

**Address made at funeral of Mrs. Diana Apcar (by Pastor Schenk)
Yokohama, Union Church, July 10, 1937**

The passing of Mrs. Apcar on Thursday morning has taken from our community one of the oldest, staunchest, and most highly respected residents – one of the best minds of this port city. For forty-six years she has witnessed the vicissitudes of life and participated in the colorful, ever-changing drama of this city, watching it grow from little more than a seaside village to a great city, seeing it once completely obliterated and then built up again.... With an alert and judicial mind she has looked out upon the work, seen history written and participated in the writing of that history, followed the rise and fall of nations, always a keen and discriminating student of international affairs, an indefatigable protagonist of the rights of her people.

I have already said that she had one of the keenest minds in Yokohama. The wide range of her interests and reading, her up-to-date acquaintance with current events were indeed remarkable. She knew history, the history the last half century and knew it with sacrificial emotion as one who had personally witnessed and experienced the sufferings and frustrated hopes of her race.... After every call, in most of which I think we fell into a discussion of international problems, I came away feeling like a little child – a mere beginner – who had been sitting at the feet of an old master.

It is hardly necessary here at this service to review the events of her life. Born in Rangoon, India, 77 years ago, she came to Hong Kong shortly after her marriage and after a year's residence proceeded to Japan. Returning to Rangoon again for a short interval she came in 1891 to Yokohama where she has made her home practically ever since with the exception of a year or so in Kobe after the great earthquake from which she had almost miraculous escape. For two years she served as Consul for Armenia and during her entire residence has been a recognized leader and adviser of a large group in the foreign community. She was the author of several books, as well as numerous essays and short stories, writing almost up to the time of her death, and completing not so many weeks ago another manuscript entitled, "From the Life of a Nation," a collection of hitherto unpublished folk stories from the life of the Armenian people.... Truly a full and eventful life rejoicing in these later years in the presence about her and her children and grandchildren with whom she shared the fruits of her wisdom and experience.

And now she has fallen upon sleep to enjoy a well-earned rest. What more fitting verse to describe this exalted estate than the words of the beloved apostle on the blessedness of the holy dead: "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth: yea said the spirit that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." ... I am sure that none among us, whether relative or friend, is inclined to question the wisdom of the divine decree. Her work is finished. With the Psalmist of Israel we can say: "The ways of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." ... He who has given life, vigor, usefulness has taken it away at the hour he thought best, seven full years past the traditional three score and ten, and we can say again as we have already said this morning; "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: Blessed be the name of the Lord."

There is much in the life and bearing of Mrs. Aparcar that reminds me of the soldier, the good soldier of Jesus Christ, the sentinel on guard—strong, courageous, inured to hardship, loyal to her convictions, her racial heritage, to her mother church and to her beloved people. Many times I have pictured her in mind as a Defender of the Faith. And it is not strange that the words of another valiant soldier, also a defender of the faith, St. Paul the crusading apostle should come to mind as words that fittingly describe her spirit and might well have influenced her life: ‘Thou, therefore my son (my daughter) be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. For I endure all things for the elect’s sake that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. If we suffer we shall also reign with him. If we deny him he also will deny us. If we be dead with him we shall also live with him.’”

For those of us who have still our courses to finish, our work to do, and who have gathered here to offer our last tribute of farewell to the earthly presence of this mother in Israel, there is very little that I need say except that we cannot better honor her memory of perpetuate her ideals than by being good soldiers also, defenders of the faith, taking up the torch of her courageous testimony, a testimony in behalf of the sacred rights of minority groups, of justice to the oppressed, and holding it high; soldiers of the cross in a world that sorely needs courageous, uncompromising Christian testimony. And if in the upward climb, the struggle and fatigue of the long and toilsome journey we sometimes wonder a little as to the justice of it all, the mysterious ways of Divine Providence—so allow at times to rescue Truth from the scaffold and banish Wrong from the throne—let us be patient, steadfast, unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord inasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord; believing the someday it will all be made plain, that someday when we get a little higher on the trail we shall look back and understand just why we had to make that strange detour, why this tiresome stretch was necessary. As the poet has express it:

“Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the Better Land,
We’ll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, sometime, we’ll understand.”

“We’ll catch the broken thread again,
And finish what we here began;
Heaven will all mysteries explain,
And then, ah then, we’ll understand.”

“We’ll know why clouds instead of awn
Were over many a cherished plan;
Why song have ceased when scarce begun
‘Tis there sometime, we’ll understand.”

“Then trust in God through all the days;
Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand;
The dark the way, still sing and praise
Sometime, sometime we’ll understand.”

(James McGranahan)

As we close our service there is another verse I would like to leave with you. Again it calls for Faith and Strength and Courage. Again it reaches out and takes His Hand in the darkness—even in the darkness of the valley of the shadow—and finds Him sufficient for every need.

Sometime by May Riley Smith

“Sometime, when all life’s lessons have been learned,
And sun and stars forevermore have set,
The things which our weak judgment here has spurned —
The things o’er which we grieved with lashes wet —
Will flash before us out of life’s dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue;
And we shall see how all God’s plans were right,
And how what seemed reproof was love most true.”

“And you shall shortly see that lengthened breath
Is not the sweetest gifts God sends His friend,
And that sometimes the sable pall of death
Conceals the fairest boon his love can send.
If we could push ajar the gates of life,
And stand within, and all God’s workings see,
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,
And for each mystery could find a key.”

“But not today. Then be content poor heart;
God’s plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.
And if, through patient toil we reach the land
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,
When we shall clearly know and understand,
I think that we shall say that ‘God knew best.’”