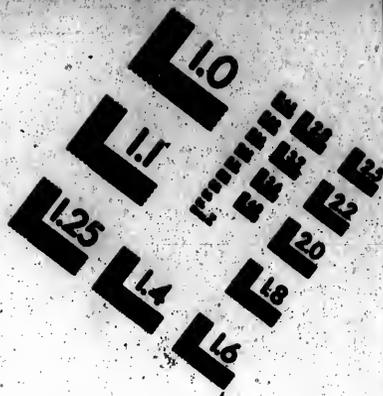




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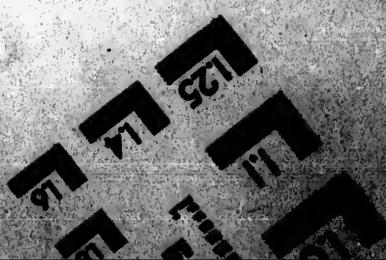
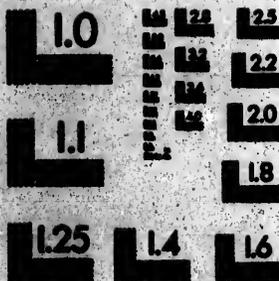
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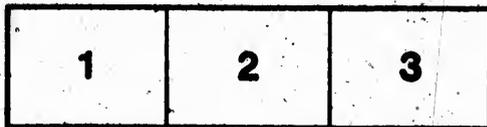
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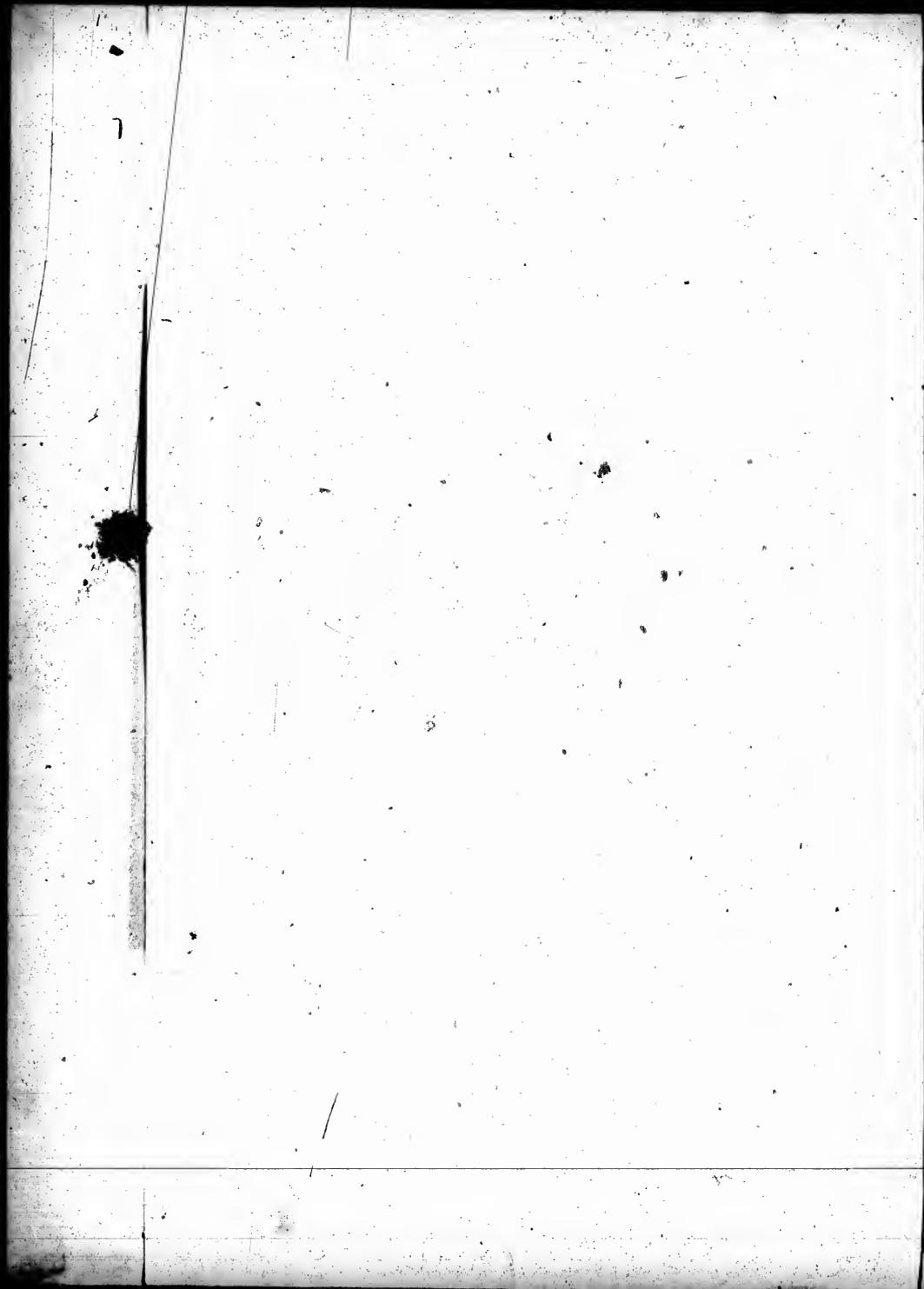
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SERMON

AFTER THE

FUNERAL

OF

W. GOODERHAM, Esq.,

(CHURCHWARDEN.)

PREACHED IN TRINITY CHURCH, TORONTO,

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER SANSON,

INCUMBENT.

SABBATH, AUGUST 26TH 1881



TORONTO.

1881.

J50883
OCT. 19, 1954

PRAYER.

O MERCIFUL God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life ; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally ; who also hath taught us, by His holy Apostle, St. Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in Him. We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness ; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him as our hope is our brother doth ; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day we may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive that blessing, which Thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world ; Grant this, we beseech Thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

SERMON.

PSALM xc. 10:

"The days of our years are three score years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

THE object of every sermon should be to do good to man, and to bring glory to God. To this rule there is no exception. It is a great thing to be permitted, in some measure, to accomplish these objects in life and death ; and if anything is to be said of any one of us, when we have left this earthly scene, it is no less important that it should be profitable to man, and glorifying to God. These are the ends for which our text was written ; for these are the ends of all God's works ; but especially of His word, which He has magnified above all His name as declared in His works of creation and providence. It is designed to humble man, to save sinners, to exalt the Saviour, to glorify God.

It is a common, though no less on that account a true remark, that a period of three or four-

score years is a long time to look forward to, but when it is passed it is as nothing. This remark acquires greater force, when we cut off from the extremes of that long period, the helpless years of childhood, the thoughtless years of youth, and the years of labour and sorrow incident to a protracted old age. When these deductions are made, the longest life is materially abridged, and we may suppose that an octogenarian, casting his mind's eye over his earthly existence, would leave out of view the two extremes of early youth and latest age, and so no less truly than feelingly exclaim, "It is soon cut off, and we fly away."

And yet what a world of action may be crowded, and not unfrequently is crowded, into this abridged period of, say, threescore years and ten! How many scenes visited; how many dangers braved; how many perils escaped; how many toils endured; how many exploits achieved; how many lessons of wisdom and prudence gathered from the wide field of observation and experience! What vicissitudes of health and sickness; pain and ease; labour and repose; weariness and rest; joy and sorrow; hope and fear; failure and success! Every man is a little world in himself, with all the variations of climate and seasons, heights and depressions, storm

and calm, rain and sunshine, yearly and daily revolutions. "He never continueth in one stay." It would be difficult to find a more striking illustration of these reflections than that which is suggested on the present occasion, by the removal from among us, in the fulness of years, of an honoured father, a faithful friend, an upright and successful merchant, and a much esteemed and most useful member of this church.

What a varied and what a busy life! In how many departments of the social economy does he form the central figure! A dutiful son; an industrious apprentice; a loyal and devoted soldier; imperilling life, health, and substance in both arms of Her Majesty's service; a deputy paymaster of various military detachments, while left in charge of one of the depôts of French prisoners after the Peninsular war; then, returning to the arts of peace, the cultivator of his paternal farm, and the overseer of the poor of his native parish. At length, at the head of a numerous band, including sons and daughters, he once more crossed the deep, and founded a new home in this locality, which at that time was covered with forest trees and miry swamps. From that period forward, for nearly half a century, every day was filled up with energetic toil and diligent attention to business, occasionally

performing such civic duties as were entrusted to him by his fellow-citizens, and habitually keeping in view the care and government of his large family, growing up under his paternal shadow.

Who can think of the numberless incidents and events, cares and anxieties, toils and efforts, actions, attainments, and successes of a life in so many spheres and with so many sides? It is like the roll of a book, in which there is no blank space, but the whole is written over, within and without, with the records of patient industry, indefatigable perseverance, and calm intelligence. What a world of thought, feeling, action, and achievement! What a filling up of our abridged period of threescore years and ten!

And here, while recognizing the hand of God for good upon our friend, preserving, guiding, and prospering him, I cannot refrain from referring for a moment to the point from which I set out,—a dutiful son. This was like a thread of gold which ran through the web of his life from beginning to end. To his latest days he honoured the memory and the character of his father. The thought of him would bring words of unaffected admiration to his lips, and tears of genuine affection to his eyes. This filial love

accounts in great measure for much of his success in life, and for some of the finest traits in his character. It made him an honest apprentice, a good soldier, an affectionate brother, a kind, dutiful husband and father, considerate to the wants and interests of all his relations, and a firm friend. Was not his long life, so strongly marked by filial, parental, and relative affection, in all their practical exemplifications, a fulfilment of "the first commandment with promise; Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayst live long on the earth?"

A life so varied, identified with so many scenes and so many persons, and so fully occupied, does indeed seem long. And even a shorter life is long, if it is well employed. We should, therefore, measure life, not so much by the number of years as by the manner of its occupation. A young person who has fulfilled the duties of his age and station, and left a good example behind him, has lived long, because he has lived to purpose, and his memory is blessed and made a source of blessing to many. But the longest, busiest, and most successful life is short, when we consider the brief space allowed for the enjoyment of the fruits of success. Many are removed from this mortal scene just when they

have reached the goal for which they strove. Others when they have succeeded beyond their expectations, are in the sear and yellow leaf of life's autumn, or in the frost-crowned months of winter, when their strength is labour and sorrow, and they have little power to enjoy their well-earned repose, or to do good with their increased resources

But life, if not actually longer, is relatively so, and assumes a far greater importance when viewed in connection with eternity. As childhood and youth are a long preparation for the activities of manhood, so this life itself is but a lengthened preparation for that higher life which is to come. This preparation is chiefly inward, in the desires and affections of the heart, and consists in sorrow for sin, faith in Christ, and love to God and man, which are the fruits of faith. But though this preparation is heart-work, and as such may be hidden from the eyes of men, it is that which God Himself chiefly regards, and has an upward and visible as well as an inward and spiritual growth. No man is accepted for his repentance, or for his faith, or for his works, but only in Christ, whose blood is the sole procuring cause of forgiveness, and whose righteousness is the only ground of justification and acceptance with God. But if any

man be in Christ, he is no longer the man that he was. He is a humble man, a believing man, a new man. He believes on Christ for pardon and peace, and shows his faith by his works; but he rejoices not in his works, but, only in Christ, who is all his salvation and all his desire. It is the purpose of God that no flesh should glory in His presence. And, therefore, the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And again to the Philippians, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Thus Christ was all to the Apostle; he put no confidence in his religious observances, nor in his good works; these he put altogether aside; yea, he counted them but dung for Christ; in whom, not in his good works, he desired to be found,

accepted only and altogether for His righteousness sake, as if he had nothing of his own but sin and want. In this respect Paul is the type of all true believers. And therefore he says, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Thus true religion is a spiritual thing, a thing of the heart, its sum, centre, and essence is rejoicing in Christ Jesus, to the exclusion of all dependence on anything that man aided or unaided can do. And here again we may appeal to the example of our late honoured churchwarden. His attention to business is well-known. His efforts to promote the interests of different public institutions, particularly the General Hospital, to which he was a liberal benefactor, are familiar to very many. It is also well understood that he was one of the principal founders of this church, and that it is owing to his fostering care that it is free from debt, and in possession of a small, but respectable endowment, which, in process of time, will, in all probability, be sufficiently ample. For more than a generation, he was the incumbent's churchwarden, in which capacity he gave the closest attention to all that concerned the comfort, convenience, and interests of the congregation, and that was calculated to strengthen the

hands of the clergyman in his intercourse with his people, and performance of his duties. His interest never flagged, and his time and means were always at the service of the Church whenever they were required. He would readily have contributed more largely to its objects, but he wisely thought that it was more for the good of the congregation that they should be permitted to do something for the maintenance of the ministrations of the gospel. His liberality was not confined to this church—he aided many others—but this was in a manner his own child, and it occupied a child's place in his heart. Until a comparatively recent period, he was never absent from the services, morning or evening. In these he engaged earnestly and devoutly. He had an habitual respect for the Lord's day, and while his strength continued, like the late Bishop Strachan and Sir John Colborne, afterwards Lord Seaton, he never allowed his horses to be taken out on Sunday. I shrink from intruding into his domestic life, but, without any breach of propriety, I may mention that he kept up family prayers morning and evening, and was most anxious that all his children should do the same. As they left his house to become heads of families themselves, he presented each of them with an excellent manual of family

prayers, which he highly prized, the author of which, like himself, was a merchant, the late John Thornton, of Clapham, on the Surrey side of the Thames.

He endured the trials which befell him with the same unvaried equanimity with which he bore his success. His last days, true to the Psalmist's description, were days of labour and sorrow; but they were visibly, because deeply, marked by humility, peace, and hope. He never once alluded to anything that he had done, nor to the integrity, conscientiousness, benevolence, and religious character of his life. So far from trusting in himself that he was righteous, he was of a contrite and humble spirit; and instead of looking for the reward of his deeds of righteousness, he was looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. We may fitly apply to him the words of Job's friend, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yes, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine He shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt

visit thy habitation, and shalt not err. Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be much, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

All that was good in him we ascribe to God. It was He who endowed him with his strength of body and mind. It was He who trained him by His providences for the various important positions which he filled so well. This he felt and acknowledged. It was God who taught him by His word and grace to think humbly of himself, and made him to know and feel that there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom and through whom he could receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was He who endued him with moderation in prosperity and patience in suffering. And when at his advanced age of fourscore years and ten, their strength became labour and sorrow, it was He to whom he was indebted for the meekness, gentleness, and lowliness of heart which adorned his faith and beautified his character, and for the peace and hope which sustained and comforted him in the decay of nature, and the pains of death.

We have lost a kind, affectionate, steadfast friend; but we desire with all submission to

say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And, "We also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear; beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen."



