SERMON BY REV. ARTHUR J. BAYNES, AT THE OBSEQUES, MARCH 16, 1896.

"To stand within the shadow of the great new school of social science and to realize that all that we hold dear in the world of art would be both helpful and appropriate, is a task almost beyond the power of old age. And surely, if we are to meet the new man, we must be prepared for the struggle of mind. So inadequate to this occasion will be any expression of mine, that it might seem better to be held, with no other token of the poignancy nor any sign of the silent tears, and the warm hand clasp of sympathy. And yet, our highest sense of loyalty to this departed friend calls us to far greater effort. Now is the time for the uttered expression of admiration and affection. It is fitting that some word should be spoken that shall give to the thoughts lying in your minds. I have been chosen to speak that word, and though it gives me sorrow that the necessity of this task should be placed upon me, it also gives me joy that I am privileged to perform it.

It is not simply as one whose mission is the preservation of the worship of the human soul that I speak today—I speak as a friend; one who had the opportunity of knowing this man, and enjoying a large measure of his confidence. He was not a fortunate gift of nature. I think of no better word, by which I identify myself with the interests of those about him; nor a rare gift, and one that made him man's friend. Therefore, I feel that I am in your wish that I should speak today, not so much of the citizens, as if the man.

His citizenship in this town, as in this Commonwealth, is identified with a most remarkable record of public service. He was a man and a benefactor. It is fitting that I say, without any fear of contradiction, that he stands in the history of the community, its foremost citizen, trust his native town will, in some sense, continue to express the greatness of his life. It is the sweep of his influence has been so far-reaching that, even when the canons of old age have made the world so humble that it hopes to do him justice. Therefore, all that for some future occasion, when the publics of the nation, or the world, will not easily be found upon the splendid achievements of his life. It is my purpose to speak today of the man, and not of the achievements of his life. He was a friend; the one whose influence consists in the qualities which pertain to the on-the-march of the people. Their ideal is ever beyond and above them; they are no more in us than content with present conditions. Their ideal is ever beyond and above them; they are no more in us than those who are in advance of the times. Those last are the true leaders. They are neither satisfied with the past, nor content with present conditions. Their ideal is ever beyond and above them; they are no more in us than those who are in advance of the times. Those last are the true leaders. They are neither satisfied with the past, nor content with present conditions. Their ideal is ever beyond and above them; they are no more in us than...
moral quality of soul, help him to be purer in his thought, cleaner in his speech, more efficient in service to those about him, charitable in his judgments, patient in the midst of trials, tender and helpful in all the relations of life; so far as they promote these virtues, they are worthy of consideration and respect. But aside from this, theological beliefs and religious convictions are not worth the paper they are written on, or the speech that gives them utterance. And you will pardon me if I refuse to consider this man's life, or any other man's life, from a theological standpoint. The end of human life is not to be saved. We are here in the world to be saved into something: here in the world for purposes of moral growth.

But moral growth must root itself in spiritual convictions. Mr. Snow believed, and, if I have judged him aright, believed with all his nature, in the great spiritual realities of our being. The world of spirit was so real to him, as the world of matter. During most of the time I have known him he has sat under my ministry, and, in moments of delightful intercourse, has unfolded to me the inmost convictions of his mind, concerning the profound questions of human life and destiny. It would be folly for me to say we entirely agreed: I will say that those things in the religion of Christ, which I have come to consider the great essentials—understand me, the great essentials—those things I believe he held clearly and firmly in mind, and was continually consummating them in his character. I once asked him, what he considered would bring about a perfect condition of life and society? In other words, what would free us from all the ills that human flesh is heir to? His answer was, that "humanity should come to a full knowledge of the true science of life." And when I asked him who was to teach this science, he paused for a moment, then replied, "I believe that is the meaning of the Christian religion. When humanity understands Jesus Christ, and understands the full meaning of His science of life, it will have found its remedy." God hasten the day when we shall cease to use the name of Christ simply as a passport to realms of eternal bliss, and shall bind ourselves to such faithful endeavor to understand the overshadowing personality and perfectly poised life of the Son of Man, that we may the better and more happily live our lives here in the world, day by day, and trust God for our future.
To stand within the shadow of some great sorrow, and speak words that shall be both helpful and appropriate, is a task almost beyond the power of the mortal mind. So inadequate to this occasion will be any expression of mine, that it might seem better to go out from here with no other token of the poignant sorrow in our hearts than the silent tear and the warm hand clasp of sympathy. And yet, our highest sense of loyalty to this departed friend calls to us for some uttered expression of admiration and affection. It is fitting that some word should be spoken that shall give form to the thoughts lying in your minds. I have been chosen to speak that word, and though it gives me sorrow that the necessity of this task should be placed upon me, it also gives me joy that I am privileged to perform it.

It is not simply as one whose mission is to voice the immortal hope in the human soul that I speak today – I speak as a friend: one who had the opportunity of knowing this man, and enjoying a large measure of his confidence. He had that fortunate gift of companionship, I can think of no better word, by which he identified himself with the interests of those about him. A rare gift, and one that made him many friends. Therefore, I feel that it is your wish that I should speak today not so much of the citizen, as of the man. His citizenship in this town, and in this Commonwealth, is identified with a most remarkable record of public enterprise and benevolence. I may say, without any fear of contradiction, that he stands in the history of the community, its foremost citizen. I trust his native town will, in some worthy manner, give expression to an assurance of this man’s immortal worth to all our truest interests. As a citizen, the sweep of his influence has been so far-reaching that, even were this the proper place for eulogy, I could not hope to do him justice. Therefore, all that for some future occasion, when the storm within the hearts of those who loved him has been calmed, and our minds may dwell with joy and pride upon the splendid achievements of his life. It is my purpose to speak today of Mr. Snow as the man, the father, the friend; the one whose life consisted in those qualities which pertain to strength, intelligence and virtue.

And the first characteristic is that which I have mentioned first – his strength. No quality of his character has been more spoken of by his friends than that quality of purpose or perseverance which springs out of an indomitable will. “He was a man,” I have heard it remarked, “whom circumstances could never crush.” No truer word was ever spoken. He rose above defeat, and gathered strength out of disaster. Even his very stature bespoke this iron quality of mind and character. Tall and straight, his powerful frame, as it seemed to us, the citadel of perfect health, we had thought of him as a man only just passing out of the prime of life. We had hoped that, surrounded by the joys and beauties of his home life, the years to come might bring to him the crown and glory of old age. But it was not to be. He has
gone out into that larger sphere of usefulness. Only a few weeks before his sickness he said to me, in substance, these words: “I believe the aim in that spirit life will be usefulness, rather than bliss. Heaven, to my mind, is not a place of golden harps; it is a larger sphere of activity. Happiness is not the aim of human life; it is the result of achievement in conformity with the laws of our being.” And today, I feel to rejoice that the strength of this life has gone out into the infinite swing of some worthy and divinely planned achievement.

Let us pause one moment, to enforce the lesson that springs of itself out of the thought of this man’s strength. It is the lesson of temperance: that we should never, for the gratification of any personal desire, overstep the bounds of nature. Mr. Snow has been so systematic in his life, so inflexible in regard to the foundation principles of temperance, that many of his friends were inclined to the opinion that he erred on the side of virtue. But looking back to-day, we can see that here was one of the great sources of his strength, a strength that justifies us in saying of him, as was said of one, who died many years ago – he was “a tower of strength,” which stood four-square to all the winds that blew. In every community there are three classes of men, those, to use the popular phraseology, who are behind the times; those who keep abreast of the times; and those, who are in advance of the times. These last are the true leaders. They are neither satisfied with the old, or content with present conditions. Their ideal is never beyond and above them. They are pioneers in all that pertains to the on-march of the people.

I would never bestow praise where I thought it undeserved, but I say earnestly and sincerely, I think Mr. Snow was the finest type of such a man. He saw with a vision almost prophetic, that which was needed, and that which must come. Without fear of criticism or opposition, and he had his share of both, he always brought all the resources of his mind to grapple with the problem of advancement.

And this brings me to what I consider the distinct characteristic of his mind, the peculiar badge of his intelligence. It is what I would call his large outlook on everything that came within the range of this thought. You knew, instinctively, that he would never consent to attempt anything on a small scale. That which was worth being done, was worth being done in a large way. “Visionary!” it has been said of him. But it was that golden streak of the visionary in his character, that has given to your town, and your country, some of the finest impulses of advancement. I have always rejoiced to see how everything pertaining to that which was small, trivial, and insignificant, seemed to spring from his mind as rain drops are dashed from the roof. You knew at once, that this man lived in the realm of large thoughts; that he trained himself to be continually environed by matters of importance.

I have spoken of his strength, his intelligence, the breadth and grasp of his mind; I want now to touch upon the third, and, to my mind, the most important feature of his character – its quality of virtue, the purity of his life,
the fine, clean strength of moral conviction. Understand me, I am not talking about his theological opinions. In the final analysis of a man’s life and character, these are matters of comparative insignificance. So far as a man’s theological beliefs and religious convictions help to develop within him a finer moral quality of soul, help him to be purer in his thought, cleaner in his speech, more efficient in service to those about him, charitable in his judgments, patient in the midst of trials, tender and helpful in all the relations of life; so far as they promote these virtues, they are worthy of consideration and respect. But aside from this, theological beliefs and religious convictions are not worth the paper they are written on, or the speech that gives them utterance. And you will pardon me if I refuse to consider this man’s life, or any other man’s life, from a theological standpoint. The end of human life is not to be saved. We are here in the world to be saved into something: here in the world for purposes of moral growth.

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The awful thing is not to die: it is to live. It is not casting anchor in the port beyond the sea that the mariner dreads: it is the wide and stormy sea itself. Our highest concern is with the living, not the dead. Therefore, my final word is not of him who has gone to his long home: it is to you who are to turn back from the grave today, to face the stern experiences of life. Your hearts will be full of sorrow, but not, I trust, a sorrow in which there is anything of bitterness or despair. We sorrow, was the greatest thought of the Apostle, but not as those who are without hope.
Into the bitter waters of Marah, Christ Jesus has cast the gourd of his victory, and the pool has become pure and sweet. “I am the resurrection and the life.”

Behind the mystery we cannot fathom: the problems we try in vain to solve: the human suffering we despair of understanding – Faith assures us that God is working out with infinite wisdom and love his own great purposes.

“And all is well, tho’ faith and form
Be sundered is the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm.”

It is the tone of that “deeper voice” I want you to catch across the storm of this sorrow.

That “deeper voice” to which the strongest and purest of the race have always listened, “Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.” That “deeper voice” that speaks from the open heaven to day, “I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen.” Back to meet that holy message of victory, may there go from our hearts, the peaceful message of resignation.

“And holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad
If other hands should hold the key;
Or if He trusted it to me,
I might be sad.
What if tomorrow’s pain were here,
Without its rest.
Better that He unlocked the day;
And as the door swings open say –
‘My will is best’.”

This friend whom we have learned to love and admire, has passed beyond the veil. The fiery splendor of that spirit would has dawned upon his vision. The onward rush of those unseen forces has gathered up his life to God’s own great purposes. The mystery is fathomed; the problem is solved; and looking back today, over the scarred battle-field of his life, we trust he can trace the markings of God’s chariot wheels of fire.