

# ADDRESS

AT THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. JANE WYCKOFF,

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

AN  
ADDRESS,  
DELIVERED IN THE  
MIDDLE DUTCH CHURCH, ALBANY,  
AT THE FUNERAL OF  
MRS. JANE WYCKOFF,  
WIFE OF THE  
REV. I. N. WYCKOFF, D. D.,  
MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 1847.  
BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE CONSISTORY OF SAID CHURCH.

---

ALBANY:  
PRINTED BY JOEL MUNSELL.  
1848.

## FUNERAL ADDRESS.

---

I was asked, at a late hour this morning, to take the place of a respected brother, one of your own communion, who had been expected to say a word to you in connection with this sad occasion, but who, from bodily indisposition, had felt himself constrained, at last, to decline the service. I hesitated, because I knew that you might reasonably, and would naturally, expect to meet in such an exercise one of your own ministers; but it quickly occurred to me that in the fellowship of sorrow sects are unknown, and that the consolations of the gospel, come through whatsoever channel they may, are always welcome to bleeding hearts. I thank a gracious Providence that we are all witnesses to the spirit of mutual good will that brings our

denominations so closely together in the ordinary interchange of Christian offices; and I am sure if there is any occasion on which we must feel that we are all one in Christ, it is when we have in the midst of us the remains of a beloved disciple, who has just gone up to join the community of the ransomed, and to mingle in their harmonious and ecstatic songs.

The providence of God is one continued lesson of wisdom to the world. Every object has a voice, every event has a voice, calling upon mortals to give heed to their higher interests. You hear of a death in your neighborhood: little as you may think of it, there is admonition in that intelligence. You look out of your windows and see a funeral procession pass, and you learn that it is a stranger whom you never saw or heard of, that they are carrying to the grave: but from that procession, heedless though you are, there comes monitory language to you; and not to you only, but to all who may happen to meet or to behold it. It proclaims to you that death is in the world; that it will certainly ere long number you as its victims; that whosoever believeth on the Son of God, the Resurrection and the Life, shall triumph over it, but who-

soever believeth not shall die to await the resurrection of condemnation.

It is the ordinance of Heaven then that some men should suffer, indeed that we should all suffer, for the benefit of others; and they greatly mistake who imagine that they have nothing to do, in the way of improvement, with any other afflictions than those which are strictly their own. But there is no case perhaps in which this principle is more strikingly illustrated than in the afflictions of a minister of the gospel. His sufferings are designed to be the channel of rich blessings to the people of his charge; and it is one of the considerations that help sustain him in the hour of sorrow, that those may be benefitted by his afflictions who have refused to receive benefit from his ministrations.

Let me, for a moment, hint at the manner in which God designs that the afflictions of his ministers shall operate for the spiritual advantage of their people. It may be a direct or an indirect influence that is exerted.

A minister's trials are fitted to act directly and immediately upon those who are committed to him. If every affliction that occurs has a voice to every one that witnesses it, the

stronger the tie that is severed, the more impressive the admonition that is conveyed. But the relation which exists between a minister and his charge, as it is among the most important, so it is among the most tender, that is ever constituted; and of course it may be expected to involve a strong mutual attachment. When, therefore, a congregation behold their minister in the depths of domestic sorrow,—when his dwelling, from having been a scene of joy, suddenly becomes a house of mourning, because the desire of his eyes is taken away, and especially when the life of the departed was full of good deeds, and her death was full of serene joy, and her memory is fragrant and precious with all who knew her,—in such a case, I say, God speaks with unwonted emphasis to a congregation,—he speaks to their sensibilities,—he speaks to their consciences,—he speaks to their whole inner man,—charging them to apply their hearts unto wisdom. There is not an individual here to day, to whom this solemnity is not impressively monitory; but it is most of all so to you to whom the deceased sustained so intimate a relation, and who see your own minister in the attitude of a bereaved

husband surrounded by his motherless children.

But there is an indirect influence also exerted to the same end. God designs that the afflictions of his ministers shall subserve the spiritual interests of those over whom they are placed, by increasing their own spirituality, and thus giving additional effect to their ministrations. No doubt one reason why our labours avail so little is, that we have not more of the spirit of Christ; that we have not a deeper sense of the value of immortal souls; that we proclaim God's truth with so little sensibility, and that our lives are so imperfectly conformed to the doctrines which we preach. But let a minister's afflictions have their legitimate effect, and there will be a quickening influence diffused through his whole soul; it will be obvious to all that he is in communion with both the Comforter and the Sanctifier; there will be an unwonted tenderness in his spirit, an unwonted fervour in his prayers, an unwonted earnestness and energy in his preaching, an unwonted purity and zeal in his life: in a word his entire ministrations will become more spiritual, more elevated, and by God's blessing more effective.

And does not all this go to show that he is afflicted not for his own sake alone, but for the sake of his people? Who can say, in any given case, in which a minister is thus cast into the furnace, but that his sufferings, by increasing the power of his intercessions and the fidelity of his efforts, may work out for some one or more of his charge an exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

May I not say also, that the case we are contemplating furnishes occasion for the vigorous exercise of some of the sweetest of the Christian graces,—particularly the grace of charity in the form of sympathy on the part of the flock towards the shepherd. You see your minister burdened with grief; and though you cannot weigh the burden, you know that it is hard to be borne; and your heart bleeds because he is in sorrow. And there is a refining, spiritualizing influence in christian sympathy, that makes the heart better. And your fellow feeling for his sorrows finds vent not merely in tears but in prayers; it carries you to the throne of grace, and you speak to your Heavenly Father in his behalf; and the intercessions you offer up for him, bring as many blessings into your own

soul as into his. Oh, I doubt not there is a silent, invisible instrumentality connected with the passing scene, for elevating many a spirit in this congregation into a more intimate communion with Heaven. There are those here, I am confident, who will not only love their pastor more and give more earnest heed to his ministrations, because they have been privileged to soothe his sorrows by their offices of kindness and sympathy, but will also feel that the Spirit of grace has a more constant lodgment in their own hearts, from the earnest supplications which they have offered up in behalf of their afflicted minister.

But I cannot pursue this train of thought. All that I designed was to impress you by a few hints with the fact that God has not afflicted his servant, without having had you also in his eye; and that in this bereaving dispensation he has done his part, and it will be your own fault if you fail to do yours, to aid your preparation for the coming world.

I know not whether I shall be expected to speak of the character of our departed friend; but it is so lovely a theme that I cannot pass it over in silence; and I own that it is always

grateful to me to pay a tribute to the memory of a saint. I shall say nothing concerning her but what you know far better than I do; and least of all shall I deal in excessive panegyric; for though her modest and humble spirit is in Heaven, there is enough of her here before me to rebuke such a disposition, even if I were prone to indulge it.

In the character of Mrs. Wyckoff there was an assemblage of qualities which I may safely say is as rare as it is delightful. With a sound, judicious, well cultivated mind, she combined a heart susceptible of every kind and generous feeling, a countenance always glowing with life and cheerfulness and good will, and manners at once graceful and dignified and conciliating. And with her natural strength and loveliness of character she united an earnest piety, which was the crowning attribute of all;—that which rendered her at once the most attractive and the most useful; and the recollection of which now increases your estimate of your loss, while it also yields you the most substantial consolation.

Being thus highly favoured by nature, by education, by grace, she was admirably qualified for the important station to which Provi-

dence called her as the wife of a clergyman, especially of a clergyman in a city. You know by observation, I know by report, with how much dignity and fidelity she sustained this relation. Without ever stepping out of her appropriate sphere, or engaging in any thing of questionable propriety or delicacy, she was always intent upon doing good; ready to lend her efficient aid wherever it was needed; going round into the dwellings of the poor and breathing mercy and love among their inmates;—in short, in all her intercourse with you as a people she was a model of discretion, of zeal, of tenderness, of fidelity. Other congregations than this with which she was immediately connected, have known and appreciated her excellence; and those who are officially or otherwise brought much in contact with the children of want and woe, have often met her amidst scenes of destitution, or else have found themselves in dwellings where she has just been dispensing her benefactions. She was more than willing to tax her strength to the utmost in aid of your spiritual interests or in coöperating with you to do good to others; and some of you were witnesses to that last, and, alas, too expensive

effort, to meet some of her friends in the congregation for a benevolent purpose, which proved perhaps the immediate occasion of her final illness.

In her family, every visitor at the house, even the most transient, saw that she was a bright example of the domestic virtues; that she was prudent, unostentatious, affable, affectionate. But what she was in these relations, is treasured most sacredly in the memories and the hearts of her own bereaved household. He who has lost in her a wife, and they who have lost in her a mother, can best tell, with how much dignity and efficiency, with how much tenderness and discretion, her appropriate domestic duties were uniformly discharged.

We saw her but a few weeks ago, moving about in circles of charity and usefulness, in apparently vigorous health, and there was nothing to suggest a doubt that years of christian activity were before her. But at that very time, the insatiate archer, death, was bending his bow, and getting ready his arrow, with her as the victim in his eye. Her illness has lasted through a few weeks. They have been weeks of considerable bodily suffering, but

suffering alleviated continually by that balm which the Spirit administers. Her intellect for the most part has been clear; and not a cloud that I can learn has ever passed between her soul and the Sun of Righteousness. Her dying scene protracted through many days, was alike consolatory and instructive. It told of the power of God's grace more impressively than mortal lips can express;—it said to her beloved friends, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" it pointed upward, as with the finger of an angel, to the meeting of friends in Heaven. There were indeed tears shed around that bed of death; and yet not one who looked on doubted that the liberated spirit took its flight to Heaven.

My dear brother, I need not tell you that I sympathize in your sorrow; and think it not strange if I say that I rejoice also in your joy. I mean not in the joy of other occasions but in the joy that pertains to this. For surely there *is* joy in all this tribulation. I know well how thick and deep is the darkness. I know how empty and desolate the dwelling must seem, when she who held the place of an angel of mercy in it is not there. I know how the recollections of bright and happy

scenes come in bitter clusters upon the soul. All this I know; but I know too that it is given to you to think of the transition from earth to Heaven; to think of the sins and sorrows left behind, and of the joys and glories that entrance the spirit now; and even the desolate dwelling will hardly seem desolate, when you remember that it has just sent up a gem for the Redeemer's crown. I am speaking to you words of consolation, such as you and I are accustomed to speak to others, and God is giving you a higher sense of their value by giving you experience of their power over a bleeding heart. May the angel that helped the three young men in the furnace, make you strong in faith, giving glory to God in this day of sorrowful visitation. May another day show that many souls committed to your care will be the better and the happier to all eternity, because you are afflicted.

And you, dear children, your mother's voice speaks to you still,—not in the chamber where she used to meet you and pray with you, and endeavour to direct you into the path of life, but from the silence of that coffin; she speaks with all her accustomed tenderness and love, and yet with an earnestness immeasurably

heightened by the experience which she has had of the scenes beyond the veil. I charge you not to forget her counsels, her admonitions, her example. Treasure them in your hearts as an invaluable legacy. If you are tempted to evil, ask "How can I do this, and offend against my glorified mother's love?" Let your aspirations for intellectual and moral excellence be quickened by the reflection that this would have rejoiced her spirit on earth, and for aught you know, it may even heighten the ecstasies of Heaven. May God's blessing rest upon you, dear children, and from sowing thus early in tears, may you reap a harvest of everlasting joy.

My friends, ye are this day a mourning congregation; and your minister is the chief mourner among you. I do not ask for him your sympathy, for I know he has it; I do not ask for him your prayers, for I feel assured that he has *them* also; but I do ask you to co-operate with him in giving to this affliction its legitimate effect upon yourselves. Her death I doubt not has been gain to herself; and it will be your own fault if it is not gain to you. She prayed for you always; she forgot you not even in death; and if the effect

of her departure should be to quicken you to follow on in the foot-steps of her faith, or if some of you, hearing her voice from the tomb, should resolve that you will heed the mandate which it gives forth to prepare to die, and should actually become new creatures in Christ, then your minister will know why he has been thus afflicted ; and perhaps she may know yet another reason why she has been thus early taken to Heaven.

## NOTE.

---

The following biographical note has been furnished by a near friend of the deceased.

MRS. JANE KYES WYCKOFF, was the daughter of Jonathan Kyes, M. D., a native of Boston, who renounced his own family because they were tories in the Revolution; himself being a decided and zealous whig. He settled on the Van Bergen and Salisbury patent at Catskill, and distinguished himself considerably as a skillful physician. Mrs. W.'s mother was Catharine Van Bergen, a grand-daughter of William Van Bergen, well remembered as an eminent Christian, elder, and catechist, in the Reformed Dutch church at Catskill.

Mrs. W. was born December 9, 1809, in the village of Leeds, Catskill, Greene county. She lost her father at the age of four years. From the over generous character of her father, the ample patrimony was gradually diminished, and in a few years all was gone, and the family were plunged into the perplexities of poverty. Mrs. W.'s education was obtained chiefly in a female academy in Catskill, under the care of Prof. Rufus Nutting and Miss Palmer, both of whom have been much distinguished in later years. It was completed however, through the kindness of her friend and kinsman, L. Nash, Esq., at a school of some celebrity in the city of New York.

At the age of sixteen, she was compelled by the necessities of her family, to enter on the arduous and responsible duties of a teacher. For seven years she pursued this vocation with the highest approbation of her patrons, and with distinguished success. A very considerable number of her pupils were brought to an early knowledge and experience of the power of religion, by her faithful and tender religious exhortations and prayers.

At the age of twenty-three she was married to the Rev. I. N. Wyckoff, who was then minister of the church to which she belonged. And although she entered into one of the most difficult positions that a pious lady can occupy—such was her known character for unassuming and eminent piety—so long had she already stood among the mothers and elder sisters, as a leader in every good work, that scarce an individual deemed the relation injudicious. And if any objected to her youth and inexperience, they were soon won to be her ardent friends, by her undeviating consistency, fidelity, and modesty.

She united with the church at twelve years of age, having from earliest recollection been the subject of the awakening influences of the Spirit. She did not remember the period when prayer and the services of God's house and the reading of the word of God, were not her chief delight. From the moment that she espoused the cause of Christ, she entered the Sabbath school, and remained in it with some unavoidable interruptions, to the year of her death. She loved the church and its services, with an ardent affection. Half the services in her native place being four miles from her mother's house, many a sabbath, if no friendly conveyance offered, she walked that distance, with too little regard to the state of the weather, that she might be in the sanctuary.

Mrs. Wyckoff came to the city of Albany with her husband in the autumn of 1836, bringing with her the kindest

regards, not unmingled with deep regret of the church to which her husband had ministered, and of the community in which her lot had been cast. Here she entered on her duties as a pastor's wife, with her whole heart, and with not the firmest health, pursued them to the day of her last attack. In the midst of benevolent exertions, and perhaps in consequence of extreme effort, she was seized with pleurisy, and after five weeks of intense suffering, was called to her final rest. On about the eighteenth day of her illness, it was announced to her by her physicians, that all hope of her recovery was taken away. She received the announcement with perfect calmness, and immediately summoned her children and friends to her side, and delivered to them charges full of affection and piety. The burden of her solicitude respected her children. She besought the members of the maternal association never to forget them in their prayers—and with overpowering emotion she whispered in the ear of her husband, "Feed my lambs." For eighteen days her decease was daily expected, and the topic was so often recalled, and the prospects of a blessed immortality so constantly contemplated, that the aspect of death became familiar, and its bitterness was past. She received death as "a glorious deliverance," and calm

"as shuts the eye of day,"

fell asleep in Jesus. She left six children to deplore her loss; the eldest and three youngest of whom are daughters.