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AN
ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS
OF THE
COLLEGE OF NEW-JERSEY,
AT THE FUNERAL OF
GERARD SEYMOUR HOOE,
FROM VIRGINIA,
LATELY A MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR CLASS:

Delivered March 16th, 1836,

BY

Carmichael
THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE,

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CLASS, TO
WHICH THE DECEASED BELONGED.

PRINCETON, N. J.

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1836.



At a meeting of the Junior Class, on Thursday, March 17, 1836, it was

Resolved, 'That a committee be appointed to wait upon the Rev. Dr. Carnahan, and request for publication a copy of his address over the remains of our late classmate, Gerard Seymour Hooe, of Virginia.

SAMUEL HUMES PORTER,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
JOHN L. MANNING,		
JOHN S. LABAR,		

AN ADDRESS.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,—

You are assembled in unusual and solemn circumstances. The corpse of one of your companions in study lies before you. Probably this is the first time, that the lifeless remains of a Student of this College have been placed in this hall.

It is a remarkable fact, that it is not certainly known that a single student until recently died, during his connexion with this institution. It seemed, as if the Lord had forbidden the destroying angel to enter these walls. But he has entered, and there is his victim.

Perhaps the youth collected here had become too secure, imagining that death could hardly reach them in Nassau-Hall.

But God has taught us, that it is not so. Yet see what warnings we have had, before the fatal stroke came. In looking over our triennial catalogue, you will notice that within ten years an unusual number of our recent graduates has departed this life. Several who, during their college course, enjoyed excellent health, sickened and died, some in three years, some in two, some in one, after they left us. Finally, one was taken away in a few weeks, or rather days, after he received the honors of the college. Still the Almighty threw around those who were here, his protecting care; while at the same time he admonished them, that they also might soon be called to render up their last account. And did we listen to these

warnings? Did we obey these admonitions? Were those of us, to whom were committed the instruction and discipline of the institution, as faithful as we ought to have been, in inculcating the most important of all lessons, the necessity of early piety, of preparation for death, and the judgment that shall follow? Truly we must plead guilty before God.

And did the students of this college obey the warnings of God's providence—forsake their sins, and turn to the Lord with all their hearts? Alas! how few, for many years, have given evidence that their hearts were here changed, and that they had commenced a new life?—And did God cease to warn us?—Did he withdraw his hand?—Did the voice, which had spoken at a distance, come no nearer?—Yes, it came nearer, and spoke in louder and more alarming accents—**BE YE READY ALSO.**

Two of our most blooming and promising students, who left us in the autumnal vacation, never returned. They both lost their lives in the same way, while engaged in healthful recreation. And another of the same class, who also left us in good health, soon after sickened and died. And again another, in a following vacation, left us in all the buoyancy and vigor of youth, and in seven short weeks he was a corpse. And did the hand of the Lord stop here?—Let it be remembered, it is the Lord, that gives life and takes away life, whatever be the means employed. The last session one of our number was somewhat indisposed. He retired to his father's house, and we saw him here no more. Nor is this all. At the close of the last session, you left one of your companions on a sick bed, and before some of you reached your homes, his body was placed in the house appointed for all living.

In all these cases, there was mercy mingled with judgment. Parents and friends had the mournful satisfaction to see their

sons breathe their last under paternal roofs, soothed by a mother's gentle hand, and embalmed in a sister's tears.

Hitherto death came near us. He took away our pupils and our companions. We heard they were gone. We saw their places vacant—but we did not see them in the agonies of death—their cold remains were not stretched out here before us. Now one is taken from our midst, far from his father's house. No relative stood near his dying pillow, and wiped from his pale brow the cold damp. I will not say, that in the land of strangers, he had no friends. Many sad hearts sympathized with him in his illness, and offered earnest prayers for his restoration to health. Every exertion was made, and every means in the power of man was used to save him.—But he is gone. And what shall we say?—Good is the will of the Lord—his will be done. Companions to whom he was endeared by his virtues will convey him to the tomb, and instructors by whom he was beloved will bend in silent sorrow over his grave. And is this all that is to be done? Does God in his providence demand of us nothing more than that we give expression to our sorrows?

You have seen that the Lord, standing as it were at a distance, has warned us. He came nearer and nearer to us: and now he has entered our abode and taken from our midst one, who a few days ago in external appearance was as likely to live many years as any of you assembled around his coffin. What is the language of this dispensation? God seems to say to us all, and especially to the fellow students of the deceased—*Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.* The coming of the Son of man, often spoken of in the New Testament, may mean, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in some remarkable judgment, such as the destruction of Jerusalem; or when he comes at death

to close the period of our probation : or when he shall come at the last great day as the judge of the world. At this time we shall consider it as the coming of the Lord at the hour of death : because our state at death decides our destiny at the day of judgment. *Whatsoever, says Solomon, thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might : for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, in the grave whither thou goest. I must work, said our Lord, the work of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh when no man can work.* And speaking of the day of judgment he says—*The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth : they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*

The whole tenor of the Sacred Scriptures goes to establish the solemn truth—that death shall close our day of grace—that whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap, and that all shall receive in a future state according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad.

We are stewards, to whom our Lord has committed the management of his property, with the express understanding that we must be ready at any moment to give an account of our stewardship. We are servants, to whom our master has assigned work to be done and preparations to be made for his return, leaving it uncertain at what hour he may come.

For the great change, which fixes our everlasting destiny, preparation ought to be made, and preparation must be made in this life, or we are ruined forever. What confusion and dismay must seize the unfaithful servant, when his master returns, who instead of doing the work assigned him, and making preparation for the reception of his absent lord, spends his time in rioting and drunkenness and abusing his

fellow servants? This is the image which our Lord employs to show us the folly and the wickedness of neglecting to prepare for his coming at the hour of death.

The necessity of some preparation for that great change, which certainly awaits us all, few will refuse to admit. The profane swearer, who uses the name and attributes of his Maker, in the most wanton and awful manner, would hardly be willing, were it left to his option, to die with oaths and execrations on his lips. The drunkard, who spends his nights in revelry, would not, in his sober moments, be willing to end his days amidst his cups and licentious companions. None, however wicked, unless utterly abandoned by God, and given up to a reprobate mind, would be willing, without some regrets for the past and some prayers for mercy, to appear before a holy and a just God.

But whatever men may think, or whether they may not think on this subject at all, God declares that preparation, in order to die in peace and go to heaven, is indispensably necessary: *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.—Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.—And without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* From these passages of Sacred Scripture, it appears that three things, inseparably connected, are absolutely required in order to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. First; repentance for sin as committed against God. That is a sincere sorrow for sin and a determination and endeavor to forsake it. Secondly, faith in Jesus Christ, as the propitiation for sin, the ground of our hope of acceptance with God. And lastly, such a change of heart as will lead

us to aim at complete deliverance from sin and perfect conformity to the law of God. Did the occasion permit, we might show at large the reasonableness as well as the absolute necessity of each of the requirements. Suffice it to say, that to hope for forgiveness while living in a state of rebellion against God—violating his laws—abusing his goodness—rejecting his mercies, is as unreasonable as it is impious. Such also is our sinful and ruined condition that we cannot, by any thing that we can do or suffer, atone for our sins. Hence the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for our sins : so that he may be a just God and a Saviour. And finally, the great end for which Jesus Christ came into the world, was to redeem men from sin, to purify for himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And how can this object be effected, while men remain the willing slaves of sin? Besides, the place which Jesus Christ has gone to prepare for his people is holy. Into it nothing that is unholy or impure shall ever enter. There must be a preparation, a meetness, a fitness for the place of our future residence and for the society with which we are to be united. And could such as are opposed to God, to his government and laws and worship, be happy were they even admitted to heaven? The guest spoken of, by our Lord in the parable, who had not on the wedding garment was expelled from the marriage festival; how much more shall such as are not washed and purified and made holy be refused admission to heaven?

The question now comes up—Are ye ready? Are ye prepared to go to heaven, if the Lord should send his messenger to call you from this world? Or have ye not yet begun to make preparation for the coming of the Son of man? This is a solemn inquiry. It calls upon such as profess to be Christians to examine the foundation of their hope—to see that their loins

are girded and their lamps are burning. And especially does it call on such as have not commenced preparation to think of their danger and to begin the work without delay.

In his wisdom, and I may say, in his mercy, God has concealed from us the time and the manner of our death. If the time at which each one was to leave the world, was certainly known, it would have an unfavorable influence on the concerns of this life. Men, who knew that they had only a few months or weeks to live, would probably be so absorbed in meditating on their speedy dissolution, as to neglect the care of their families and the necessary business of life. On the other hand, if they knew they were to live three score years and ten or fourscore years, they would probably be tempted in youth and middle age to make no preparation for another world, believing that they had abundant time before them; so that when old age approached, habits of sin would be formed so fixed and unyielding as to leave no hope of reformation. But in the uncertain state in which God has been pleased to leave this subject, we have the strongest motives to attend to the business and to discharge the duties of this life, and at the same time not to neglect preparation for another world.

The great boundary of human life, beyond which few pass, is fixed. And at any period between infancy and seventy or eighty years, we are liable to be arrested and called to answer for the deeds done in the body.

The Sacred Scriptures represent the uncertainty of human life in the strongest language. *Ye know not the day nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh. Death comes as a thief in the night.* At midnight, the hour of silence, when all nature is hushed, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air enjoying the repose of nature, and man slumbering on his couch, the alarm is given—Behold he cometh—go ye out

to meet him. These representations correspond with what actually takes place in every age. Death comes at an hour when he is least expected. The inhabitants of the old world were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, when the flood came and destroyed them all. Belshazzar with his lords and his nobles was feasting and carousing, when the mysterious hand writing, indicating his doom, appeared on the wall. It is not always the feeble and sickly and aged that die first. Not unfrequently, the young and healthy and vigorous are laid low, while those emaciated by disease linger for years.

So indiscriminately does death direct his arrows, that the intelligent and amiable and pious are often smitten, while the stupid and worthless and wicked are spared. To be convinced of this fact, look at what has taken place among us, within the last nine months. Who would have selected Gulick and Howell and Hooe as the most likely persons to go first? Two weeks ago, from external appearance, your deceased fellow student was as likely to live many years as any now present. Yet he is gone, and you are spared. And who shall go next? This question, the most skilful physician after the most accurate examination, could not answer. And what lesson should we learn from the uncertainty of human life? Undoubtedly, that it is the duty and the interest of all, without exception, to be ready.

Yet uncertain as life confessedly is, many are calculating to make their peace with God at some future period. And is eternity and all its momentous consequences to be suspended on the uncertainties of the morrow? No doubt many of you would be greatly disquieted, if you thought you should die and go to judgment in the state in which you now are. You intend to repent and to seek an interest in redeeming mercy,

before you die. And what is your life? A vapor scattered by the smallest breath. A thread broken by the slightest touch: and yet on this feeble thread you are willing to suspend your eternal interest. Is this wise and prudent, or rather is it not the height of folly and madness?

But you imagine you see insuperable obstacles in the way, if you should at the present time attempt to change your course and to devote yourselves to God. Your studies, your passions, your companions, all seem to stand in the way of your return to God. But may not your studies be pursued with as great success from a sense of duty as from the promptings of ambition? And when let me ask, will your passions become more governable? Think ye, they will be subdued by indulgence? Will not habits be formed more difficult to be overcome than the most violent impulse of feeling?

Suppose you were separated from your present associates, is it not likely you will find others as little disposed as these now around you, to aid you in your way to heaven? But are you going to ask your companions, whether you shall go to heaven or hell? Will you not rather consult your own conscience and manfully obey its dictates? Away then with such excuses. They will not bear the test of reason and conscience; much less will they bear the scrutiny of an omniscient and holy God. Let me tell you also that the experience of all who have gone before you, contradicts the idea that you will find it easier hereafter than you now do, to become sincerely pious. You have advantages now, which will probably not be presented at a future period. The time has been in this college when there was a general inquiry among the students to know what they should do to be saved. Even many of those, who at first scoffed and made sport of these things were compelled by the convictions of their own

hearts to fall on their knees and beg for mercy. Such too, we are happy to learn, is the state of things in other colleges at the present time. Oh! what a blessed result, it would be, if the sad event which we this day deplore, should be the means of exciting a general anxiety among you to know what you must do to be saved. And why not all, here over the remains of your beloved fellow student, resolve that from this hour you will forsake your sins and prepare for the coming of your Lord? In other matters you like to go together. No one wishes to be singular. And surely you cannot be united in a purpose more wise and more important. Eternity with all its joys and sorrows is suspended on the result of your determination. But let not one wait for another. It is a matter which each one must decide for himself. If your companions will not go with you, go alone. Whatever others may do, let not death find you unprepared.

But will any of you still say, the probability is you shall live many days, or if you should be called away in early life, you may have some warning by previous sickness that your end is approaching. God grant that you may live many years. Yet let me say there is a fearful uncertainty resting on this subject. And if your life should be prolonged, there is no certainty that you will be better prepared than you now are. In all things, the power of habit is wonderful. Every act of your life, and every thought of your heart, has an influence in forming your moral character; so that you are every day becoming more and more confirmed in good or bad habits. Consequently every day you live in sin and impenitence, your conversion to God is becoming more difficult. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

There is another serious consideration. If you are ever

truly converted, it must be through the grace and power of Almighty God. And is there not danger that he may be provoked by your ingratitude and continued rebellion to withdraw from you, and permit you to take your own course? He has said that his *spirit shall not always strive with man*; and he has often verified this declaration.

But do you still imagine, that like a great part of mankind, you shall have some pre-monition of your approaching end, and that when you see death near, you will have motives to make ready which cannot be resisted? Oh! deceitful, fallacious hope! We say nothing of the numerous unforeseen contingencies which terminate life without a moment's warning. We say nothing of the delusive hopes which buoy up the patient under a lingering and fatal disease. We simply ask,—is a sick bed and a dying hour a fit time to prepare for eternity? Do the pains, the agitations, the restlessness of a sick chamber, afford a favorable opportunity for collected and calm reflection? Do not many diseases, before they are thought to be dangerous, dethrone reason and preclude the possibility of reviewing the past or of anticipating the future? Ask those who have attended the sick and the dying in cases in which reason remained unimpaired, whether the last hour is the most suitable time to prepare for dying. Oh no. The burnings of a fever, the difficulty of breathing, the agonies of the whole frame, the dissolution of relative and social ties are sufficient to occupy the whole attention. But it usually happens that the intellectual as well as the animal sensibilities are blunted,—a stupor which no considerations of life or death, of heaven or hell can dissipate, seizes the patient; so that the warnings and intreaties and prayers of pious friends are unheeded and utterly useless. My young friends, depend not on

a death bed repentance. It will deceive you, and you will probably die as you have lived.

As I have previously remarked, we have had several calls and warnings to be ready. This last call is the nearest and loudest. And if it also be unheeded, God who in mercy has warned us will be offended. He says to us in his Providence and in his word—*Be ye ready also.* And will you or can you disobey with impunity? Surely no youth present can be so reckless as to have no serious reflections on this occasion. I know your sympathies are excited. But there is danger that this seriousness will vanish as soon as that corpse is deposited in the grave. Let me intreat you to cherish any good resolutions which you may have formed in this solemn hour. Let each one after he returns from performing the last offices of kindness to the remains of a departed companion, retire to his closet and commune with his own heart, review his past life, and most solemnly ask himself, where his soul would now have been, had it pleased God to remove him instead of our deceased young friend. Let us all remember that our time on earth is short—life uncertain, and that all the interests of eternity are suspended on the improvement of these fleeting hours. The Lord teach us so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom.

TO GOD BE

