

Sara (Knoll) William Funeral Notes by Rev. Tom Easterly

Scripture References: Psalm 73: 25-26, Proverbs 23:4, Job 10:25, Romans 8:35, 37-39, II Timothy 4:6-8, John 14:1-3, II Corinthians 5:1, and Revelation 14:15

Friends I want to speak to you not as a preacher but as a friend and neighbor who sympathizes with you in this hour of bereavement. When Brother Floyd came to tell me of Sister William's death, these words came to mind. It is finished.

You remember those were some of the last words of Jesus as He hung on Calvary's cross for you and for me. His life was not finished but the work He came to do was finished. He came to reveal God, and to save man from His sin and this He had accomplished. The atonement had been made but his death was a mystery to the world that day. And so today we come to that mystery, Death.

We see the babe, the young man or the young woman with the prospect of a brilliant career before them, or perhaps a young mother leaving a heart broken father with a motherless babe and we say their lives were not finished. We can't understand why they must go. But not so in this the death of our Sister for the Psalmist says "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet in their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away." So we can truthfully say of this life, it is finished.

As we go back in memory and picture a little girl twelve years of age making the long journey with her parents from Pennsylvania to their new home on the prairie of Kansas, and think that she is the oldest of a large family. We see the many weary tiresome days she spends helping the mother care for the other children and with the many duties that went with the privations and hardships of pioneer life.

She remained at home until 25 years of age when she was united in marriage to the one who was to be her life partner for nearly 52 years. As they begin to plan and work for a home and the babies come to bless that home, the cares and worries, heartaches and pains multiply and as the last of the large family of boys and girls leave the home to build homes of their own, no doubt there was a sigh of relief as well as sorrow, and no doubt mother thought it is finished but not so.

Many more, nearly 10 years, of greater pain and suffering are to follow and to think that for nearly 5 years unable to wait on herself. The greatest pain and suffering of all to sit by the hour day in and day out looking at the many things that ought to be done and unable to do them. That is when the great mystery, death is a blessing. And why should we fear it when truly it is only a door from the world of sin and sorrow into two roads. The one to a land where mansions are prepared for those who love the Lord and the other to a place of eternal punishment. But we are to have our choice. Choose you this day who you are to serve.

Little did I think that a little over a year ago one Sunday morning at this place I had the pleasure of speaking to four elderly ladies, Sister William being one of them. That would be the last time she would be able to come to church. Her life like that of her Master has been one of service and sacrifice as the Master said on that occasion when at the age of twelve years His parents found Him in the Temple. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business and for years later I must work the works of Him who sent Me for soon the night cometh when no man worketh."

Who can estimate the value of such a life lived for 60 years in one community? Only the great Judgment Day of Almighty God can reveal its power and influence. To know such a one is an inspiration, and to have fellowship with such a friend is truly a great privilege. We shall miss her, but she being dead yet speaketh.

No doubt many times in the days to come as we recall her to memory, me thinks it will almost seem to us that the veil that separates us from the Glory World will be parted and we can hear her again speaking to us, admonishing us to be faithful and true, saying, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

She has fought a good fight although the struggle has not been easy. But just as the oak stands the winds and storms that beat upon it so the fibers are strengthened that make it stand as a symbol of strength and a landmark. Just so with our Sister as she met the trials and temptations, the difficulties and disappointments, they too made her a tower of strength and a blessing to her associates. She has finished her course and the way was long and many the hours filled with weariness and pain, yet I am sure that in the strength of her splendid purpose she forgot the toiling, the pain and the sacrifice, like her Master remembering only the joy set before Him, the joy of a worthy service well done.

She fought a good fight, she finished her course, and bet of all she kept the faith. Like Paul she could say I know in whom I have believed. It was the longing of her heart that her husband, every one of her children, each of her grandchildren as well as all of her neighbors might come to know too that living experience that was in her own soul. Like Abraham of old, he believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness and so as she passes on, to our hands she commits the torch of her unquestioning faith and it is our duty to hold it high.

The tears would start to our eyes for we shall miss her – how much we scarce can say but we shall stop our tears and bid the tumult of our hearts to cease, remembering that ripe in years, rich in faith, rejoicing in labor finished, secure in the eternal love of the Father, she departed. Just as the sun began to lower in the west at the close of day she came to the river that separation between us and the Glory World, and looking across no doubt saw the gates of the Holy City swing wide and the light of the Eternal Glory fell upon her as she heard the trumpets sounded for her on the other side.

Yes Mother of so many years, thou art gone and we will miss you but in the very presence of Him, Whom having not seen thou didst love and serve, there shall we meet you. For He has prepared the way and you have set the example and only we and we alone are to blame if we miss it.