I do love." Thus she passed cautiously along from day to day, feeling her way as it were, down the declivity of life until she stood, like Bunyan's pilgrim, in the midst of the river of death. In those cold and bitter waters she continued to stand for several days, while she held converse with sympathising friends, who came to tender the offices of affection, and take a final leave. Standing, like the priests that bore the ark, on solid ground in the midst of Jordan, she stretched forth her pale and trembling hand, and like the patriarch of old, blessed her child,

claiming for her the covenanted mercies of her God, commended her afflicted companion to the same almighty being, expressed her gratitude to those who administered to her comfort and alleviated her pains, sent messages of love to her far distant relatives and friends, distributed a few tokens of regard among the little children, and took a deliberate and final leave of all earthly things, with as much composure as though she was only about to retire for the night. She was fully conscious of her situation, and retained her reason till the last moment. But her faith never wavered. She knew in whom she believed. The fact is death met her as a conquered foe; his sting was gone, his scythe was broken, his dark visage disappeared and a smile sat upon his brow. He felt that he was swallowed up in victory, and made no show of resistance. Mrs. Castle told me the day before her death, she could respond fully to the language of triumph, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Among the last words she was heard to say, were these, "Precious, precious;" meaning no doubt, precious Redeemer, an expression she often used.

In this state of mind she ceased to breathe on Friday morning, at a little past six o'clock. As I turned away from the dying scene, I thought of the touching lines the of Scottish bard, which are applicable to the very letter.

"Our sighs were numerous and profuse our tears;
 For she we lost, was lovely, and we loved
 Her much—
 We gathered round her bed, and bent our knees
 In fervent supplication to the throne
 Of mercy; and perfumed our prayers with sighs,
 Sincere and penitential tears, and looks
 Of self-abasement: but we sought to stay
 An angel on the earth; a spirit ripe
 For heaven.—
 The dying eye—that alone was bright,
 And brighter grew, as nearer death approached.
 ——— She made a sign,
 To bring her babe—'twas brought and by her placed.
 She looked upon its face, that neither smiled
 Nor wept, or knew who gazed upon't, and laid
 Her hand upon its little head, and sought
 For it, with look that seemed to penetrate
 The heavens, unutterable blessings—such
 As God to dying parents only granted
 For infants left behind them in the world.
 "God keep my child," we heard her say, and heard
 No more: the angel of the covenant
 Was come, and faithful to his promise stood
 Prepared to walk with her thro' death's dark vale.
 And now her eyes grew bright and brighter still,
 Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
 With many tears, and closed without a cloud.
 They set as sets the morning star, which goes
 Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
 Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
 But melts away into the light of heaven."

How much is there in this event, to excite
 us who are yet alive, to improve the time that
 remains, that we also may come to such an end?
 Our turns will come by and by, and we know
 not how soon, when we must eternally take

leave of all earthly things and enter upon the unalterable realities of the eternal state. Are we prepared? Is Josiah's God, our God? Have we like the deceased, laid up a good foundation against the time when flesh and heart shall fail? Do you ask, what was the secret of her triumph? I answer, she was a Christian; she had laid hold by faith of the hope set before her in the gospel. She had sold all for Christ, and if you would die such a death, go and do likewise. Give up all for Christ: you may live without him, but you cannot die happy without him. How unspeakably dreadful it is to die without God and without hope! Who can endure the distresses of a consuming, wasting, dissolving frame, looking death in the face, with a soul full of sin unpardoned, a body full of pain and sorrow, divine wrath impending, and the judgment seat of an almighty, holy and angry God, and an endless eternity of misery, disgrace and woe, without mixture or mitigation in prospect? Who can endure this? Who can lie down in everlasting burnings? My hearer, would you escape such a fate, would you go over Jordan, as did the deceased, with the shout of victory, "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" while you heard the trumpets, and saw the chariots on the other side ready to convey you away to the new Jerusalem, the city of the great King, then mark the footsteps of those who have gone before and follow on. Break with the world; take the

track which all the pious dead have trod. If you have never done it before, do it to-day; do it, I beseech you, over this coffin, and by yonder grave. May God enable us all so to live, as to leave a sweet savor of Christ behind us, that it may be said of us when we are removed, "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him."

This pamphlet contains one sheet and a half.

