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Högt skall då jubelhymnen skalla öfver döden, som blifvit besegrad och om lifvet, som blifvit återvunnet. Men vi, som tro, att Jesus har dött och uppstått, sjunga redan här våra segersånger. Och vid detta tillfälle, då vi så allvarligt och kännbart påminnas om dödens kraft, vilja vi med den tårdränkta blicken fästad på Kristus sjunga om vårt synd, sorg och död öfvervinnande evighetshopp.

Gud vare tack, som gifver oss segren genom vår Herre Jesus Kristus!

Sermon by Dr. G. A. Brandelle.

Dearly Beloved,—The most painful appointment that I ever received was the one to address you this afternoon. And in this connection I am reminded that when the message came more than thirty years ago to a small farm house in Central Illinois that the late Rev. Jonas Swensson had passed to his eternal reward, there was in that family a lad of thirteen years who went out into the barnyard and wept. The news of that death spread consternation and grief throughout the bounds of the entire Augustana Synod. Proportionally the sorrow then was perhaps as great as that of today, but the number that shared it was relatively much smaller.

As we are gathered this afternoon around the bier of our dear Dr. Swensson unutterable grief fills not only our hearts, but also the hearts of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children throughout the length and breadth of this land. Yea, even beyond the great waters have the news of the passing of Dr. Swensson brought great sorrow to many. Never was there a time in the history of the Swedish-American nation when the death of any one of its members was so keenly felt and so universally deplored.

And there are good reasons for it too. Many eminent men have risen among us from time to time in the past fifty years, and great is the work which they have accomplished. But the Swedish nationality of our land has never had a representative so highly gifted and so well qualified for the position of leader as was the deceased. Though he primarily belonged to the Church, and to our own Augustana Synod in particular, yet did he reach out and lend his support also to the upbuilding of the State and the Nation. He was interested in the welfare of the State not from selfish motives, but in order that the greatest good might come to the greatest number, and that the cause of

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morality and religion might be advanced among the people in general. He always spoke for that which was true and ennobling no matter what the strength of the opposition might be.

His was also an abiding faith in the innate strength and power of our own nationality. No one championed its cause both at home and abroad as did he. Never was any man more ready to note its advantages and possibilities. These he held forth without ceasing, ever urging our people onward in order that it might show to the world whereof it was capable. Dr. Swensson revealed to the Swedes of this land much of their real character and worth and made also the Americans place the proper value on the Swedish-Americans. His cherished idea was to elevate the entire Swedish nationality of America so much so that it should become both in religion, morals, education and influence one of the leading nationalities of the New World. That he accomplished much in this direction is evident to the well-informed.

The greatest and most lasting work which he performed was as a member of the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod. In one sense he was older than the Synod, but in another the Synod made him what he was. For within its folds did he receive his religious, moral and mental training. In it was his heart kindled with love to God and to his fellowmen. This love was steadily increased until it burned within him in one strong and steady flame. He never forgot the benefits he had received from the Church and which was the means of enriching him spiritually. To it was he faithful until the end. No cause was nearer to his heart than the advancement of the evangelistic, educational and eleemosynary work of the Synod. He believed that the Synod was right in its doctrinal position and that it had a tremendously large mission among our people of this land. He was anxious that all the opportunities should be taken advantage of. To the general work of the Synod was he a veritable tower of strength.

To us as members of the Kansas Conference was he known best. He came to this portion of the Lord's vineyard while it was yet very small and poorly dressed and kept. For twenty-five years was he engaged in doing the will of the Lord by way of preaching the Gospel to the many thousands of Swedes of this and adjoining States. He lived to see the work grow and prosper greatly. His was the joy of seeing the mighty advance made by the cause of Christ in this Conference during the past quarter of a century. From the very time that he took up his abode among us he became one of the leading spirits of the Conference. After a while he rose to the distinction of the leading

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man and maintained this position until death came. We all admitted the greatness of his ambition, the wisdom of his words, the strength of his character and his towering abilities. We depended upon him for so much. Scarcely was anything of importance undertaken before he had been consulted. Now he is gone. We are left to do the planning and the work ourselves. This means that there must be unanimity of feeling and unanimity of action. Through the grace of God we will be sufficient for the task. But it will be a very long time before we can accustom ourselves to go on with the work just as if nothing had happened.

Aside from the direct preaching of the Gospel there was one matter that filled his heart to overflowing, and which appeared to acquire a stronger hold on him as the years sped by, it was a question of the education of the young. The young people of our Synod, and for that matter everywhere, never had a more true friend than Dr. Swensson. He was solicitous not only as to their spiritual training, but exceedingly anxious as well that their natural gifts and faculties be given the opportunity to develop in accordance with the possibilities to be found in man himself.

For this reason did he take up the work of offering to the young people of our Church and State, as early as 1881, an education higher than that afforded by the public schools. The outcome of it all was Bethany College. How marvellously has not this institution grown! Thousands of young men and women have within its walls secured an education that has made life more easy to them and also prepared them for greater usefulness to themselves and to their fellowmen. But who can tell at what expense to our deceased brother! This institution was in truth the apple of his eye and as such did he take care of it. No human heart beside his own did ever know the fullness of the anxiety and anguish connected with the upbuilding and maintenance of this school of learning. He bore it all, cheerfully and without any thought of ever giving the matter up. Thousands of young men and women are blessing his name today because he did begin and carry on the work of christian education. They will ever revere his memory.

But this work is not as yet completed. It is, moreover, one that must receive at all times the united and loyal support of the friends of higher education. It is ours as members of the Kansas Conference now to put our shoulders to the wheel as we have never done before. It behooves to this community in the future to continue its relations to this institution on the same basis as in the past. It is our moral duty to ourselves, to the

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young people of our church and nation, and to the memory of our deceased brother, so to concern ourselves about Bethany College that it may ever continue to grow and to be a lighthouse whence shall come both spiritual and intellectual light to light the way of thousands as yet unborn. We believe firmly that such is the intention of our Conference and the entire Church, and by the help of God will it be accomplished.

The chief mourner at this time, however, aside from the immediate family, is the Bethany congregation. Down in that little church, which is now being remodeled, has the voice of Dr. Swensson sounded for nearly twenty-five years. It has at times risen to the pitch of the trumpet and at other times been but a still small voice as it declared either the wrath of God on sin or the wonderful love and mercy of the Savior towards the sinner. Thither have come thousands and thousands of men and women during the past quarter century, in order that they might be comforted by the message of the Gospel as it was preached by the deceased. How many hearts have not been touched in that temple by the tongue which is silent in death. As the people have come and gone they have been impressed with the unction and spiritual power of their beloved pastor. They longed to come to the sanctuary, for they did so love to hear the departed one speak of the blessings of faith in Jesus both for time and eternity. How he did make it plain to them that "Godliness is profitable to all things," and how he did at times speak of the heavenly Jerusalem within whose gates he at this moment is standing! Think of the many children that he has baptized, the many who in his presence have plighted each other their troth, and of the many who, from the temple yonder have been borne thence to the silent city of the dead! Everywhere and at all times there were words of warning, cheer and comfort. He was more than a father to the most of the members of the church.

These will ever acknowledge his gifts, faithfulness and zeal. But they will cherish him above all as a man of God that spoke unto them the truth as it is revealed in Christ Jesus. For Dr. Swensson knew aught but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To him it was sufficient that the Word of God made certain declarations. He believed them and preached them. To him a "Thus saith the Lord" was worth more than all the combined testimonies of so called men of science. As time goes on the real worth of a position like this will become increasingly apparent to you all.

To the bereaved wife and sorrowing daughters the Lord alone can speak words of true comfort. This terrible affliction

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came over them with a suddenness that could not previously have been conceived of. God in His wisdom has removed from them a loving and tender husband and father. His own presence, however, does He not withhold. As in the past He has stood by their side, so shall He also in the future continue to let the light of His countenance go with them. Their hearts are filled with grief, may they also be filled with the Divine presence to the end that they might be comforted and sustained. In the course of time they shall, by the grace of God, once again meet their loved one never afterwards to know of any separation or sorrow. And to all the other relatives may the Lord be nigh in his great mercy.

Speaking of the true purpose of the calling of God, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Heb. 49. This promise is to all the people who believe in Jesus Christ as their savior, and who are willing to glorify Him in their lives here below. Into this rest has our dear Dr. Swensson entered. It came to him much too early, as it appears to us. We had so great need of him for the present, there was so much which he as an experienced workman could perform better than any one else. But his share of the work was done, yea, more than this. For it is permissible to say that he wrought more than what is usually allotted to one man. A number of men could not have accomplished what he did. There was no rest for him ever since he began to enter the service of the church. It did not matter whether he was at home or on a journey, he was ever working in one way or other. Many is the time when the still hours of the night were devoted to correspondence and literary work. There was for him no conventional eight hours in bed out of the twenty-four. Of late he complained at times that he felt tired. But as long as life on earth lasted there would be no rest for him. He was, nevertheless, entitled to rest, and he got it. God gave it to him. He took him unto Himself. Our brother is enjoying in the bosom of the Father the sweetness of the heavenly rest. We do not grudge him the pleasure, for we know he has merited it.

For us who are as yet in the flesh the great Sabbath has not begun. We are still in the weekday of life. Before us is the work assigned us which the Lord expects us to do. Let us work with the same enthusiasm and faithfulness as did Dr. Swensson and then we shall not have lived in vain. In the evening it shall be light, and we also shall enter the rest that remaineth to the people of God.