

LOMA D. ARMSTRONG

1891-1967

For the many thousands of you Brethren who would have been present if it had been possible — and as a tribute to our First Lady — we reproduce the full text of the funeral service delivered by Albert J. Portune.

WE STAND here this afternoon in the presence of death, but also in the presence of the highest tribute and achievement and purpose a human life may render in its brief span upon this earth.

We cannot pass this day without taking note of that tribute. For many of us may never pass this way again.

Man has sought solace in many fantasies about death — conjured up many philosophies about death in an attempt to escape the *reality* of death! These fantasies and philosophies only cause empty sorrow! But, Jesus said: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Real comfort, real understanding about death can only come from the true Creator God as revealed in His Word!

The Patriarch Job asked the eternal question many centuries ago: "If a man die shall he live again?" Job continues, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee. Thou wilt have a desire for the work of thine hands."

Job knew the *truth* about death!

Job knew that every man who walks this earth is God's workmanship.

God created man and placed him on this earth to fulfill destiny. That destiny as revealed in God's Word in Ephesians 2:10: "That we should become His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk [live] in them."

To walk and live as the bond slave and servant of God in this world of evil, vanity and competition — to serve Him faithfully in sickness and in health — in trial

and storm and trouble — to obey and walk with God in loyalty and fidelity — is the highest achievement and tribute a human life may render on this earth.

That is what we salute here today: MRS. LOMA ARMSTRONG — handmaid and servant of God — who lived before Him and died — His faithful servant.

God has laid before every man and woman — a choice.

That choice is revealed in God's Word in Deuteronomy 30:19. God said: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death — blessing and cursing: "therefore choose life, that both thee and thy seed shall live." (MRS. ARMSTRONG chose life and service to God.)

Either eternal life in His Kingdom and Family for obeying and serving Him or eternal death! For disobeying Him and serving self.

These promises reach beyond physical life, beyond the grave — into the soon coming future day that John wrote of in his Gospel: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resur-

rection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

We cannot escape the eternal justice of God!

So, God reveals the truth on this all important question. *There WILL be a resurrection of all who live and die!*

In this busy world of seeking pleasures — following human vanities — striving for human recognition and status



—how lightly so many consider the rules of life set down by Almighty God.

God has revealed through the ages His Law — which if followed produces happiness, peace of mind — abundant, joyful life. This Law of God is the basic Law of love — love to God and love to fellowman — expressed in: "Thou shalt love the Eternal thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind — and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

All of us live before God according to that Law. Transgressing that Law is sin — for God reveals in I John 3:4, "Sin is the transgression of God's Law."

And also in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death, [eternal death] but the gift of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord."

None of us can escape this Divine decree. Some time, sooner or later, we must face the choice. We must decide whether to choose eternal life or eternal death.

For those who choose life (as MRS. LOMA ARMSTRONG did) we are assured that: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A tremendous, fantastic reward and heritage beyond any human goal.

For those who choose evil and death God says: "I tell you, nay, but except you repent you shall all likewise perish."

If we follow human rules — the things that seem right to us but are contrary to God's Law of love — we shall perish forever. As God reveals, "There is a way which *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." — And God says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

MRS. LOMA ARMSTRONG lived the life before God which points the way to eternal life. A tribute which we honor here today — the highest achievement of human existence.

We pause today to note that example which God has set before us all. That we, if we will live, must turn to the way of the happy, peaceful, abundant joyful life — the way of obedience to God's Law.

That we must believe Jesus and believe on Him as our personal Saviour, we must believe His Gospel — the Good News of His coming Kingdom — the Government of God, the Family of God which we may enter by being born again.

On these two conditions God gives, as He did to MRS. ARMSTRONG, the promised Holy Spirit which is the impregnation of eternal life — the imparting in us of God's nature, which will burst forth at the resurrection into glory and honor and eternal life.

The road she walked was not easy. But when she turned into that way, God took her by the hand and *He never let go!*

He asked her for her all. He asked her to sacrifice — to serve — to endure hardness as a good soldier.

He placed her other hand in her husband's hand and

TOGETHER *they have walked with God.* No man could have asked for a more faithful and loyal wife and fitting helper than MRS. ARMSTRONG was to her husband.

This was their golden anniversary year. *Fifty years together* — bound together by the Creator God to serve Him and His people — to raise up His Church in this age — to struggle together — to work side by side together — to build and to plant.

And the vines have grown to reach around the world — in colleges and offices and churches which span the globe — in sons and daughters in God's three colleges who love her as a mother.

Behind those years of struggle and achievement together are the waymarks of a job — well done — waymarks which cannot be adequately portrayed in human words, but which are expressed in the hearts and minds of thousands of lives which have been touched and changed around the world — these works will bear eternal fruit in the World Tomorrow.

The apostle Paul speaks of this soon-coming day: "Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised — incorruptible — and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written — death is swallowed up in victory.

"O, death, where is thy sting?

"O, grave, where is thy victory?"

In the soon coming World Tomorrow MRS. ARMSTRONG will *win the victory* and LIVE AGAIN to see the seeds she helped plant, grow into a world of peace, happiness and righteousness!

We also read in I Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of God, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore *comfort* one another with *these* words."

The truth of God brings real comfort!

Yes, one day soon God will have a desire for the work of His hands — for the character, service, and loyalty MRS. ARMSTRONG built and infused in her life.

For those — like she — who loved Him and served Him — Jesus will return to this earth *with healing in His wings* — with His reward of eternal life with Him.

Jesus said: "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house [His Kingdom on this earth] are many mansions [many offices of service]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Jesus also said: "Behold *I come quickly*, and my reward is with me — to give to every man according as his work shall be."

Men leave behind them many monuments of worldly achievements — in business, in war, in governments and in personal vain grandeur. These monuments are like sand castles which the winds of time erase from human memory and which pass like a fading flower.

MRS. ARMSTRONG was born in 1891. She lived through 4 generations.

She saw many sand castles of men come and go. She saw men fight many vain wars for emptiness. She traveled around the world — saw the crumbling grandeur of the monuments of men in Egypt, Palestine, Europe, England.

From the quiet farming community of horse-and-buggy Iowa to the jet age — the atomic age, the space age, and the megalopolis of sprawling cities. But only one choice was hers — her God and His service at her husband's side.

The choice — *the life* — of MRS. ARMSTRONG before us today will remain forever an eternal tribute to an Eternal God.

Let's notice the words of the apostle Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven [but coming with Jesus to this earth] for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Let us take a glimpse into that glorious, undefiled reward — the Kingdom of God which MRS. ARMSTRONG will soon inherit.

It is revealed in Revelation 21:1-4: "And I saw a *new heaven and a new earth*: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

This is the world and kingdom MRS. ARMSTRONG will know in her next conscious moment.

This is *the new world* MRS. ARMSTRONG worked so many years to help prepare the way for — to help announce and proclaim — the *World Tomorrow!*

This is the coming world she lived for and died for.

All of the words we would like to recount about MRS. ARMSTRONG would be far too many to say.

So, from all of us who love her and thank her and reverence her life and memory around the world, let us pay her the highest tribute and say with God — to our own true "First Lady" — "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" — "You have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, you have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will give to you at that day, and not to you only, but to all who follow your example and love His appearing."

The Patriarchs and Prophets, the men and women of God, through the ages, mentioned in Hebrews 11 *all died in FAITH* not having received the promises. Yet those promises are sure for them by their faith as they are sure for MRS. ARMSTRONG.

The last verse of that chapter says, "that they without us should not be made perfect." So we may be sure *we* may go on in faith, *as* MRS. ARMSTRONG *did*, to one day also receive those promises.

A few days before her death, MRS. ARMSTRONG said to a number of the leading ministers gathered by her bedside: "YOU MEN GO ON AND GET YOUR WORK DONE — I'M GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT."

In her death MRS. ARMSTRONG has given to us new energy — new zeal — new dedication — new courage.

And *we* WILL carry on as she asked us to — Solomon wrote in the book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

Now, in the purpose of God is her time to die for her God and our God — we accept His purpose.

Now, it is *our time to build and plant and harvest and to go forward in ever-growing strength to finish the work!* To announce the Kingdom of God she lived for.

She said: "You go on and get the Work done — I'll be all right."

Yes, she *will* be all right and we *will* go on!

Let's let her last words be our pledge to her — let us pray!