

A PLACE FOR LIVING AND DYING

I. Introduction

Western writer Robert Flynn tells the story of the Turrill family's journey from east Texas towards California. Married at 16 Grover and Edna Turrill set out across Texas in a wagon pulled by a milk cow and a steer. Grover had promised Edna he would get her to California; it was a dream of hers that would become their dream. During the trek through central Texas they had a baby boy. They were alone, so 16 year-old Grover assisted in the delivery. It was only a few days later that the baby was killed in a traveling accident.

The young couple tarried for days trying to decide whether or not to abandon the grave of their first-born child. "California is purty," said Grover and "it'll be easier to forget if we move along."

They were crossing the west Texas prairie when their milk cow died. They lived in the wagon while Grover planted a crop to try and raise enough money to buy a yoke of oxen to take them to California. In the meantime, another baby was born, this one a girl. Grover built a lean-to for mother and daughter to be of out of the weather. Time passed, crops were harvested and the Turrill's found themselves with child once more; another boy.

This Texas prairie was not the land of Grover and Edna's hopes, nor was it rich enough to help them accomplish their dream of California. Each evening as the sun faded into the west, Grover and Edna would talk of California. "It's purty," Grover said.

Not too many more years passed, when their youngest child was killed in a hunting accident. But pain and suffering was not over for the Turrill family. The daughter soon came down with a stomach ailment. Grover tried to get her into town to see the doctor, but when they arrived, the doctor was not in. By the time the doctor was found, the 13 year-old girl was dead. After the funeral, Grover and Edna went to the house and sat on the porch and looked west. "If that old cow hadn't of died we'd be in California," said Grover. "It'd been purty," replied Edna.

Grover and Edna left no heirs, but instead left a legacy of endurance, hope, and the search for beauty and meaning in their meager lives. They never lived to see California. During the daughter's funeral, the neighbor's took up a collection to help pay their way, but the Turrill's refused to go. "We'll think about California next year," said Grover. "It'll sure be nice and peaceful when we get there though, and peace is something we've never had here," added Edna.

Grover said, "There ain't but three things life has taught me: don't look too far ahead; don't quit too early; and turn loose when the sun goes down." "California is for hoping and dreaming, but Texas is for living and dying."

II. Discussion

A. Do Not Look Too Far Ahead.

1. Caught up in cares of this world. The Rich Fool (Lk 12:16-31). (323 – *Living by Faith*, Heb. 11:6)
2. Caught up in yourself – it is not about you, it is about Him. (368 – *All to Jesus I Surrender*, Ps. 51:15-17)

B. Do Not Quit Too Early

1. Have endurance, patience. (Ja. 1:2-4)
2. Wait on the Lord (Ps. 25:4,5, 20,21)
3. (377 – *Farther Along*, Jn. 14:1-3)

C. Turn Loose When the Sun Goes Down

1. Work for the night is coming (Heb. 6:9-11; 254 – *Work for the Night is Coming*, Jn. 9:4)
2. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. (376 – *Angry Words*, Eph. 4:29-32)
3. Walk in the light – in the steps of the Savior (184- *Stepping in the Light*, 1 Jn. 1:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:21.)

III. Conclusion

- A. We are only “passin’ thru” (496 – *This World is not My Home*, Heb. 11:13) on the way to a better place. But this land is our place for living and dying.
- B. Our hope and dream of heaven (476 – *How Beautiful Heaven Must Be*, Rev. 21:10-25) can only be realized, when we give up this mortal shell.
- C. While we prepare for our dream to come true: don’t look too far ahead; don’t quit too early; and turn loose when the sun goes down.” (518 – *Beyond the Sunset*, Rev. 22:5)