

**A DISCOURSE DELIVERED ON THE DEATH  
OF CAPT. PAUL CUFFEE: BEFORE THE  
NEW-YORK AFRICAN INSTITUTION, IN  
THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
ZION CHURCH, OCTOBER 21, 1817**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649745517

A Discourse Delivered on the Death of Capt. Paul Cuffee: Before the New-York African Institution, in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, October 21, 1817 by Jun. Williams

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Cover @ 2017

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**JUN. WILLIAMS**

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A DISCOURSE  
DELIVERED ON  
*The DEATH of Capt. PAUL CUFFEE,*  
BEFORE  
The New-York African Institution,  
IN  
*The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church,*  
OCTOBER 21, 1817.

—  
By *PETER WILLIAMS, Jun.*  
A MAN OF COLOUR.

—  
PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF SOME MEMBERS OF THAT  
INSTITUTION.

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New-York Printed :

YORK :

REPRINTED FOR W. ALEXANDER ;

SOLD ALSO BY DARTON & CO., W. PHILLIPS, AND W. DARTON,  
JUN., LONDON.

—  
1818.

F.  
C9651w

LINCOLN LIB.

1818

## PREFACE

TO

*The ENGLISH EDITION.*

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PAUL CUFFEE, an American and a man of colour, to whom the following Discourse relates, was well known to many in this country, not only as an efficient agent of the AFRICAN INSTITUTION in London, and a zealous coadjutor in its benevolent exertions; but also as a firm and active friend of the whole African race.

Soon after Captain Cuffee had been in England, the Editor published a Memoir of him in the year 1812, which, though brief, contains a more full account of events respecting his life, than was likely to be intro-

duced in a Discourse; yet in this will be found some interesting particulars, which are not in the Memoir.

These, however, are not the principal inducements for publishing the Discourse, which is the production of a YOUNG MAN OF COLOUR, and said to be delivered extempore. It does not indeed possess the polish of refined erudition, or of a highly cultivated mind; but its imperfections enhance its value; because they evince that the Author's unadorned eloquence, is the result of *natural* powers, which, like those of the individual concerning whom he spoke, contribute an additional striking proof, that superior abilities do not attach more to a white than to a coloured skin.

## DISCOURSE

ON

CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFEE.

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**A**LL around us is crumbling to ruins. The globe totters on the brink of fate. The sun and moon, with all the lesser lights of the firmament, are about to be extinguished, and this whole creation to sink in the night of chaos. Already has that fearful sentence of Jehovah, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," been executed on the bulk of Adam's race. Compared with those who have taken up their abode in the silent mansions of the tomb, few are they who remain on the face of the earth. Before the strokes of Death, the generations of men have fallen and perished, even as the leaves before the autumnal blast; and so widely and thickly scattered are their remains, that the whole world has become a Golgotha, in the which there is scarcely left a spot whereon one can set his foot, without standing on the bones of our ancestors and brethren.



Contemplating this scene of desolation, a train of reflections, incomparably gloomy and afflictive, overshadows the mind, and drives down the mounting spirit. What is the destruction of splendid edifices, of flourishing cities, of the most noble works of genius and art, compared with that which death hath made in the family of man! Over the wide and still expanding empire of death, humanity wanders mourning her offspring, the noblest workmanship of God, creation's pride and head, laid prostrate in the dust; the prey of corruption and of worms. Among the fallen, she recognizes her favorite sons, those excellent ones of the earth, whose deeds shed a lustre over her character, and deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance. At their tombs she stops, and recounting their virtues, gives vent to her feelings in loud and bitter lamentations. While, with her, we weep over the graves of departed merit, our attention is peculiarly drawn to the spot which contains the mortal part of our late worthy brother, Capt. PAUL CUFFEE. There, whatever other occasion we may have to mourn the triumphs of the mortal foe, we find cause for the liveliest expressions of grief. There, without the least tincture of flattery, may be inscribed—  
*“ Here lies one whose exertions, in behalf of oppressed humanity, have entitled him to the esteem of the world, and the grateful remembrance of latest posterity.”*

Draw near, O! ye sons of men, and learn, not merely what the common subjects of mortality teach, that "the days of man are but as vanity—that he cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down—that he fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay;" but the more important lesson of so conducting yourselves as to secure respectability in life, peace in death, and unfading felicities in a future state.

Draw near, but let it be with respectful steps. That GRAVE is peculiarly consecrated to SORROW. Over it Europe and America mourn; and Africa, unhappy, bereaved Africa, pours a deluge of tears.

Were I required to delineate a character of distinguished greatness, I would not seek, as my original, one whose blood has been ennobled through a long line of ancestry, who has had all the advantages of fortune, education, wealth, and friends to push him forward; but for one who, from a state of poverty, ignorance, and obscurity, through a host of difficulties, and with an unsullied conscience, by the native energy of his mind, has elevated himself to wealth, to influence, to respectability, and honor; and being thus elevated conducts with meekness and moderation, and devotes his time and talents to pious and benevolent purposes.

Such an one's character deserves to be drawn by the ablest artist, and to be placed up on high for public imitation and esteem ; nay, the portrait should be placed in our bosoms, and worn as a sacred treasure ever near to the heart. Such an one was PAUL CUFFEE, the son of a poor African, whom the hand of unfeeling avarice had dragged from home and connexions, and consigned to rigorous and unlimited bondage ; subjected to all the disadvantages which unreasonable prejudice heaps upon that class of men ; destitute of the means of early education ; and more frequently struggling under the frowns of fortune than basking in her smiles : by perseverance, prudence, and laudable enterprize, he raised himself to wealth and respectability : and, having attained that eminence, he so distinguished himself by his amiable and upright deportment, and his zealous exertions in the cause of humanity and religion, that he became, not only an object of general notice and regard throughout the civilized world ; but even the untutored tribes, that inhabit the regions of Ethiopia, learnt to consider him as a father and a friend.

If ever there was a necessity for me to apologize to an audience for my inadequacy to my subject, I feel it so on the present occasion. I knew the man. I had the honor of an intimacy with him ; and having, from the first moment of my