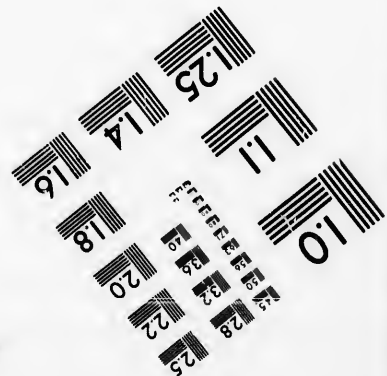
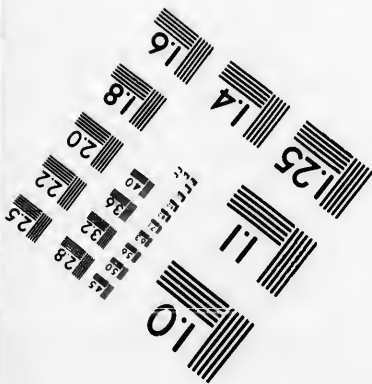
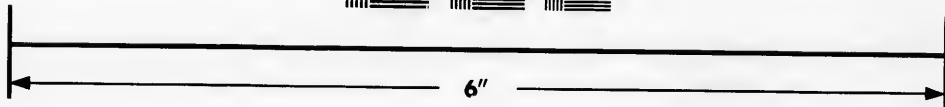
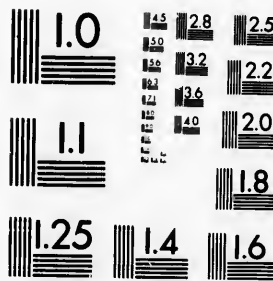


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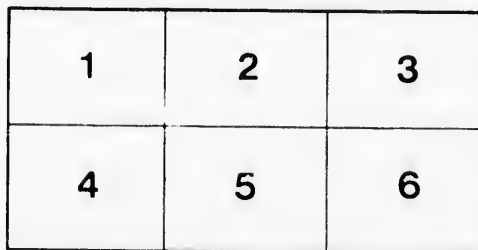
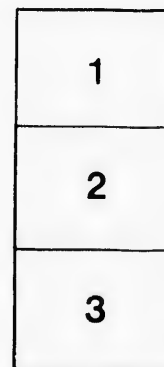
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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. PAUL,

AT HALIFAX;

On Sunday the 11th of June, 1815.

AFTER THE FUNERAL

Of Mrs. MARY STANSER,

WIFE OF

The Revd. ROBERT STANSER, D. D.
Rector of the Parish.

.....
By the Revd. JOHN INGLIS, D. D.
Ecclesiastical Commissary in the Diocese of
NOVA-SCOTIA.
.....

Being dead, she yet speaketh.

—
JOHN HOWE, SON &

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Vol. 5

18

Public Archives of Nova Scotia
HALIFAX, N. S.

To
*The Churchwardens, Vestry,
and Parishioners of the
Parish of St. Paul,*

THIS SERMON,

Printed by their desire;

Is respectfully inscribed;

By their faithful friend,

And obedient servant,

JOHN INGLIS.

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ECCLESIASTES, CHAP. 9TH, PART OF VERSE 12 :

For Man also knoweth not his time.

THE shortness of life, our ignorance of its appointed period, and the certainty of Death, are among those truths, which the most foolish have never doubted, and the boldest and most infatuated of the children of impiety have never ventured to deny. Every day gives them new evidence; and every reflection upon them increases their importance.

But barely to acknowledge truths, in which every human Being is deeply interested, is a very small part of the duty which they impose—Their influence upon the heart and conduct must be cultivated; they must be used to rouse the slumbering and the careless, from their fatal insensibility; and should

should stimulate all to profitable consideration of their most important interests.

Few things can be more evident than the intention of the righteous Ruler of the Universe, to make the ministration of death particularly useful in the moral government of the World—It was ordained at first, and still continues to be, an awful punishment. In its earliest visit, it bore an awakening warning to the primæval inhabitants of the earth; and every subsequent call has repeated the alarm to all the children of mortality—The value of this notice, when it is duly received, is testimony to the heavenly mercy which is ever mingled with the judgments of the Almighty—That mercy softened the sentence by which Death was first commissioned for its destructive work; and would still mitigate the severity of that sentence in every instance of its execution, if the folly and the depravity of the human heart did not so frequently strive to defeat its purposes.

Where men are crowded together as in populous cities, when the frequency of the instances of mortality is too apt to lessen the effect, which they ought to produce; and every day consigns numbers to the grave, without a proportionable influence upon the living; we frequently find the arm of death supported by the aid of famine, or pestilence, or some other scourge; and God upholds the power which he has delegated to this Messenger; thus raising his voice, and mercifully speaking louder, as the wickedness and infatuation of men close their ears against him.

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So also in those unhealthy climates where life is preserved with difficulty from day to day, and the empire of death seems so firmly established, that we might reasonably expect to find its moral and religious influence producing the happiest effect, and exciting universal piety; it too often happens that the corruption of the human heart creates an insensibility little short of madness. Every finer feeling appears to be paralyzed; and, deaf to the instruction of daily experience, the deluded votaries of Sin gather round the standards of iniquity, and triumph with new boldness, as the threads of life grow weaker, and their companions in guilt fall suddenly around them, in multitudes. Here we might be tempted to suppose that the intentions of the Almighty are frustrated, but not so: His purposes must be executed; and when the extraordinary frequency of death in so astonishing a manner renders the heart callous, and destroys even its common influence, a cure, proportioned to the magnitude of the evil, is often brought for its removal, and this messenger of God receives adequate assistance, which proves his power, and enforces his authority in a most awful and tremendous manner.

For it is especially in countries like these that the tempest, and the hurricane, and the inundation, sweep away flocks and herds, and all the inhabitants of the land, in one mighty ruin. Here also we often find the volcano, burying Fields, and Villages, and Towns, and Cities, in liquid fire. And here also the yawning earth is sometimes opened and swal-

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lows thousands and tens of thousands of her children in an instant.

Thus we see that God will not be mocked; but as he first gave power to this agent, when called upon to do so, by man's transgression; so will He continue to uphold his authority, until all the righteous plans of mercy are accomplished, and Death shall universally be swallowed up in Christian victory.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood, as if I were leading you to suppose, we can at once discover the whole design of infinite Wisdom, in every wonderful visitation of God—It is a mistake, similar to this, which encourages the visionary enthusiast, with very unbecoming boldness, to apply every remarkable interference of Providence to some specific and minute intention, as if the whole counsel of Heaven were opened for his personal information. Rather let us reverently believe, that numerous objects, and perhaps of more importance than any which our limited sight can discover, may be intended, whenever it pleases the Almighty to visit the children of men, in any remarkable manner—And it will be a duty, in perfect unison with such lowly reverence, to make every manifestation of His power instrumental to our improvement in righteousness: an employment not only safe and profitable upon all occasions, but even necessary for the most pious and devout.

A plain and obvious inference from the observations before us, is this—That it is incumbent upon us to consider death, in every visit to our little circle of

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of friends or acquaintance, as the bearer of a particular message and warning, which demand admittance within every heart—And happy would it be, if these were duly and thankfully received ; for then, however clouded with sorrow, at their approach, they might, with the blessing of God, be more instrumental to our highest joys, than all the notes of earthly pleasure that have ever sounded in our ears.

Messages of this kind have lately been addressed to many of my present hearers, in a very impressive manner, by more than the ordinary frequency of death among their dearest friends—And such a message is now borne to *every* individual of this congregation, by the death of one, who was known to all of them, and connected with them by a very interesting union.

For she was the partner of Him who is united to this flock by one of the most tender and endearing ties, that can bind an individual to the Society in which he lives—

Nor was she a partner only of his domestic cares and employments ; for she had a share also in many of his pastoral duties—Her prayers were often mingled with his, when they ascended to Heaven, to implore a blessing upon his spiritual charge. She was often the companion also of those visits, through scenes of sorrow and suffering, which were intended, to minister instruction to the ignorant, and comfort to the afflicted. Sometimes she would share in his pious labours to assuage the pains of sickness ; to wipe away the tears of penitence, and pour a balm into the wounded spirit : to animate
the

the faith and hope of the expiring Christian; to soothe the passage through the grave; and direct the closing eye to Heaven.

She may also be considered as having borne a part in that sacred instruction, which has been duly delivered from this place; for the whole tenor of her conduct exhibited a very animating illustration of its influence.

In her we beheld those retired and modest virtues, and that amiable and engaging piety, which adorn and exalt the female character—Like the excellent Dorcas, whose praises were thought worthy of a place, in that inspired history, which details the Acts of the Holy Apostles, *she was full of good works.*

But the tribute which affection would offer is superfluous—

To my hearers at large, it is unnecessary—for her merits were so well known and so duly appreciated, that the remembrance of them will be long and affectionately cherished.

Nor is it required by those, who must now mourn for the loss of a dearest relative; for they have an higher and a sweeter consolation, than can be offered by a fellow mortal—

It comes to them from that hallowed voice, which assures them, that *blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord.* They are comforted by the direction of the Apostle, which bids them, *not to sorrow, as men without hope, for them, that sleep in Jesus.*

For her also every tribute we can offer, is entirely needless

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needless—Her ears are now closed against the
sounds of a mortal voice; and her spirit is too far
removed, to be affected by any thing in this lower
world—

But we may readily believe that, if it were per-
mitted her to look back upon the scenes she has so
lately left, it would afford her the highest satisfac-
tion to see every one of us deriving a profitable les-
son from her recent funeral—Let this be our holy
employment; and although we are not warranted in
saying she can be affected by it, we may ven-
ture to promise that it may be full of most important
benefit to ourselves.—And that her funeral may
have its due effect, let every man consider, with all
the seriousness that should attend such reflection,
that very soon he also must bow under the blow of
death, and be the subject of a new triumph to the
mighty Spoiler.—

This will lead him to enquire also in what state of
preparation he will be, if the next visit should be to
himself—For he will feel it to be of most solemn im-
portance, that he should at all times be ready with
the preparation of the Gospel, since he dare not de-
ny that even this night his soul may be required of
him—And if he should be hurried away, unprepared
for the change which Death must make, and before
his peace is made with God; through the only Me-
diator and Redeemer, he is aware that the approach
of his dissolution must be dreadful, and the portion
provided for him must be full of horror and despair.

He will do well to remember too, that after
death,

death; his lot is fixed—not for a few fleeting months nor years; not for the short span of time, in which the busy affairs of this little world put on their paltry pomp; but for the endless Ages of Eternity—He knows that the most comprehensive mind attempts, in vain, to measure, even in thought, this boundless space; for after its most distant excursions, through millions and millions of centuries, more, infinitely more, will lie beyond it, than has yet been passed; and the years of man and of the world, with all their affected consequence, and all their empty engagements, sink, at once, into nothing.

If there are any present in this congregation, who have never yet given their attention to these solemn concerns of their immortal souls, let them consider how wretched the account would have been, which they must have rendered to the Almighty and all searching Judge, if they had been summoned to the bar of God's tribunal, instead of her, whose body has so lately been committed to the Earth.

By the mercy of Heaven these are still spared, and the opportunities so often slighted and neglected may yet be duly improved. But after a waste of years, they should not add another moment to the loss—At this favorable time, in this acceptable hour, let them make an offer of their hearts to God, and they may eventually receive in return, the endless joys of Heaven—Let them enter into the School of Christ, and they will find lessons marvelously suited to their condition—His yoke will be easy; his burden will be light—If they are sincerely inclined

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to become his true disciples, their progress will be continually and powerfully assisted, and every lost hour may even yet be redeemed—

Unhappily the most hardened champions of iniquity, whose progress in crime is continual, are strangers to the house of God; and a warning from this place can seldom reach their ears—But if any such should now be present, let these deluded slaves of Sin reflect, with trembling, upon the state in which they would now be suffering, if an offended, a justly offended God, had suddenly called them away from Sin to punishment, when death was so busy on every side of them.

Unhappy men! the sport of the enemy of souls! what would have been your condition, at this moment if you had been the victim for the grave, so lately opened?

And can you believe that you are to be spared much longer? Can you doubt that you also must be summoned from the present scene, and God only knows how soon, must meet him face to face.

In pity to yourselves, while thus He waiteth to be gracious, *Draw nigh to God, that He may draw nigh to you—Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts; Be afflicted and mourn and weep: Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness: Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, that he may lift you up.* Immediately, even in this present hour, how yourselves, in deepest humility of heart, at the throne of Grace—
And there, with unfeigned repentance, and with
servent

fervent prayer, prompted and enlivened by faith in the atonement of the Saviour of the world, most earnestly implore that the crimson of your crimes may all be washed away—Thus may you be prepared with new feelings and new prospects for the next funeral; nor will you fail to recollect that the next may be your own.

But of those who belong not to this class of offenders, how many should now be warned against delay in the fulfilment of many a holy purpose, many a Christian resolution, which they may have formed, perhaps in unconscious obedience to the silent dictates of the Holy Spirit; but have hitherto neglected and postponed them, waiting from day to day, and from year to year, for some more convenient season.

Never can a fitter moment, than the present, arrive; and never can it be more proper, more important, and more necessary, than it now is, for every one among us anxiously to review his spiritual state, and implore the help of Heaven in its amendment and improvement: For who is he that does not require amendment and improvement, before he follows our departed Sister, through the tomb?

The aged, I should hope, need not be reminded of the peculiar call on them, for holy preparation. They surely ought to have been ready for the last visit, if it had been made to them, instead of her, whose death has now drawn our notice to this interesting subject.—Be persuaded to trim your expiring lamps, ye, who in mercy have been spared so long; Watch and be ready!

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Nor should those in the fuller strength of middle life consider it less incumbent on them to be prepared for his call, who has just summoned one from themselves—For if her age alone had been regarded, she might have supposed that much of her race was still before her. But lo ! it is finished, and she is gone ! Be it your part to seek for strength that never languishes ; for health that always blooms : and look intently, and continually, to that Goal, whose prize is endless glory—

And may you also, my younger hearers, hasten to resign yourselves to the service of your Creator, your Redeemer and your Sanctifier—Yours is the welcome sacrifice of the morning, which rises to Heaven, like the grateful incense—Beware of confidence in your continuance here, for this is no abiding City ; and it is a well known truth, that many more of the young, than of the old, are daily carried to their graves, for but a few see long life—Banish the fatal delusion which would lead you to fancy there is time enough before you for the employment of your hearts in religion and piety. These are the fittest and the happiest engagements for every period of life. Begin when you will, new duties will rise before you every day, and in the faithful discharge of these, new delights will be continually unfolded. A pleasure blooms around them, pure as the clearest fountain, and as unfading too. Let it be sounded in *your* ears also, with warning as impressive as its truth is immovable, that *Man, born of a Woman, is of few days, and that he also knoweth not his time.* And

And may the Grace of God so attend the removal of our departed Sister, and our improvement of the melancholy event, that, as we must all daily approach the gates of Death, so we may no less surely approach those everlasting gates, which open on all the joys and all the glories of the highest Heavens.

Grant it Almighty Father, we most humbly implore Thee, for the sake and merits of Thy dear Son, Christ Jesus, to Whom with Thee and the Holy Spirit, eternal Three in One, be ascribed all Glory, Praise, and Adoration, henceforth and forever—

AMEN.

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