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Brownlie - Walter
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MEMORIAL SERVICE

WALTER B. M. BROWNLIE

August 3, 1957
First Reformed Church
Wm. R. Buitendorp, Minister

We are gathered here in solemn and sacred memory of Walter B. M. Brownlie whose call to higher honor leaves us with the mixed emotions of sorrow and joy. Sorrow for the great loss that is ours. Joy at the greater glory that is his.

The early Greeks had a custom that was so commendable. The father would take his children to the park where were the statues of their great leaders. As they stood before each statue the father would relate to his children the virtues of these honored leaders so as to inspire the lives of all who followed after. Is there any wonder why the golden age of Greece still casts its glow over human history!

This morning we feel something of that as we recall the life of him who lived so graciously among us. We hardly need to speak in form of eulogy, for here was one whose life was its own praise.

His friends here in Tarrytown watched his rise from the assembly line only to return where he began, but to return as the Plant Manager. That must have been a most happy moment in his career, but accepted in that humble spirit that was always so characteristic of him. Thus he was admired as much in the shop as he was in the front office because each man knew he was their friend.

His place in the community was such that few men can fill. His genius for organization, his ability to inspire others to work for noble causes, his personal interest in every human need made him our leader in all humanitarian and social efforts. His good works went far beyond what we read in newspapers or know about through our personal relationships.

So often even individuals found him quietly stepping to their side when their misfortune came to his attention.

Indeed, there is no one whose life in a few years has so left its mark upon our community. One tree in the midst of a forest may fall and lie almost unnoticed,

but, as Edwin Markham has said, when a stately tree on top of a hill shall fall it leaves a great vacant space against the sky. That is what we feel and see today, for "he was a man who possessed no common soul".

Here, no doubt, is the secret of his life, for a man's personality is only his soul shining through. And when that soul is touched by the Spirit of the Living God it bears a radiance that transforms both the man and his world. Nurtured in that faith in his Scottish home, and in his Scottish church, he found that faith maturing in our church until now he

"Knows the thing that all men dream,
There is no death. There's immortality."

So we are not here, as St. Paul writes, "as men who have no hope". We are here as those whose Lord broke the bonds of death and left an empty tomb to prove himself the Lord of life.

That leaves us here not as those whose dreams are ended. We are as those who just waved a bon voyage to one we love, looking with confidence and hope to that time when we shall meet again to share the joy and fellowship interrupted for a little time.

For love is something stronger than death. It is not bound by time or space. Love is eternal, for God is eternal, and God is love. Therefore we see a rainbow through our tears, and behind the rainbow the Lord Jesus Christ our comfort in sorrow, our companion through the lonely hours, and our everlasting hope. Into his hands we commend his spirit with humble and grateful hearts.

Amen.