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Rev. A. S. Lawrence

Funeral Services

IN MEMORY OF

MRS. M. F. EELLS,

ONE OF THE PIONEER MISSIONARIES OF THE A. B.
C. F. M., TO THE SPOKANE INDIANS
OF OREGON, IN 1838.

Held at Skokomish and Seattle, W. T., August 11 and 13, 1878.

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The Christian's Future Assured.

A discourse preached by Rev. G. H. Atkinson, D. D., in the Congregational church in Seattle, W. T., August 13, 1878, at the funeral of Mrs. M. F. Eells, one of the pioneer Missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. to the Spokane Indians, of Oregon, in 1838.*

2d Corinthians, v., 1. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The Apostle Paul was a Christian. He wrote this text for himself and his fellow-Christians then alive, and for those of all time. This was also the common teaching and the common faith of the disciples of Christ, based upon his own words on the night before his crucifixion. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would not have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." These promises were the legacy which the Master left for all his followers. He might have left them the riches of this world, for all were his, but he chose rather to endow them with the treasures of his Father's eternal Kingdom. As they received and cherished his pledge, they became like him, calm in trial and pain, full of zeal to make known his Gospel, (good news) courageous amid dangers, joyful in sacrifices and losses, abounding in hope and inspired by his love to do good to all mankind, that by all means they might win and save the lost. Paul became an eminent example of these qualities. His words and deeds were a living power in other hearts. "Ye are our epistle," he said to the church at Corinth, "written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." This figure reveals a fact. The words and deeds of a teacher live in the whole after life of his pupil. Your mother lives in you. All she was at home photographed itself upon your heart. You can efface the material photograph and destroy the phonograph, but the memory of her look and the tones of her voice remain the same amid

* Mrs. Eells died August 9, 1878, at the Skokomish Indian Agency, in Mason county, W. T. Memorial services were held in the Skokomish church on Sabbath, August 11th, the employees and the Indians all attending, after which the body was taken to Seattle for burial

all the tossings on life's voyage and through all its darkness and its brightness.

Sure are these signs that we live in the future as in the present. Strange it would be for a thought and a voice to go on age after age like Paul's, like your wife's, your mother's or your teacher's, and that the thinker and the speaker should cease to exist. Marvelous is it for every particle of matter, and every impulse of force to remain forever indestructible, while the intellect, the affections and the will, even all the elements of the soul, are supposed to vanish into non-existence as soon as their bodily tenement crumbles away! Nobler inspirations are these exultant notes: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

1. Death dissolves only the form of things. Their substance takes other forms. This is not the metempsychosis of the Hindoos, or migration of souls into other bodies here, but it is the reunion of matter in new bodies, which matter is fitted to build up, and it is the clothing of the spirit in a body like itself, imperishable and eternal. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."

This lesson of the Bible is in harmony with the demands and the teachings of the latest exact science. As a fact the body is dying and dissolving away every moment while we are awake or asleep, and it is also living and building up itself anew every moment, awake or asleep, from the food we take, and the air we breathe, and the light we absorb. It dissolves entirely away if we cease to take and use proper nourishment. Its lack of food is sure death. The process of living must always exceed that of dying, or our frail bodies will soon be dissolved. We are not alarmed at the process of dying, which goes on with the process of living, only we are reminded that the latter must be kept in full vigor. We tremble for him who hastens the death process by over-work, or by the reckless strain upon his powers, as when you strain a cable, or a mast, or an engine, and make them too weak for further use. Athletes, runners, rowers, boxers, wrestlers, gymnasts of all classes, shorten life by contests that over-task them. We tremble more for literary and business athletes whose fierce mental strains in the arena of scientific study, or the trials of the forum, the pulpit or the press, or in the sterner conflicts in the marts of business, snap the finer fibres of the brain, and leave the victims helpless wrecks along the shores of those seas where once their barks sailed gracefully out on many a prosperous voyage.

We are astonished at those who burn up their bodies and minds, brawn and brain, with whisky, or deaden them with narcotics. We are amazed at those who infect their bodies with leprous diseases, and visibly drop in pieces inch by inch. But we honor those who by useful labor develop and strengthen

their bodies, and prolong the machinery of life to its utmost limit of use. We sympathize with and help those who were never very strong, but who, like our beloved sister, carefully used her strength so as to do the most and save it for the longest possible service to her family, to the Church of Christ, and to the poor Indian wives and mothers and their families.

The Gospel is in harmony with the abundant provisions of nature to make the most of this bodily life, and to have it last as long as possible. Rightly understood, it puts no limit upon the proper use of body or soul. It stimulates the healthful activity of both. Its aim is the well-being, not the ill-being of any one. When it speaks of death, it is not to overcast the scene with gloom, but to light it up if possible with the brightness of an assured and endless future of happiness. In doing this it keeps the path of Bible truth, and of reason, and fails not to sound the alarm at every point of danger. It warns as a friend, not as a foe.

2. In the light of the Gospel, the future of the Christian is a subject of exact knowledge. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Our service of Christ in sufferings, "even bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," gives a consciousness of the power and truth of Christ, which becomes the surest knowledge. "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." The soul life within bears fruit, brings results, as the tree from its root, as the wheat from the seed. If you know the apple and the peach, and if you can weigh the tons of the wheat harvest, so you can know the hidden life from which they sprang. In like manner if you can measure the Christian work of a mother in her family, of the missionary wife in transfusing her words and example into the life of an Indian family, so you can know the realness and excellence of those spiritual forces which produce such works and examples. By thus following the Master we learn his meaning of the words, "If ye will do his will ye shall know the teaching." The scholar knows the book by doing what it commands. Our Lord's abounding grace thus becomes an experience of power in his disciples. "For which cause they said we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

It is a prime fact to trust consciousness. By it you grasp truths which give strength, and which bring forth fruit. Two and two do not make four set side by side, but by a conscious operation of the mind. The timber in the forest never builds a house of itself, and the iron in the mine never in itself constructs the engine. These structures are first ideas and plans in the mind. They are the real things, the seed, known to the thinker long before they are seen by other eyes. Many things are possible, and are true and are known to the thoughtful scientist years before they are published. Inventions are known facts in the inventor's mind long before they appear in his models. The Re-

deemer's Kingdom was a reality in his own mind, known to himself long before a disciple believed on him, or the Great Apostle to the Gentiles went forth to preach. The missionary work of our beloved sister was wrought out in her own mind in her early childhood home in Holden, Massachusetts, where, as the child of thirteen, Myra Fairbanks, sixty years ago, publicly professed her faith in Christ and devotion to His cause, saying in her heart: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and then learning day by day from his word, from her Christian parents, from her pastor, from the newly awakened religious press, the calls and claims of the heathen for the same gospel which had so blessed her in that quiet New England home.

Her mind slowly and quietly took in all these lessons and her heart responded and her will bowed to the command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Her spirit answered: "The vows of God are on me and I will go. I may no longer doubt to give up friends and idol hopes and every tie that binds my heart to thee, my country. Henceforth, then, it matters not if storm or sunshine be my earthly lot; bitter or sweet my cup. I only pray God make me holy and my spirit nerve for the stern hour of strife. Oh! how this heart will glow with gratitude and love! Through ages of eternal years I'll ne'er regret that toil and suffering once were mine below."

When the letter came from him who was to be her life companion, her husband, her reply was: "You could not possibly ask one more willing to go on a mission than I am." It was the ripe fruit of a long buried seed. Our mental life is unseen but it is real and it is known. Our joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, our sense of right and wrong are realities, better known than even the objects seen with the eye, or felt by the hand. We are conscious directly of the former and indirectly of the latter. In like manner we are conscious of a fellowship of kindred souls, which gives happiness, and creates desires for a permanent union. The drawing together of two souls is a known fact. The apostle John wrote: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ." "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," wrote the apostle Peter. The flower holds up its petals to the sun because there is a sun to send down its life rays to the flower. The soul that looks upward to God the Father with delight and love, and meets the loving eye of that Father is drawn towards him, and he is drawn towards that soul. He that loveth me, said Jesus, loveth my Father also, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. This affinity of the souls with the Father and the Son is real. The apostles knew what it meant. Our departed sister had a growing knowledge of its reality for sixty years, and never was it more clear and precious than during her last years and last days and hours.

The argument rests here. It is sure ground. You will go where your treasure is. You will dwell forever where you are fitted to dwell. The body is only a tent that keeps the soul away from its final home. This tabernacle can be easily taken down and let the spirit, which desires like Paul to depart and be with the Lord, go to that prepared mansion. The apostle's strong asser-

tion that we *know* this, is like knowing that two drops of water will flow together, or that two kindred hearts will dwell together. The way being open, their union will occur and the opposite or the separation will be impossible. Death opens the way through which the soul departs to its celestial and eternal home.

3. Once a child in God's family, there is no reason for change. To go no more out forever is assured by the nature of things. Mortality is swallowed up of life. To be absent from the body is to be ever present with the Lord. He who formed this body to be the earthly home of the soul of this dear wife and mother, has been at no loss to form her spiritual and incorruptible body. This new mansion, and having no element of decay or waste or need of repair, will of necessity be immortal, thus eternal.

4. The conscious and growing fitness and desire for such a heavenly home is the only question to be tested. The evidence of it is to be sought in one's own heart. Into its sacred musings no eye of friend or foe can look. The inquiry and the answering signal must be within us. Only the author of our soul can share this inspection and approve or reject our self-judgment. What thoughts and motives and purposes thus pass in review, will give sentence in ourselves ere it can be know abroad. The bank defaulter knows his condition in advance of his directors and of reporters. The upright have the secret conviction of approval in advance of all records.

Into two ranks only will the human race range themselves. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad."

Outward tests signify the inner life. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is as true of characters as of trees. What we sow we must reap. He who sows to the flesh must reap corruption. He who sows to the spirit must reap life everlasting.

We find it here wisest to carefully try everything on which our safety and welfare rests. We test the boat, the engine, the compass and chart and the chronometer for the voyage. We test every element of business and social life as much as possible. The same wisdom applies to the fitness for eternity. Yet it is a process not settled at once. It requires a practiced eye to see and a quick ear to hear. The Great Teacher often said: "He that hath ears, let him hear." The use of our own powers in deciding the condition of our souls is required as much as in the diagnosis of health. If we would be clear and true in the latter, much more in the former. The Great Apostle boldly met this self duty and left an example of its value in the assurance: "We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." Our beloved sister whose body we commit to the grave, was in the habit of trying herself and proving herself whether she was in the faith. Sixty years ago, when a child she professed Christ, she began the habit of self-examination on this

point. Over the whole*chart of her inner life her eye surveyed often every motive, every thought, resolution, wish and purpose. To him who for forty years best knew her habit of spiritual diagnosis, the outward tokens of true submission to the will of God, of earnest desire to discover that will and of hearty consecration to the service of Christ, were very precious pledges of her being a child of God and an heir of heaven. One of the sweetest experiences of domestic life is the daily evidence of true piety in your companion. You rest in its assurance. Out of it spring your best hopes for yourself, your family and your work. Christianity has already so impressed itself upon the world, that those who do not profess it choose for trusted companions those who do profess it. They are pained when in any respect this trust fails. They rejoice when it proves true. How much this has applied to companions in the missionary work, among the Indians and in the settlements of this north-west during the last forty years! On every occasion of trial, in joy or sorrow, light or darkness, health or sickness, peril or safety, this beloved wife and mother evinced a Christian faith, patience, courage, prudence, helpfulness and energy, which enabled her companion to fulfill his duties, which cheered and led onward and upward her fellow laborers in every place, and which brought forth "the fruits of righteousness" in her own and in other households. Such impressions have been made upon my mind during an acquaintance of over thirty years. Without boasting she could say in death: "I am comforted. Jesus is mine and I shall *soon* go to him."

To examine and test ourselves in like manner is wise and comforting. To shrink from it shows a lack of courage. To judge hastily is rash. To conceal any facts is a vain effort. To judge ourselves is to forestall judgment. It is to be like our sister, ready and waiting for our Lord's call. It is, if proved a Christian experience, to welcome death, and exclaim: "We *know* that when our Lord shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." "And he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

Address at the Skokomish Church.

Delivered by the youngest son of the deceased, Rev. Myron Eells, Missionary to the Indians, and pastor of the Church, on Sabbath, August 11, 1878.

Acts vii., 60. "He fell asleep." Also Psalm 23.

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep."

As a child goes to sleep, so she went to sleep in her Savior's arms to wake in glory; no struggle, simply going to sleep.

At such a time as this it is hardly proper, certainly not wise for me to say much, yet perhaps a few things ought to be said. Hence I propose to let *her* speak, myself only being the one who shall convey her words to you.

The Psalm which I read speaks both of life and death, and there is a beautiful calmness running through both parts of it. The Psalmist speaks of trusting his Shepherd when in the green pastures, and beside the still waters, when in the presence of enemies, and when in the valley and shadow of death: in joy and trial in this life, and in the passage to another: it is "trust all the way through."

So she speaks to us to-day; in joy and sorrow, in life and death, she has spoken and lived the words of this Psalm. Sixty years of life as a Christian is a long one in which to set us an example, while in the green pastures and in the many trials of life; and seventy days of lying on a bed of sickness has been long enough to show us that she had the same trust when passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

Her life speaks first. Let us listen. She was born in Holden, Massachusetts, May twenty-sixth, A. D. eighteen hundred and five, and hence was seventy-three years, two months and fourteen days old. At the early age of thirteen she made a public profession of religion, and when we celebrated the anniversary of her seventieth birthday, she stated that she had never regretted becoming a Christian when so young, and it had been the means of saving her from much temptation and trouble. How thorough this consecration was to Christ is seen in the fact, that before her marriage, which took place forty years ago the fifth day of last March, she had given herself the work of teaching the heathen, first with the idea of going wherever the Lord should send her, and, second, with the expectation of going to Africa, but the Lord sent

her to the Indians of this coast. When the first letter was written to her before her marriage by him who was to be her husband, asking her if she were willing to go to a missionary field, she replied: "I doubt whether you could have asked any one who is more desirous to become a missionary."

The same consecration is seen from the fact that the day after her marriage she started for her destined sphere of labor, when Oregon in point of time was more than three times as far from her home as China is from us to-day; fully as far as many portions of interior Asia, and also as far as the most distant parts of Africa, where Livingstone and Stanley have been exploring.

She was the oldest of a family of eight; two brothers and six sisters—three sisters now remain. She loved them, with her father and mother, but she loved Jesus more, she loved the souls of the lowly more, and so she came when it took nearly six months to make the trip, most of the time on horseback, and in 1838, when but one company of white women, two in number, had ever made the journey.

To show how much she loved her friends an extract from a letter of her's dated July 9, 1838, to her sister will show: "It costs me tears every time I write home, and every Sabbath when I think how neat and nice we used to go to church together, my tears are never suppressed; not that I wish to return or that I have once regretted that I have left you all, my dearest friends, and what my soul holds dearest on earth; no, we rather count it a privilege, if we may labor among the heathen, and be the means of doing any good."

For ten years she remained with the Indians in the Eastern part of this Territory—as long as she could on account of Indian troubles, and wherever she has been since, while working in the places God has assigned her, at Salem, Hillsboro and Forest Grove, in Oregon, or at Walla Walla, or in this place in this Territory, her thoughts have been for the good of the Indians, her prayers have been for their conversion, and her eyes have looked for their salvation. It is also proper to add, that of those among whom she first came to labor, although their faces were dark here, and their hearts black forty years ago, yet there is good reason to believe that some of them, profiting by the teachings of Christ, which she helped to carry to them, have had their hearts washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and having put off their dark skins, have gone before to welcome her to "the home over there," while others, waiting a little longer, she will welcome to the "land of the blest."

In 1847, after the massacre of M. Whitman, M. D., at Walla Walla, when the country was passing through the Cayuse war, and there were comparatively very few to go and protect her and hers, she wrote in the spirit of this twenty-third Psalm: "Clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne" and she could trust the righteousness of her Heavenly Father, notwithstanding the clouds and the darkness.

During all these years her favorite hymns have been :

“ From Thee I seek protecting power.”

And—

“ God is the refuge of His saints.”

Which breathe the same spirit as that of the Psalm.

Thus for sixty years she has been living as well as speaking these words.

Her last sickness says the same. When she was first taken sick, as you know, her husband was absent; and when he returned, he said, “This is a different meeting from what we expected.” She replied, “How gentle God’s commands.” More than once she has spoken of it as “passing over, passing over.” That was all there was of death—passing over the river. When asked whether she wished to live or die, to go to Colfax or not, she repeatedly said, “I do not wish to decide.” Once, in regard to the anticipated removal to Colfax, she said, “I prayed that God would decide it for me, and I think He has done so.” “I would like to do something for you,” was said to her one day. She replied, “It is too late.” “I would like to do something to comfort you,” was said again. “I am comforted,” she said; “Jesus is mine, and I shall *soon* go to him, I guess.” When a funeral took place among the Indians, the difference was spoken of between her own condition and that of the deceased. “I hope in Christ,” she replied. At another time she repeated the words, “Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are. Pray for this.” She was then asked, “Do you think this a dying bed?” “I do,” she said; but afterwards added, “It is not dying *now*, but I think I cannot get well.” “Does he make it soft?” was then asked. “Is it *not* soft to be resigned?” she replied. At one time she thought she was going, and said, “Pray for me.” When asked, “What shall I pray for?” she replied, “Faith, patience and grace.”

True, she has not said very much while sick, for she has not been able to converse much; but she has said these things, and I think that any one who has been with her has noticed that she had faith, patience and grace. Her prayer was answered, and while not saying much, she has lived these graces while passing through the valley of the shadow of death. Patience for other’s convenience and for God; submission to the will of others and to Christ’s will, she has by *not* speaking, and by *not* acting, but by lying still, spoken and acted these more plainly than words could express them.

Thirty years ago, in writing to her mother, she said, in speaking of death, “How much we shall have to praise the Redeemer for, if we shall be permitted to meet at his right hand.” We trust she is there. What infinite happiness, two and a half days in Heaven! But being dead she yet speaketh these things to us, and asks us to trust in the same Shepherd, while now in green pastures or beside the still waters, or when in the presence of the enemies of our souls, or when passing through the valley of the shadow of death, so that we may meet her at the right hand of Christ. She has fallen asleep. Let us follow her—follow Christ.

