

Chapter 32

The Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Hannah Case Miller

Introduction

My 4th-great grandmother, Hannah Case, was born on 28 June 1761 in Simsbury, Connecticut. In 1781, she married The Rev. Jonathan Allen Miller, who was born on 21 July 1762 in Avon, Connecticut. Hannah Case Miller and her husband Rev. Jonathan Allen Miller had nine children: daughters Clarissa and Orpha, and sons Ezra L., Jonathan Allen, Allen, Orren B., Jonathan, Horace Allen, and Herman. Hannah Case Miller died on 14 September 1819, at the age of 58.

The “Quincy Oakleys” are descended from Hannah Case Miller and Rev. Jonathan Allen Miller through their son Allen Miller, who was born in 1788 in Hartland, Connecticut. Allen Miller married Hannah Louise Tripp in 1810 in Galway, New York. In about 1839, they moved west (along with a number of other **Miller** family members) to Winnebago County, Illinois, where they farmed on land that today is the site of the Chicago-Rockford International Airport. Allen Miller and his wife Hannah Louise Tripp Miller are buried in New Milford Cemetery, in New Milford, Illinois, just a few miles east of the Rockford airport – here is a photograph of their gravestone:



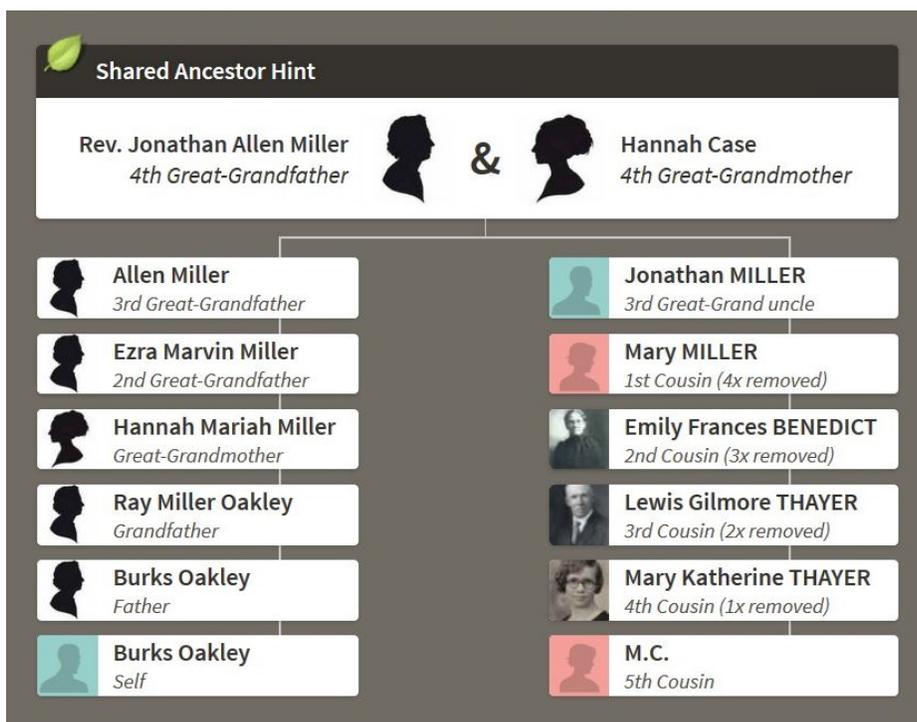
Allen Miller and his wife Hannah Louise Tripp Miller had a number of children, including Ezra Marvin Miller (1812-1874). One of Ezra’s daughters was Hannah

Mariah Miller (1838-1926). Hannah Mariah Miller married Aaron Burr Oakley (1835-1906), and their son was my paternal grandfather, Ray Miller Oakley (1876-1948). Therefore, I can trace my **Oakley/Miller/Case** lineage back to my 4th-great grandmother Hannah Case as follows:

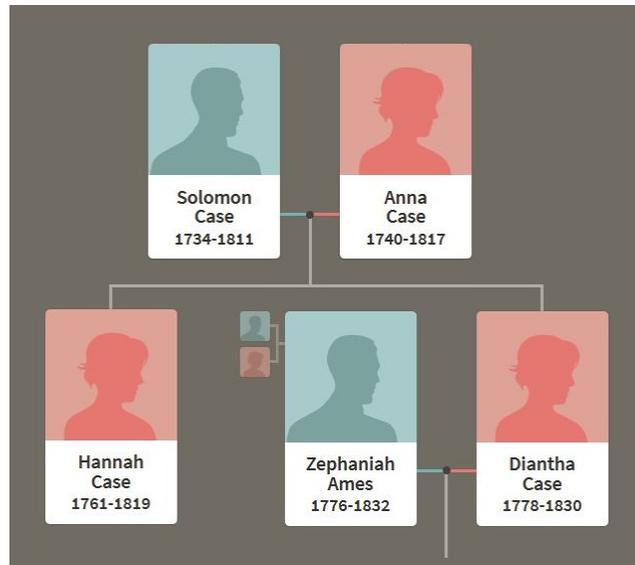
- Burks Oakley II (1949-) – self
- Burks Oakley (1898-1969) – father
- Ray Miller Oakley (1876-198) – grandfather
- Hannah Mariah Miller (1838-1926) – great-grandmother
- Ezra Marvin Miller (1812-1874) – 2nd-great grandfather
- Allen Miller (1788-1868) – 3rd-great grandfather
- Hannah Case (1761-1819) – 4th-great grandmother

A DNA Connection Going Back to Hannah Case

One of my first adventures with “genetic genealogy” led me to investigate a DNA match that I have on Chromosome 8 with several other people. One of these people is Mary Kay Coker’s mother (Marjory Carol Coker). Our **Most Recent Common Ancestors (MRCA)** are Hannah Case (1761-1819) and the Rev. Jonathan Allen Miller.



Hannah’s parents were Solomon Case (1734-1811) and his wife Anna (1740-1817):



Another one of my DNA matches on Chromosome 8 is with John Martin; he is descended from Solomon Case (1735-1811) and his wife Anna Case (1740-1817), through their daughter Diantha Case (1778-1826).

Mary Kay Coker and the Funeral Sermon for Hannah Case Miller

In interacting with Mary Kay Coker about my DNA matches with her family members, I learned that she works as an archivist – she has a MS in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where her major field of interest was archiving. She works as an archivist for the State of Missouri Archives in Jefferson City, Missouri.

In the fall of 2015, Mary Kay sent me an e-mail note with the following:

Oh, by the way, I recently got a copy of the funeral sermon for Hannah (Case) Miller. When I get some time, I'll scan it and send it to you. It's missing 2 pages, I think because the original was so damaged that it was illegible. (It's part of an Early American Imprints series on microfiche.) But the critical parts about her life and parentage (Deacon Solomon Case) are still there. She apparently had mental issues at the end, which strangely fluctuated with the seasons. It was brought on (so they thought) by caring for an ill son.

Hannah died on 14 September 1819. It turns out that her son, the Rev. Orren B. Miller, preached the sermon at her funeral. Later that year, Rev. Orren B. Miller published this sermon; it is fascinating reading, and I have to say that I am amazed by the high level of intellect and knowledge of biblical scripture

displayed by Rev. Miller in his oratory. [As an aside, his name was mistakenly spelled "Orrin" in my father's genealogical records, which I obtained from my cousin Hal Oakley in electronic form.]

I note that microfilm of this document is available in several libraries.¹

A funeral sermon preached at the occasion of the death of Mrs. Hannah Miller, consort of the Rev. Jonathan A. Miller, September 14, 1819, at Mount Morris, Genesee Co., N.Y.

Author: [Orren Miller](#)
Publisher: Moscow [N.Y.] Printed by H. Ripley, 1819.
Edition/Format:  Print book : English [View all editions and formats](#)
Database: WorldCat
Rating:  (not yet rated)  0 with reviews - Be the first.
Subjects: [Miller, Hannah, -- 1761-1819.](#)
[Funeral sermons.](#)
[Sermons, American.](#)

Here is a partial list of the libraries that have this document:

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4.  Western North Carolina Library Network Appalachian State University Boone, NC 28608 United States
5.  Davidson College Davidson College Library Davidson, NC 28035 United States
6.  Vanderbilt University Library Jean and Alexander Heard Library Nashville, TN 37203 United States

The following pages in this document contains photographs of the pages from the sermon, which were sent to me by Mary Kay Coker, along with my translation. I

¹ <http://www.worldcat.org/title/funeral-sermon-preached-at-the-occasion-of-the-death-of-mrs-hannah-miller-consort-of-the-rev-jonathan-a-miller-september-14-1819-at-mount-morris-genesee-co-ny/oclc/21349575>

request that all readers of this document inform me of any errors that I have made in this translation.

Page 1:

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Miller, Orren.

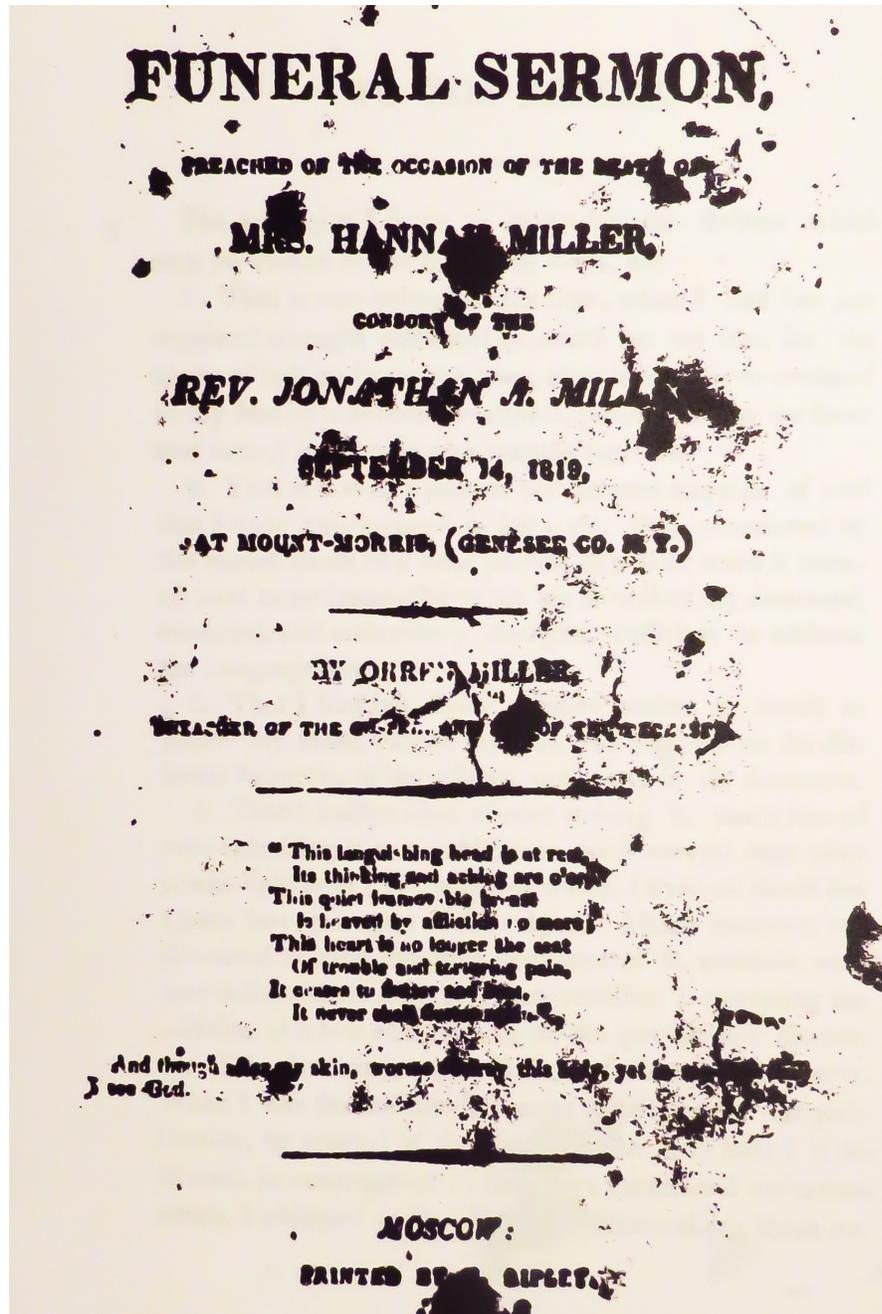
**A Funeral Sermon, Preached on the Occasion
of the Death of Mrs. Hannah Miller, . . .**

September 14, 1819.

Moscow, [N.Y.], Ripley, 1819. 20 pp.

(pp. 18-19 skipped in filming.)

NRU copy.



Funeral Sermon
Preached on the Occasion of the Death of
Mrs. Hannah Miller
Consort of the
Rev. Jonathan A. Miller
September 14, 1819
At Mt. Morris (Genesee County, N.Y.)
By Orren Miller

TO THE READER

The apologies I have to make for the defects which may be visible in the following work, are

1. That it was delivered at a time, when I had but just regained strength sufficient to stand on my feet, for the space of half an hour at a time, after having been confined to my bed by a nervous weakness, (occasioned by the fever and ague,) for almost nine months together.

2. That it was at a time of the keenest anguish of soul that I ever experienced in life; viz. that occasioned by the recent death of a dear parent, at a time when it seemed next to an impossibility for me to collect my scattered, confused, and melancholy thoughts, sufficient to address the congregation.

3. That I had but thirty minutes' notice, in which to collect my mind, choose my text, and meditate on the different branches of the subject presented in the discourse.

4. That I had no idea of ever writing it, much less of ever submitting it to a publication, until several days after it was delivered; by reason of which, I have no doubt but I have lost some part of the subject. I have however, endeavored to write the main substance of it, *verbatim*, as it was delivered, as near as I can recollect; excepting the addition of a few observations on the person and character of the deceased, which I have inclosed in brackets. When I was first solicited to write a discourse for publication, by several of the congregation who heard it delivered, in consequence of the above mentioned embarrassments, I objected to it. Notwithstanding, those em-

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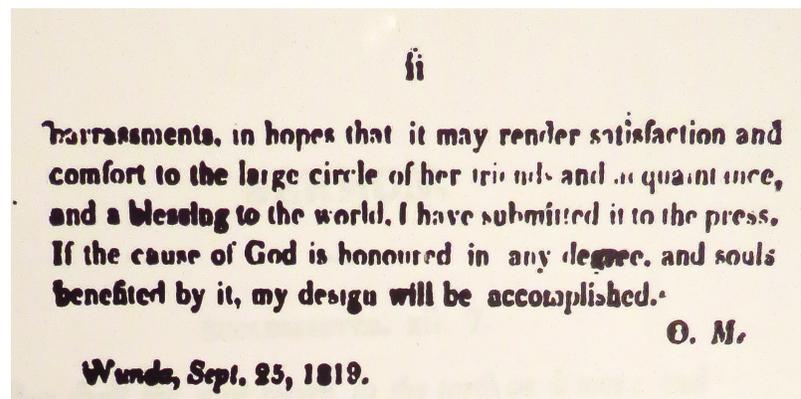
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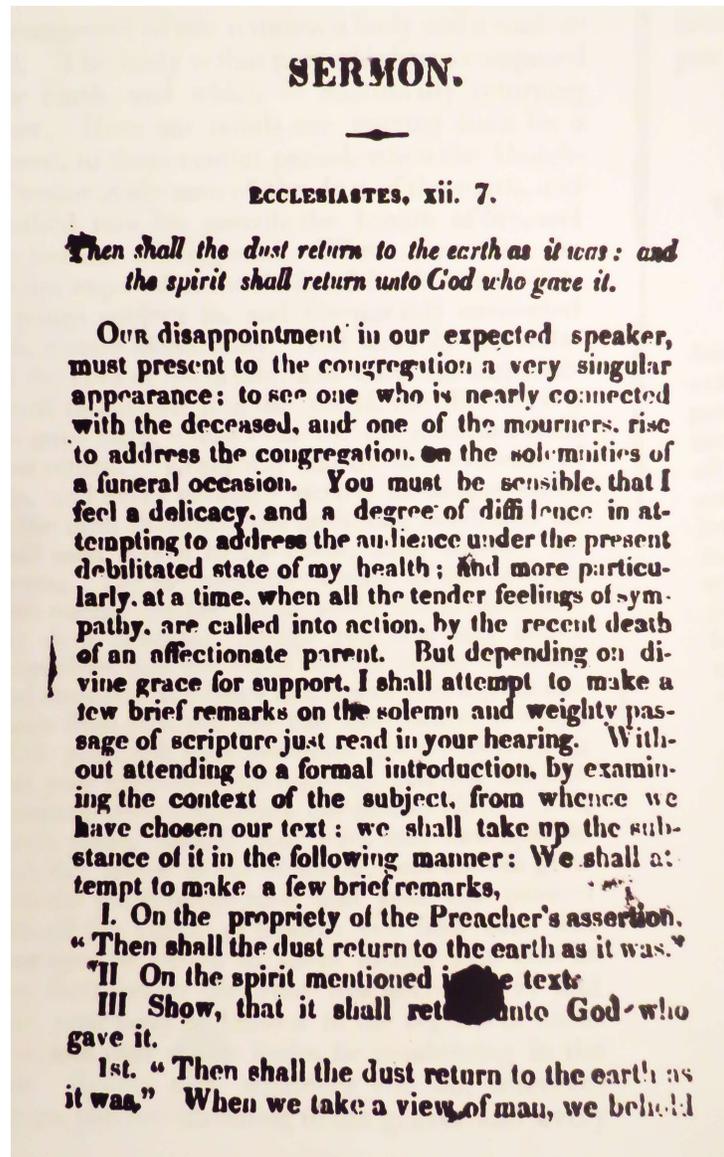
Page 4:



barrassments in hopes that it may render satisfaction and comfort to the large circle of her friends and acquaintance, and a blessing to the world, I have submitted it to the press. If the cause of God is honoured in any degree and souls benefited by it, my design will be accomplished.

O.M.

Wunda (??), Sept 25, 1819.



Sermon

Ecclesiastes xii 7

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and
the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

[Note from Burks: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This is Ecclesiastes 12:7 from the King James Version of the Bible. In case you were wondering, the King James Version of the Bible is an English translation of the Christian Bible for the Church of England that was begun in 1604 and completed in 1611 – more than 400 years ago!]

Our disappointment in our expected speaker must present to the congregation a very singular appearance; to see one who is nearly connected with the deceased and one of the mourners rise to address the congregation on the solemnities of a funeral occasion. You must be sensible that I feel a delicacy and a degree of diffidence in attempting to address the audience under the present debilitated state of my health; and more particularly at a time when all the tender feelings of sympathy are called into action by the recent death of an affectionate parent. But depending on divine grace for support, I shall attempt to make a few brief remarks on the solemn and weighty passage of scripture just read in your hearing. Without attending to a formal introduction by examining the context of the subject from whence we have chosen our text: we shall take up the substance of it in the following manner: We shall attempt to make a few brief remarks,

I. On the propriety of the Preacher's assertion

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was.”

II. On the spirit mentioned in the text

III. Show, that it shall return unto God who gave it.

1st. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was.” When we take a view of man, we behold

him composed of two natures, a body and a soul, or spirit. The body is that part which was composed of the earth, and which is continually returning thither. Here our minds are carried back for a moment, to that eventful period, when the Almighty Creator made man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. When, for a time, he was not exposed to the shafts of death, nor the bitter pangs subject to, and inseparably connected with, a state of mortality. But since he has violated the laws of his maker, and since the introduction of moral evil into the world, the dire decree has gone forth, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Every day affords new evidence of this, and every creature around us demonstrates to the most skeptical and hesitating mind, that we shall soon return to the earth, from whence we sprung. Let me press the weight of this subject, with energy on the minds of the congregation.— My dear hearers; though you now may flatter yourselves, that you enjoy the full vigour of health and strength, and fancy that death is at a great distance from you, yet ere you are aware, perhaps while you think your prospects are yet increasing, and your greatness still aspiring, you will fall like autumnal leaves, to enrich our mother earth. Yes, lovely youth, though your eyes may now sparkle with the lustre of the diamond, your cheeks glow with the blush of the rose, and your lips painted with all the vigour of health; yet, how soon will your eyes be closed in silent death, your cheeks lose their former die, your lips become livid and pale, your body be housed in the regions of darkness, and your arms and limbs, lie mouldering in the dust. Reflect that whatever you do, wherever you go, you are travelling to the grave, and every

him composed to two natures, a body and a soul, or spirit. The body is that part which was composed of the earth, and which is continually returning hither. Here our minds are carried back for a moment, to that eventful period when the Almigh-

ty Creator made man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. When, for a time, he was not exposed to the shafts of death nor the bitter pangs subject to, and inseparably connected with a state of mortality. But since he has violated the laws of his maker and since the introduction of moral evil into the world, the dire decree has gone forth, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Every day affords new evidence of this, and every creature around us demonstrates to the most skeptical and hesitating mind, that we shall soon return to the earth, from whence we sprung. Let me press the weight of this subject, with energy on the minds of the congregation - My dear hearers: though you now may flatter yourselves that you enjoy the full vigour of health and strength, and fancy that death is at a great distance from you, yet ere you are aware, perhaps while you think your prospects are yet increasing, and your greatness still aspiring, you will fall like autumnal leaves to enrich our mother earth. Yes, lovely youth, though your eyes may now sparkle with the lustre of the diamond, your cheeks glow with the blush of the rose, and your lips painted with all the vigour of health; yet, how soon will your eyes be closed in silent death, your cheeks lose their former die, your lips become livid and pale, your body be housed in the regions of darkness, and your [unreadable] limbs lie mouldering in the dust. Reflect that whatever you do, wherever you go, you are travelling to the grave, and every

beating pulse leaves the number less. Although:
you now may be

“Flooded with abundance, purpled o’er
With recent honours, bloomed with every bliss,
Set up in ostentation, made the gaze,
The gaudy centre of the public eye.”

Yet,

“When fortune thus has toss’d her child in air,
Snatcht from the covert of an humble state,
How often have I seen them dropt, at once
Our morning’s envy ! and our evening’s sigh.”

And, although you may have escaped the numerous evils incident to childhood, and in health and vigour arrived to the years of manhood, yet soon will the brittle thread of life be cut in sunder by the all devouring scythe of time, and you will be gathered into that land “from whose bourne no traveler returns.” Instance how often it is the case that to-day we see our honoured parents, our dutiful wives and children, our affectionate brethren and sisters, and our kind neighbours, flourishing in the full vigour of health, and ere to-morrow’s sun has set, we follow them to the silent grave ; their dust “returns to the earth as it was.” We now come

2. To make a few remarks on the spirit mentioned in the text. The spirit mentioned, is the spirit of the man ; for saith the Preacher, “ who knoweth the spirit of the man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth.”* It is that better part of man which is not subject to the arrows of death. Some moral philosophers have attempted to make some distinction between the spirit and soul of man. But, as the distinctions made by them, are of so little consequence, and as the terms, “~~god~~ and spirit,” are used so nearly synonymous in the sacred scriptures, in consequence of the debility of my health, I

* Eccl. iii. 21.

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[Note from Burks – this poetry was written by the English poet, Edward Young, 1683-1765.]

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*Eccl. iii 21

[Note from Burks: Ecclesiastes is one of 24 books of the Hebrew Bible. It is among the books in the Old Testament of most denominations of Christianity.]

The title Ecclesiastes is a Latin transliteration of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Koheleth, meaning "Gatherer", but traditionally translated as "Teacher" or "Preacher", the pseudonym used by the author of the book. Note that the Rev. Orren B. Miller used the traditional term of "Preacher" in the sermon.

The book of Ecclesiastes is an anonymous treatise; critical study believes it was composed in the last part of the 3rd century BC. The author "Koheleth" uses a literary device to introduce himself as "son of David, king in Jerusalem" (i.e., Solomon), which dates the book itself to the 10th century BC. It proceeds to discuss the meaning of life and the best way of life. He proclaims all the actions of man to be inherently hevel, meaning "vain", "futile", "empty", "meaningless", "temporary", "transitory", "fleeting", or "mere breath," as the lives of both wise and foolish people end in death. While Koheleth clearly endorses wisdom as a means for a well-lived earthly life, he does not ascribe eternal meaning to it. In light of this senselessness, one should enjoy the simple pleasures of daily life, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's work, which are gifts from the hand of God. The book concludes with the injunction: "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Ecclesiastes has had a deep influence on Western literature. It contains several phrases that have resonated in British and American culture, such as "nothing new under the sun," "a time to be born and a time to die," and "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Abraham Lincoln quoted Ecclesiastes 1:4 in his address to the reconvening Congress on 1 December 1862 during the darkest hours of the American Civil War: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever....Our strife pertains to ourselves - to the passing generations of men; and it can without convulsion be hushed forever with the passing of one generation." (end of note from Burks)]

&

shall not attempt to show the distinctions made, but refer your minds to a few of the many passages of scripture, which speak of the spirit of man. It is said of the Almighty, that "he is the God of the spirits of all men."* Again he says, "the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made."† Job says, "there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding;"‡ and St. Paul says "I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless."§ &c. Again, "Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."¶ From these and many other passages of scripture which might be mentioned, we see that the spirit, is that noble, immaterial, sensative, immortal principle within us, which is capable of the sensations of happiness and pain, and which is not subject to dissolution; which shall exist when the body is consigned to the grave. Nay, shall in its existence, run parallel with eternity; shall exist as long as God himself exists. I now proceed

3. To show that the spirit shall return to God who gave it.

When life sinks apace, when death draws the curtains of time, and presents eternity to view, when death winds up the changing scenes of life, and relieves us from this mortal toil—when death puts a period to our pains, our sorrows and our tears—when death opens this cage of clay and lets go its weary prisoner—then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the freed spirit "returns to that God who gave it."

Here I would beg leave, to dissent in opinion from those who suppose that the spirit lies dormant and inactive in the silent grave, until the morning

* Numb. xviii, 16. † Isa. lvii, 16. ‡ Job, xxxii, 8. § 1. Thess. v, 23. ¶ Luke, i, 47.

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* Numb. xxvii 16

† Isa lvii 16

‡ Job xxxii 8

§ Thess v 23

|| Luke i 47

[Note from Burks: Typographical devices such as the asterisk (*) and dagger (†) are used to point to footnotes. According to Wikipedia, the traditional order of these symbols in English is *, †, ‡, §, ||, ¶. And that is exactly the order used in the printing of this sermon from 1819!]

of the resurrection—and offer a few arguments, to prove that the spirit returns *immediately*, “to God who gave it.”

In relation to this subject, it is said of Rachel, when dying, “that her soul was on *departing*.”*— Again, when Elijah raised the body of the dead child, he prayed and said, “let this child’s *soul come into him again*.”† and in answer to his prayer, it is said, “the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” Again, it is said of St. Stephen, when dying, he called upon God, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my *spirit*.”‡ So it is said of Abraham, “he gave up the *ghost*, and died.”§ &c. Again, when the penitent thief on the cross prayed, “Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom. Jesus said unto him, *to-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise.”¶ Please to note, it is not said, thou shalt be with me in paradise at the day of judgment, or thereafter, but *to-day*. Here let me quere; if the soul lies dormant in the grave until the resurrection of the body, how could our Lord promise him, “*to-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Again, “I saw,” says St. John, “*under the altar, the souls* of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth.”‡ Again, St. Paul says, “having a desire to *depart*, and to be with Christ, which is far better.”** “Knowing, that whilst we are at *home* in the body, we are *absent* from the Lord.” “We are willing rather to be *absent* from the body, and to be *present* with the Lord.”†† Here let me quere again; if the soul of man lies dormant in the grave

* Gen. xxv. 18. † I. Kings, xvii. 21. ‡ Acts, vii. 59. § Gen. v. 8. ¶ Luke, xxiii. 43, 43. ¶ Rev. vi. 9, 10. ** Phil. i. 23. †† II. Cor. v. 6, 7.

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* Gen. xxxv 18

† I. Kings xvii 21

‡ Acts vii 59

§ Gen. xxv 8

|| Luke xxiii 42, 43

¶ Rev. vi 9, 10

** Phil. i 23

†† II Cor. v 6, 7

until the close of time, how could St. Paul be present with Christ, any sooner by being absent from the body *then*, than he would have done, had he remained in it a thousand years longer. It therefore, undeniably follows, that "the spirit returns to God who gave it," at the very time the dust returns to the earth. Again, it is said, "and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, with the spirit, &c."* Observe, it is not said, they shall be blessed after they have arose from the dead; but "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth." Therefore, they must have a conscious existence from henceforth, or they cannot be blessed from henceforth; for if they lie dormant, they can receive no more of a blessing from henceforth than the wicked do, for both are alike insensible of either pleasure or pain. Once more; it is said that "Lazarus died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, bring in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."†

It is therefore certain that the spirit does not sleep in the grave, but has a conscious existence, either happy or miserable, from the very moment the body dies—and from the several passages of scripture that have been mentioned, it appears that after the spirits of men have returned to God, they have a conscious and intelligent existence, either in the place of the separate spirits of the righteous, called paradise; or in that of the wicked, called hell, or hades, during the interval of time between death and the day of judgment. And, from the very nature of their moral characters, they must be either happy or miserable, according to their consciousness of guilt or innocence.

* Rev. xiv. 13. † Luke, xvi. 22, 23.

until the close of time, how could St. Paul be present with Christ and soon by being absent from the body *then*, than he would have done, had he remained in it a thousand years longer. It therefore, undeniably follows that "the spirit returns to God who gave it," at the very time the dust returns to the earth. Again, it is said "and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed

are the dead which die in the Lord, from *henceforth*: yea, saith the Spirit &c”* Observe, it is not said they shall be blessed after they have arose from the dead; but “blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from *henceforth*.” Therefore, they must have a conscious existence from *henceforth*, or they cannot be blessed from *henceforth*; for if they lie dormant, they can receive no more of a blessing from *henceforth* than the wicked do, for both are alike insensible of either pleasure or pain. Once more: it is said that “Lazarus died and was *carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom*. The rich man also died, and was buried, and *in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*”†

It is therefore certain that the spirit does not sleep in the grave, but has a conscious existence, either happy or miserable, from the very moment the body dies - and from the several passages of scripture that have been mentioned, it appears that after the spirits of men have returned to God, they have a conscious and intelligent existence, either in the place of the separate spirits of the righteous, called paradise; or in that of the wicked, called hell, or hades, during the interval of time between death and the day of judgment. And, from the very nature of their moral characters, they must be either happy or miserable, according to their consciousness of guilt or inno-

* Rev. xiv. 13

† Luke xvi. 22, 23

gence—for virtue is its own reward, while vice is its own punishment; and while there is a consciousness of virtue, of justification and innocence, it is impossible but that the soul must be happy.

Here, I would beg leave also, to dissent in opinion from those who suppose that the judgment takes place with the souls of men, as soon as they depart from the body—and that the righteous and wicked are rewarded according to their works, as soon as the spirits return to God who gave them." For if this supposition be correct, it must supersede the necessity of a day of judgment, to arraign men at the bar of God, and judge, punish and reward them for actions and works which were judged, punished and rewarded, many of them, six thousand years before. Again, God cannot consistently judge man according to his works, until the final close or accomplishment of his works, which will not be, until the final dissolution of all things. For instance, the writings, preaching, and ministerial labours of St. Paul, a Whitfield, and a Wesley, have not ceased to do good, notwithstanding they are dead and gone, and probably will not, so long as time endures. Instance on the other hand, the writings and efforts of a Voltaire and a Tom Paine, to diffuse the principles of infidelity among the nations, have not yet lost their effects, and probably will not, so long as infidelity is known to exist on the earth; therefore, as man cannot be judged, punished or rewarded for works which he has not yet performed, it follows that man cannot be judged until the day of judgment, or many of his works must go unpunished and unrewarded, which justice forbids. Therefore, man cannot, will not, be judged, until the great drama of nature shall close; the changing scenes of time wind up, and the actions of man come to a final period. Then, at the sound of the

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great trumpet of God, the sleeping dead shall hear the great alarm and spring from their dusty beds, their souls and bodies reunite, and they shall be judged and meet the final reward due to their actions and enjoy the full summit of their happiness, or find the full completion of their misery.

But, as virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment, and as the spirit of man has an intelligent existence in the interim between death and judgment, that existence must be either happy or miserable, according to their consciousness of having been virtuous or vicious while in life.—

Here, let me impress this subject with all its weight and importance on your minds; let it be written as with the pen of iron, or the point of a diamond, on the table of your hearts, that it may influence your minds to seek for the enjoyment of that religion which will prepare you for, and give you a title to, a seat in the great church above, where the supreme architect of the universe presides,—where sickness, sorrow, pain and death shall be feared and felt no more—where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. Let the solemn scene which is now presented to your view, influence your hearts to reflect, that soon your dust shall return to the earth as it was, and your spirit shall return unto that God who gave it.”

Shall I call your attention for a few moments to the solemnities of the occasion on which we are assembled.—It is to follow the remains of a departed neighbour, a dear and deceased mother to the silent tomb. Were it not for the near relation in which I stand to the deceased—were it not a parent, I might say much concerning the excellency of her moral character. But, nevertheless, so far as her moral character is connected with the excellency of the christian religion and the

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church of God, I beg the indulgence of the congregation, while I make a few brief remarks on her person and character.

[She was the daughter of Solomon Case, deacon of the presbyterian church, of old Simsbury, (Connecticut,) and was born on the 28th of June, A. D. 1761. She received a christian education, and was early taught the principles of virtue and religion.] At the age of twenty-two, (soon after her marriage,) she gave evidence of her genuine repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of her sound conversion to God.— She joined the presbyterian church in Farmington, where for several years she held the acknowledged fellowship of that church. From thence by letter, she removed to, and united with, the presbyterian church in New-Hartford. After walking in christian love with that church for several years, she removed to Hartland, and by letter, united with the church in that place, where she remained a pious and worthy member until about twenty-seven years since, when she joined that numerous and pious body of christians, the methodist episcopal church. [From thence, she removed to old Stockbridge, (Massachusetts,) and by recommendation, joined her heart and hand with the society in that town, where, for about nine years, she evidenced the christian walk, and gained the love and good will of her numerous acquaintance. From thence, by recommendation, she removed to, and united with the society in the town of Galway, (New-York,) where, for better than twelve years, she trod the christian path with vigorous delight, and gave evidence to all around her that she was not a stranger to the benign religion of the humble Jesus. She removed from thence in the year 1816, to this place, (Mount-Morris, Genesee co.) where, during her rational moments, her

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piety has never been doubted.] Finally, from the time of her first profession of religion, so long as she retained her senses, her character has uniformly corresponded with the religion she professed. She bore up under the changing and afflicting vicissitudes of life, with all the fortitude and patience of a christian.—She has been the mother of eleven children, three of whom she buried in infancy, a fourth was a lovely boy of twelve years of age, and if she had a darling child in her family, it was that; yet when he was torn from her arms by death, when God called for her blooming boy, she cheerfully resigned him up, and with the fortitude and resignation of a christian, exclaimed, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” In short, her moral character has ever been unimpeachable. Her daily life has been a standing monument of the excellency of that religion she has so long professed and enjoyed. As an evidence of this, I would just relate a few particulars of her life, which are yet fresh in my memory, and which I trust I shall never forget.

I well recollect, that when I was a child, in the absence of my father, with that fortitude which few women possess, she would call her numerous family of children and domestics around her, and after reading a portion of the word of God, and instructing our minds in the principles of the religion of Christ, on her suppliant knees, before the throne of grace, she would pour out her soul to her God in plaintive cries, for her children and domestics, that they might grow up in the knowledge of God, and become pious and useful members of the church of Christ.—Yes, her many pious prayers and religious councils, given in the moments of my childhood, have left such an impression on my mind, as I trust time shall never erase. {As a wife, she was

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condescending and respectful—as a mother, she was kind and affectionate—as a neighbour, she was compassionate and obliging.] As a woman, she was possessed of a good understanding, a sound judgment, and a feeling heart. How often have I seen the tear of sympathy steal down her cheeks for other's woes. She was not elated with prosperity nor dejected with adversity; but frequently would stay her mind by saying, "the Lord will provide." But she has now escaped the cares and calamities of life, and no doubt she now rests in Abraham's bosom.

Shall I now make a few remarks to my dear father, brethren, and sisters, who with myself are called to mourn.

Honoured Father,

How shall I address you, or what shall I say?—God has, in the wise dispensation of his providence, come near unto you, and removed your bosom friend, my dear and honoured mother, from your company and embraces—he is gone, to return no more. After having been united by the most sacred ties, for almost forty years, the ties that bound and united your souls together, are now cut in sunder, and you must part to meet no more in time. She has been a kind, tender, and dutiful companion amidst the afflicting scenes of your past life. I think you have reason to rejoice while you mourn, and be thankful that God did not take her from you, while your numerous family were yet young, and incapable of taking care of themselves, and leave them destitute of a nursing mother. But she has been spared to see your children grown up to years of manhood, and settled around you. Notwithstanding her mental derangement,* for the few

* As a satisfaction to her numerous acquaintance, I would here give a short account of the cause of her mental derangement, for the few last seasons of her life. In the month of July A. D. 1813,

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last years of her life, has been the source of many a heartfelt pang to you, as also to the remainder of our family; yet, we have the consoling reflection, that we have the opportunity of paying our last respect to her remains. May your loss be made up by a more near and dear communion with your God—may that religion which you have so long professed be your support in this trying hour of affliction—may it be a stay and a staff to you in your declining years, and may your last days be

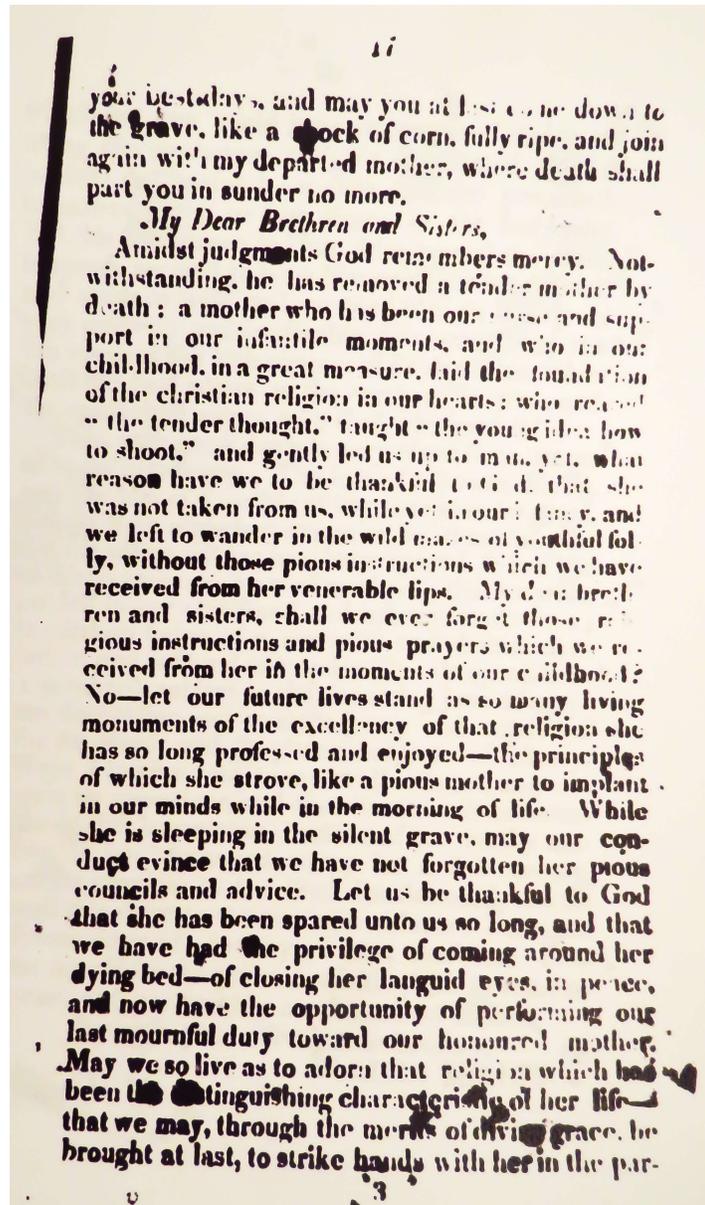
I was attacked very violently with the bilious fever, and after having been confined about three weeks, I was removed from where I was first taken ill, to my father's house, where I was soon reduced so low by the disease, that my life was despaired of. Immediately, she took almost the sole charge and care of me upon herself, and after having attended to the duties of her numerous family, during the day, with all the care and anxiety of a most indulgent mother, she would watch the couch of illness, and administer to my relief, until a late hour of night, and then with the dawn of day she would arise, and again renew her care and solicitude—her maternal hand kindly propped my sinking head, and she resigned not her care and kind offices until I had recovered my health, so far as to be able to take care of myself. This was followed immediately, with some other sickness in my father's family, which called her attention so much from her usual sleep and rest, that it proved too much for her constitution to bear. It produced an unusual action of the nerves, which was soon followed by symptoms of mental derangement, such as a melancholy and dejected spirit, &c. which continued during the winter, and though she recovered again, in a great degree, the next summer, yet the ensuing spring she discovered still greater symptoms of delirium. Her mental derangement continued to increase yearly, as the seasons came around. It generally began about the last of March, and terminated in a great measure about the last of August, and thus became periodical with the season. Previous to her derangement, she was possessed of the most amiable and agreeable temper, and disposition of mind. Since my recollection, I seldom, never, saw her in a passion, or ruffled with anger.—Notwithstanding, she was, in her deranged moments, (when the helm of reason was lost,) left to be driven by the merciless winds and boisterous waves of turbulent passion, and her bosom torn with the most keen sensations of horror and frenzy, yet, the readiness with which she, at all times, would quote the scriptures, show that she had deeply studied, and well understood them, previous to her derangement.

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[continuation of footnote from page 15]

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your best day, and may you at last escape down to the grave, like a shock of corn, fully ripe, and join again with my departed mother, where death shall part you in sunder no more.

My Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Amidst judgments God remembers mercy. Notwithstanding, he has removed a tender mother by death; a mother who has been our [unreadable] and support in our infantile moments, and who in our childhood, in a great measure, laid the foundation of the christian religion in our heart; who reaped (?)

“the tender thought”, taught “the young idea how to shoot,” and gently led us up to [unreadable], yet what reason have we to be thankful [unreadable] that she was not taken from us while yet in our infancy, and we left to wander in the wild [unreadable] of youthful folly, without those pious instructions which we have received from her venerable lips. My dear brethren and sisters, shall we ever forget those religious instructions and pious prayers which we received from her in the moments of our childhood? No -- let our future lives stand as so many living monuments of the excellency of that religion she has so long professed and enjoyed - the principles of which she strove, like a pious mother to implant in our minds while in the morning of life. While she is sleeping in the silent grave, may our conduct evince that we have not forgotten her pious councils and advice. Let us be thankful to God that she has been spared unto us so long, and that we have had the privilege of coming around her dying bed - of closing her languid eyes in peace, and how have the opportunity of performing our last mournful duty toward our honoured mother. May we so live as to adorn that religion which had been the distinguishing characteristic of her life -- that we may, through the merits of divine grace, be brought at last, to strike hands with her in the par-

Pages 18 and 19 were not copied, since they were illegible.

Page 20 [this part of the document consists of comments from Allen Miller, who was Rev. Orren Miller's brother]:

20

which but few could have encountered under ex-
[unreadable] circumstances, with his debilitated state of
health; not having been able to have preached,
to exceed three or four times, in the last year.
Yet, his confidence in Him, who caused the dumb
to speak, seemed to buoy him up above his difficult
and arduous task, and enabled him to deliver a
very pathetic and applicable discourse about the
7th verse of the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, "then
shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and
the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
This, with every day's history of our lives, warns
us to be always ready. The loss of a bosom friend,
and the loss of a mother at any time must be great,
and we have abundant reason to be thankful, that
our mother has been spared to see her
children arrive to years of manhood; that we were
not left in our childhood and infancy, motherless;
that we were not the forlorn babes of a mournful and disconsolate
father, and suffered to wander like sheep without
a shepherd, subject to the devouring jaws of un-
godly dissipation and wretchedness, and rendered
the despised, and yet pitiable, objects of misery.
Were I to give vent to my swollen heart, and ex-
press its sensations, and describe the sad catastro-
phe of the lamentable situation of our worthy mo-
ther, in her deranged state, for a few dreary
months previous to her final dissolution, I should
swell this sheet to the size of a volume; but want
of room demands brevity; I must therefore, con-
tent myself for the present, wishing you to remem-
ber us, and particularly our honoured father.
I remain your affectionate brother,
ALLEN MILLER.

ORREN L. MILLER.

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[unreadable] circumstances, with his debilitated state of
health, not having been able to have preached,
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This, with every day's history of our lives, warns [unreadable] also ready. The loss of a bosom friend, and the loss of a mother at any time must be great, [unreadable] we have abundant reason to be thankful that [unreadable] of our mother has been spared to see her children arrive to years of manhood; that we were not left in our childhood and infancy, motherless; [unreadable] forlorn [unreadable] of a mournful and disconsolate father, and suffered to wander like sheep without a shephard, subject to the devouring jaws of wanton dissipation and wretchedness, and rendered the despised, and yet piteous objects of misery. Were I to give vent to my swollen heart, and express its sensations and describe the sad catastrophe at the lamentable situation of our worthy mother, in her deranged state, for a few dreary moments previous to her final dissolution, I should swell this sheet to the size of a volume; but want of room demands brevity; I must therefore, content myself for the present, wishing you to remember us, and particularly our honored father.

I remain your affectionate brother,

ALLEN MILLER

Ezra L. Miller

Concluding Remarks

I find it truly amazing to be able to read the funeral sermon preached by my 3rd-great-uncle, Rev. Orren B. Miller, at the funeral service for my 4th-great grandmother, Hannah Case Miller, on 14 September 1819 in Mt. Morris, New York. Her funeral service was almost 200 years ago!

The United States of America was very different in 1819 than it is today. In 1819, James Monroe served as the fifth president of the United States, Alabama was admitted as the 22nd U.S. state, and the SS Savannah became the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean (taking an entire month to make the crossing). In the following year, 1820, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia, Maine

was admitted as the 23rd U.S. state, the Missouri Compromise² became law, and James Monroe was re-elected president, virtually unopposed. The 1820 United States Census found that the country's population was 9,638,453 – of which 1,538,022 were slaves.

Hopefully this backdrop of the early days of the United States puts this sermon and into perspective. Hannah Case Miller certainly was an interesting woman. She was a good Christian woman, the daughter of Deacon Solomon Case, the husband of the Rev. Jonathan Allen Miller, and the mother of the Rev. Orren B. Miller. According to the sermon, she was the loving mother of eleven children (I only know of nine: daughters Clarissa and Orpha, and sons Ezra L., Jonathan Allen, Allen, Orren B., Jonathan, Horace Allen, and Herman). She was kind and compassionate, and of “unimpeachable” moral character. Unfortunately, her final years were marred by a “mental derangement”, which curiously came and went with the seasons.

Based on this published sermon, I now know that my 3rd-great uncle, the Rev. Orren B. Miller, was an intelligent, well-read man, an eloquent speaker, and someone with a great knowledge of the Bible. That he could give the sermon at his own mother's funeral tells me a lot about his character. We all should feel very fortunate to be able to read his words.

Finally, I am indebted to Mary Kay Coker for letting me know that a printed version of the funeral sermon existed, and then sending me photographs of the pages.

Ecclesiastes xii 7

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was:
and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

² The Missouri Compromise was a federal statute devised by Henry Clay. It regulated slavery in the western territories of the United States by prohibiting the practice in the former Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36°30' north, except within the boundaries of the proposed state of Missouri. The compromise was agreed to by both the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions in the United States Congress and passed as a law in 1820, under the presidency of James Monroe.