

## **Funeral Sermon Fragment and Obituary of Martin Coyner.**

– F. K.

Delivered at the Interment of Martin Coyner, June 11, 1883, by F. K..



Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. – Luke 2:29-32.

In Jesus beloved, sorrowing Friends:

For over a year the angel of death, by the goodness of God, spared our little congregation, but now he has visited us again, and this time has stretched out his hand for our senior member. A man is taken from our midst who, for more than half a century, was an active and faithful member of the congregation. In his death, therefore, not only his own family, but we all sustain a severe loss. And yet we have much reason to be thankful to God. We have reason to be thankful to God because we can cheerfully deposit the earthly remains of this our beloved father and brother, into the bosom of the earth with the confident hope that, when the trump of God will resound, he, too, will rise up rejoicingly to be crowned with that crown of glory which fadeth not away. As far as his life is known to me, he stood among you from youth up as a Christian, and I can bear witness that he died like a Christian. Like as aged Simeon, speaking in our text, he declared himself ready to go; like Simeon he looked death in the face cheerfully without terror; and like Simeon he rested his hopes in that salvation which God has prepared before the face of all people. Often in his last sickness he would repeat the precious verse:

Jesus' blood and righteousness  
My beauty are and stately dress,  
With which in glory I shall stand  
When I enter heaven, my fatherland.

Shortly before his departure he strengthened his faith with the reception of the Lord's body and blood, and confessed that he was a sinner and that his hopes stood alone in the work and

merit of Jesus Christ, and he declared that in this faith he expected to die and appear before God. As far as human eye can discern, we must surely say of him, as of Simeon, he departed in peace.

Let this be a comfort unto you, my sorrowing friends, that you can so confidently look upon the day when your husband and father departed this life as his real birthday on which he was born, not into a poor life as it is upon earth, but into that everlasting and glorious life which God has prepared in heaven. Do not think only of your loss; remember, rather, his gain.

But you will say: “We have lost a staff on which we could lean, a faithful counselor to whom we could apply for advice.” That, indeed, I do not think of denying; yet I remind you that you need not be without staff and without counselor. There is a strong staff for you to lean on, a wise counselor to whom you may entrust your cares. In the 23rd Psalm, David says unto his Shepherd: “Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me,” and in the 146th Psalm we read: “The Lord preserveth the strangers; He relieveth the fatherless and widow.” Cast your cares upon the Lord and He will care for you as no earthly father can; better than the fondest of mothers can care for her infant child. Trust in that God in whom your father trusted and who showed such great mercy to him, who carried him unto hoary hairs and now has received him unto Himself in good old age by a quiet and peaceable death. Yea, this latter, the manner of your father’s death, I pray you to remember all the days of your life. Your eyes have seen how composedly your father looked upon death, and let the remembrance thereof be a continual admonition to you, so to live in this world and so to prepare for death that your end may be like as his. Hereunto I would heartily admonish all here present. Let me, therefore, briefly show from the words which have been read *how we shall be prepared to depart from this world in peace.*

In our text Simeon says: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word.” That man did certainly not fear death. He did not regard death as something awful and appalling, but as something desirable. He does not even call it dying, he calls it departing, and his words show that he had longed for death. “*Now,*” he says, “Lord, *now* lettest Thou Thy servant depart.” He was glad the time had come when he should depart out of this world. What made him so willing and ready to die? Was it because he had enjoyed the world and become satiated? Was it because he had gained great wealth and renown? Nay, my friends; for he does not say: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for I have enjoyed pleasure and gotten me riches and honor before men.” Pleasure, wealth, honor and fame are, indeed, the

things which men pursue after as though they were the highest good which alone could bring everlasting happiness. But the enjoyment of carnal pleasures, the possession of wealth and fame will not make men cheerful and willing to die; for the simple reason, because man cannot take them with him in death. Alexander the Great, won the wealth of Asia and great fame, which has lasted through all generations to the present day; yet before he died he ordered that his one hand be left hanging out of the coffin in order that every one might see that Alexander, the great conqueror, departed from this world with an empty hand. To set one's heart to enjoying pleasures, making money, winning fame, or whatever is of this world, and must remain in this world, is not preparing to die in peace, but preparing to depart with remorse. Not he who has his treasure in this world, only he who has his treasure in the world to come can depart in peace.



It pleased the Lord of life and death on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June [1883] to call out of this life unto Himself in heaven, Father Martin Coyner, by an easy and tranquil death. He was born in Augusta County, Virginia., March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1804, was baptized in his infancy, and by confirmation received into the communion of our Evangelical Lutheran Church, of which he remained a faithful member until his death. By a diligent study of Dr. Luther's postils and other writings, he became thoroughly versed in the knowledge of the truth of God, and that truth he loved so that it was his daily conversation. We shall not forget his words which he spake, when asking for a translation of Dr. Walther's reply to Stelhorn, when he said: "All that comes from that man is good." We note this, not as though he or we thought Dr. Walther infallible, but because it shows that the deceased knew to distinguish doctrines. Because he loved the truth he was a regular attendant at public worship; even in the debility of old age, neither rain nor snow would keep him from church. In him a kind husband and father, and a good Old Lutheran, has gone to his rest.

A widow, eleven children and 23 grandchildren remain to mourn his death.

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