

Talk by Willis J. Lyman, given at the funeral of Agnes Anderson Lyman, on July 3, 1945.

My friends, this is a blessed occasion to me. I am indeed happy and proud that I have been asked to say something on this hallowed occasion. I trust that our Father in Heaven will bless me that I may be able to deliver a message that is appropriate, comforting and sustaining to the family and to all of us. We are indeed a fortunate people. We are indeed blessed with a great heritage. We are blessed with a great faith in God from our forefathers, from our church, from our associates, and from all who have gone before, that enables us to meet occasions like this with comfort, strength, and solace, and turn them into a great blessing for life. I am sure that this occasion will, in the lives of all who are here, be thought of as an occasion of strength, and of blessing, and of everlasting solace and benefit in the years to come.

I am grateful for my heritage and I am sure you are grateful for your heritage of faith that enables us to take occasions of this kind and turn them into occasions of blessings. We can share here the burden of our friends with serenity, with assurance and with a faith that cannot be shaken. So may God bless us in the heritage that is ours, that we may be true to the noble example that has been set by this spiritual family, an example of noble living before God and their fellow men. There probably have been some mistakes in their lives, but I am certain that the good and noble ways of their lives far exceed that which might not have been so desirable.

I know of no other family that has been to me, outside of my own, a greater comfort and solace, and I am sure that has been the case with others who have come in contact with this family. It was my privilege to drive Leo and Agnes to the train when they went to be married, and I know of the fine spirit that was with them when they were first in love and during their early married life. I honor them for this. They have exemplified noble characteristics of life and were honored in this world for it. People who can go forward and organize their lives, that can be honored and respected by everyone who comes in contact with them, can live in faith before their God, that can meet the end of life as our Sister met it with faith and sweetness of disposition, set for us all a glorious example. These things only come out of a life well lived. We honor those who have incorporated noble and exalting principles of life into their living and have prepared themselves for death. The Poet William Cullen Bryant has said:

So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go, not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed

By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

In all my experience I have seen no other who has exceeded the perfection with which our Sister fulfilled the thought of the poet, "to approach thy grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

My brothers and sisters, this is a time of great stress; this is a time of trouble and turmoil. This is a time under God that has been designated for a time of testing and a time of sifting out among the people of the world. Truly, "God is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat." And the time will come when we must be tested in our faith, when we must face the inevitable calamities of life. May we have strength in that day; may we have strength by our own righteous living, may we cleave unto those things that give us strength, that make us fearless and strong for the hardships and the sorrows of life. We must be mindful in these days that we do not turn against that which is inevitable. In the case of Job after his friends had expounded all their wisdom and after Job himself had his full say regarding the reasons for his suffering, the voice of the Lord said, "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without wisdom.: We must live by faith. We must trust in God. We must not forsake our heritage, our God, and that which is before us for our everlasting blessing.

To these children I will speak this word: Look carefully into heritage which is yours. Remember those who have gone before you, who endured trials and tribulations, and everything that life could heap upon them and have not wavered nor betrayed the righteous heritage that was theirs. Walk in faith, humility, and diligence with a shining glory of the lives of those who have gone before as a guiding light, that your life will be lived as they would have it lived and as God would have it lived, in these times of trouble.

I just want to make one more point. It has been my experience that there is nothing in this life so precious and so dear as the religion of our fathers and the faith they have transmitted to us. It is everything to me. Let us honor it, hold it dear and live for it. Everyone has one first great responsibility, and that is to be true to his convictions. God will hold us accountable for this. One other responsibility we all have is to leave the heritage that was passed on to us just a little finer when we pass it on.

May God's choicest blessings be with everyone; that we might live lives of service and true nobility, as was so splendidly exemplified in the lives of these people. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.