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ADDRESS

AT THE FUNERAL

OF

CAPT. LORENZO D. GOVE,

SLAIN BY REBELS IN VIRGINIA,

DELIVERED IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE.



BY S. P. LEEDS,

PASTOR.



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OF
CAPT. LORENZO D. GOVE,
IN THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE,
BY THE PASTOR.*

There is always something peculiarly impressive to the members of a small community, in the loss of one of their number. We constitute what might be called a large *family*. As is too often the case with such a family, whose sons and daughters have reached middle life, and have households of their own, — without much intercourse except as we meet upon the street, we yet feel an interest in each other's welfare deeper than we are conscious of till the hour of trial comes. Then — when some domestic circle is bereaved of its babe — when disaster of *any* kind visits some one of us — all have a sympathy unknown in large towns or cities. Especially is this the case when Death removes a husband and a father; and yet more when this husband and father is, for a good reason, at all prominent among us.

So is it in the present instance. We are not here to-day to indulge in eulogy. Seldom, and in but limited degree, is such a strain appropriate at a funeral-service, or in the house of God. Nor would it be fitting that I, who knew the deceased less than most of you, should attempt to describe to you his character. Nor needs he praise among us. As I have already indicated, he was one of a family which we of this village compose, at the head of one of its households, and well-known to us all. This is enough for us. He leaves behind him a widow; he leaves behind him children. This is enough for us.

* The writer has not felt at liberty to refuse the publication of this Address, to friends who think it might be of some service to the cause of Truth. He counts it a privilege, indeed, to make any contribution, however humble, to the interests of Patriotism, Humanity, and Righteousness. Hastily prepared, the Address expresses, nevertheless, deliberately formed opinions and heartfelt convictions.

But this is not all. We cannot forget that our brother has been taken from us amidst peculiar circumstances. He has been slain; and slain while fighting in the cause of his country. In that great host which has gone forth to maintain Government, and Popular Institutions, the Union, the Constitution, and the Laws, he had a place, a place of no slight consequence, a place which he filled honorably too; and in that place it was that he fell. We have, to day, my Friends, the somewhat unusual spectacle of a Funeral without the body of the departed. That body rests beneath no deep waters—in no mountain-hollow—in the recesses of no trackless forest—in no distant land; but in a spot not very far away, which we know, but from which, alas! War prevents us from removing it. On the last day of October, a hostile force attacked our lines; our friend hastened to perform his duty; he was mortally wounded, and became a prisoner. He received, I rejoice to say, great kindness from persons residing near the battle ground; they took him to their house, and there watched over and nursed him until the next day when his spirit passed away. When, or indeed whether, his remains can be brought to this his home, is yet uncertain; therefore we delay no longer the obsequies. And therefore, I repeat, it is in circumstances peculiar and peculiarly fitted to excite our regard for him who has been taken and for the wife and children who have been left, that we meet to-day. Patriotism unites with sympathy and with friendship to bid us mourn, and pay the last sad tribute of respect for his memory.

But an occasion of this kind compels us to look beyond what concerns the individual or the community. It were affectation, alike culpable and foolish, to take no note of the Great Conflict in one of whose innumerable minor struggles our friend lost his life. I cannot, if I would, be silent on this topic at such a time. “The voice of our brother’s blood crieth unto” us, as well as unto God, “from the ground,” and commands us to ask why it has been shed. As plainly, however, does the solemnity of this service forbid that I enter upon the sphere of partisan politics; and this you will not ask of me.

Under a sense, then, of my responsibility to right reason and to God, I would speak to-day of the events of our time.

So speaking, I feel bound to declare that our friend was slain by a most wicked rebellion. "Oppression and revolt," in the language of Scripture (Isa. 59:13), — "*oppression and revolt*" have taken his life. The more carefully I read the word of God, the more conscientiously I listen to the voice of unbiased reason, the deeper becomes my conviction of the enormity of that attempt at revolution which has already made thousands of widows and myriads of orphans. I am but repeating what was said to me by one of the ablest and holiest divines of our land, a man, too, of conservative temper, as well of as Southern birth, when I affirm, that this is the most flagrant instance of human wickedness since the crucifixion of our Lord. Whether we consider the frauds with which it was ushered in, the thing itself, or the object at which it aims, we are *horriſied* at this rebellion.

When we consider those introductory frauds, we need no very high standard of morality by which to condemn them. Admitting that in a righteous enterprise some bold measures may be resorted to, not allowable in ordinary times, admitting that some stratagem, in ordinary times inexcusable, may then be rightly practised, no one can justify the presence in a country's Cabinet and Senate of men whose hearts are given and whose hands are virtually, if not formally, pledged to that country's enemies. Who of us does not rejoice that Washington and his compeers held no place in British counsels when they engaged in the defence of our freedom? With what different sentiments should we regard the memory of these men, were it otherwise!

But aside from this, consider the rebellion in itself. An attempt at revolution, my Friends, is no light thing. Wise men have long since decided, with the greatest of English statesmen, Edmund Burke, that "a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good." Too common in our nation is the idea that to baptize an enterprize with that name is enough for its defence, and too frequent is the reference to our own example. But, apart from the fact that there is a world-wide difference between a revolution for the right and a revolution for the wrong, between a revolution whose motto was that all men are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and a revolution whose motto is a denial of this, between a revolution to maintain Free-

dom and a revolution to extend Slavery, — apart from this, I say, we must inquire in the case submitted to us whether the asserted wrongs were intolerable, whether redress was hopeless, and whether there was a reasonable hope of success in the rebellious undertaking. All these must concur. Did they concur in the present instance? Were those who rose up against the Government suffering intolerable oppression at its hands? Was all hope of redress for it vain? Was there also good ground for them to expect success in their revolutionary enterprise? If all of these questions can be answered in the affirmative, then is the present rebellion righteous; if any of them must be answered in the negative, then is it wicked. And wicked indeed is it, if it is a rebellion against a Government whose power has been felt only in blessings, a Government with which have been bound up the hopes and the prayers of the oppressed in all other lands, a Government whose success gave promise that “in due time arbitrary weights should be lifted from all men’s shoulders, and all have a fair opportunity in the race of life.”

But, my Friends, Patriotism requires no injustice at our hands. It is but fair to admit that our countrymen who have now become our enemies contend that they were suffering a vast wrong. And if Slavery be a great good, and if, farther, the right to extend it be a real and invaluable one; I see not how this can be denied. Nor was there any hope of redress for this asserted injury; for an overwhelming majority in the land, — four-fifths of its voters, — in two different columns, to be sure, but, on this point, unanimous, — had refused their aid to Slavery-extension. The question, then, recurs, and we cannot justly evade it, — Is slavery of such a nature, or, more exactly, Is the extension of slavery so precious a “right” as to entitle its advocates to convert this great land into one battle-field? Let the widows whom this war has made, answer that question! Is the extension of slavery so precious a “right” as to entitle its advocates to convert this great land into one vast battle-field? Ye fathers of more than one hundred thousand sons already dead in this conflict, answer! Ye mothers, who with those sons gave also a portion of your own life, answer! Ye little children, who look in vain for the return of the protectors whom God gave you, answer!

From all of these various classes. I am well assured that, if it go no farther than that our husbands and sons and children should have bled ; but, being *what it is*, the crime of Slavery adds unspeakably to its guilt!"—Yes, odious as is the crime in the frauds that introduced it, odious as it is in its means, it is odious also in its avowed aim. The extension of slavery—the mere statement of such an object is enough to goad up any enterprise. Take these all, then, into view, and you will regard it as one of the enormous crimes in the history of the world.

But, my Friends, we are not here merely to consider the wickedness of men, still less the wickedness of others, although for a time compelled so to do. The word of God teaches us, when we are visited by great calamities, to recognize His agency. Long ago did He declare that the proud Assyrian who came up to assail Israel executed, though unwittingly, His own infinite purpose : we are told that the death of our Saviour was accomplished, indeed, by wicked human hands, but fulfilled the everlasting counsel of Jehovah. Are there no indications, then, of His displeasure against a guilty nation, in our present calamities?

Well may any one shrink from *pointing* the judgments of God. Plainly are we taught in Scripture that the Divine displeasure against individuals is not to be inferred from the afflictions which they may endure. But, we must close our eyes to a very large portion alike of its narratives, of its declarations, and—be it especially noted—of its prophecies concerning Christ's kingdom, if we would not see that there is very great reason for guilty nations to fear Divine punishments. In our own case, we have especial reason to believe that we may be suffering such, in the fact that such have been long anticipated by all who can claim the name of observers. Patent to many among ourselves have been our national sins, and sad have been their forebodings. Not, indeed, to destroy us, as we would humbly hope, has God lifted up His hand. His dealings with us we would fain regard as chastisements "for our profit." Trustfully do we anticipate a time when, our pride, vainglory, materialism, and the rest, having been rebuked, we shall come forth from these troubles to be a better as well as a happier nation than before. Indeed, it

would be hard for any one to conceive a process better adapted to secure this result than is much of what we are now called to bear. Living too much on the immediate or the speedy future, we now find a very black cloud over it, and we can only hope, at the best, for a perfectly restored peace and strength years hence. Proud of the increasing extent of our domain, we see it threatened with a most serious dismemberment. Relying on our vast material resources, we find ourselves baffled by a fraction of our number with but a fraction of our wealth. Confident in the working of natural laws apart from their Author, we observe those laws doing service to our enemies. Boastful of the inherent powers and capacities of our government, we are rudely roused to discover our error, and have it so painfully set before us that we were in danger for a time of exaggerating it. Careless of Government in general—of the sacred names of authority and law—we are taught most fearfully the meaning and value of these. Defiant towards other nations, we are obliged to submit to indignities the more galling because we persist in regarding them as greater than they are. Exultant in our success and deeming ourselves—with but partial truth—the object of general admiration, we are become a byword and a reproach with few indeed to do us reverence. In fine, too much inclined to disregard the obligation of the *moral* law,—to believe that the will of a majority may modify its applications—to hold that there is no Higher Law than human enactments, we are compelled at last to recognize the law of Jehovah.

I repeat, it would be hard to conceive a process better adapted to make our nation truly wiser than is much of what we are now suffering. Already, I think, we see *some* fruits of this discipline; fruits, however, I must add, which there is great reason to fear would never come to maturity were our calamities soon to cease. Not quite so self-confident as we once were, are we now; not quite so sure of our power to crush all enemies; not quite so certain that wealth and energy can overcome every obstacle; much more inclined are we to think that it is “God’s gentleness which hath made us great,” that it is He that “removeth Kings and setteth up Kings,” that “except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” Believing,

then, in the *ultimate* success of our cause, not for any one reason, but for the combined reasons that greater strength and resources *generally* prevail, — that our cause is just, — that we are in the line of modern history, the regular successors of William of Orange, the third William of England, of Washington and his co-laborers, — and that we are coördinate, too, with the great movements of Christendom in the present day as illustrated especially in Germany and Italy which are struggling at once for union and liberty, for union as the safeguard of liberty, and for liberty as the soul of union, — I anticipate that when that success arrive, it will appear from the character of the nation that it has been dealt with in a way of chastisement most illustriously merciful as well as wise.

But, my Friends, I am forced to say that, after the most careful consideration of the subject, I cannot affirm that such chastisement exhausts the whole meaning of current events. I ponder in amazement those events; I contemplate the armies upon our soil — armies which in their aggregate (including, I mean, those of both sides) outnumber all that modern times can show; I consider the frightful loss of life; I ask with awe whether there be nothing in our previous national history to explain this. Cautiously — avoiding as far as I can all rashness and presumption — I inquire whether there be aught of sin which we have committed, to furnish a parallel to the sufferings which we are now enduring. *And such a parallel, I find.* I find that, besides the widows and orphans and childless whom we now commiserate, there has been another host of these in our land whom we have almost disregarded. I find that for years, scores of thousands of human beings have been annually transferred from the States of their nativity to remote regions, against their will, and as articles of merchandise. I find that human beings have been sold on the auction-block as brute beasts, for prices that have risen with their virtues and their piety. I find that, by this process, husbands have been separated from wives, and parents from children. And as if this were not enough, by unmis- takable evidence, I find that thousands annually have lost their lives thereby. And all this, I say, has lasted for years.

When, then, Friends and Fellow-Christians, I see what we are looking upon to-day, I dare not affirm that *chastisement*, merely, is the meaning of to-day's events. If Joseph's brethren, having sold one brother into bondage and being threatened with the loss of another, were right when their affliction reminded them of their crime, and "they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear, — *therefore* is this distress come upon us;" then may we well fear lest that great sin of our nation has brought upon us a bitter portion of our woe. Speaking as it becomes God's ministers to speak — as upon my oath to tell the truth and the whole truth in this matter — I believe, I say, that to the great sin of the slave-trade within our borders is due a large and bitter portion of our present woe.

If any would suggest that we, at least, of the Northern part of the land, have not been involved in that crime, gladly would I accept the suggestion, if I could. But, my Friends, — to say nothing of laws to arrest the guilty traffic which we might have secured — to say nothing of these, because by some their constitutionality has been doubted, — can we declare as before God that our influence has been exerted on this subject as it ought to have been? Have our voices been lifted earnestly and incessantly upon it? Who of us can affirm that with "meekness of wisdom," yet with holy indignation, he has rebuked this inhuman trade as steadily and earnestly as he should have done?

And this, too, be it remembered, is but the most glaring manifestation of our national sin. For, our national sin is not slavery so much as it is *the ill-treatment of a race*; and *this* has been shared in by the whole land — North as well as South. The gloomy proofs of this assertion, I need not give.

So, then, by our wrong treatment of that sorrowing race and by our guilty silence, we are involved in the particular sin of which I speak. That traffic, which, upon the high seas, we have been ready to condemn and from the contemplation of whose horrors there we might have learned its essential horrors everywhere, — that traffic, whose agents as between Africa and this land, one of our own statesmen and the son of whom our College here is proudest, declared to be "offenders far beyond the

ordinary depths of human guilt," — that traffic, of which as thus existing, he exclaimed "I hear the sound of the hammer—I see the smoke of the furnace where manacles and fetters are still forged for human limbs—I see the visages of those who, by stealth and at midnight, labor in this work of hell ; if the pulpit be silent whenever or wherever there may be a sinner, bloody with this guilt, within the hearing of its voice, the pulpit is false to its trust," — that traffic, with its annual myriads of broken-hearted wives and parents and children, and of prematurely slain, explains those other myriads, similarly bereft and similarly smitten, over whom we mourn to-day !

Verily, my Brethren and Friends, the nation's sin has found us out. "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth," and He has said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." OUR SIN AGAINST A WHOLE RACE — a sin so great that it might well destroy our nation, which, I fear, would destroy it, were not Paul's mitigation ours, that we have done it "ignorantly in unbelief," — our sin, *culminating* in the internal slave-trade, has brought at last its retribution. "Verily, He is a God that judgeth in the earth!"

Yes, my Friends, there is a God, and sin against Him is "an evil thing and a bitter." He *will* rule among men. They shall bow to His power, if they will not bow to His law ; nor shall He fail to have obedient subjects, too, for future generations shall learn from our calamities, if we will not, to acknowledge His authority.

But why should not we learn, also ? This question I now wish to bring home to each one *individually* and in relation to his *eternal* welfare. For, my Friends, vast as are the temporal interests of nations, vaster far are the spiritual interests of individuals, because these are immortal. Nations die ; men never die. To all empires, kingdoms, republics, an end — however remote — shall come. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." But we — our higher nature — ourselves — shall outlast them, and shall live on, and on, forever. — And God's dealings with nations, we may well believe, are designed to teach

us those great lessons which our individual lives in this age or the world are too short to learn. As one might teach a child, or a person of feeble sight, with large letters, so upon national history He writes in broad and unmistakable characters the great truths of His rule over us, the excellence of His moral law and the necessity of obeying it, His long-suffering — vast and wonderful, yet not exhaustless, and followed by — His fearful justice. “The Lord is slow to anger, — and great in power, — and will not at all acquit the wicked ;” these words of His Book stand out upon the canvass of His Providence as He deals with nations — stand out so fully that millions may read them at a time, and each may read them for himself. It is true, and blessed be His name for it! that with us as individuals there seems to be a greater long-suffering than with us as gathered into nations. For, He has prepared an atonement for us as individuals, while for nations there is none directly — they receive only the *reflected* benefits of that one. With us, then, in our separate relations to Him, He lays, perhaps, a greater emphasis on His mercy than He does in our national relations to Him, — saying, My name is “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” — and yet to this He adds, “and that will by no means clear the guilty.” Let no man, then, trifle with God. Do you behold disloyal empires receiving the visits of His wrath? Do you see, as if in flaming letters upon a midnight sky, the declaration, “The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted?” Then, be you sure; my Fellow-men, that disloyal *individuals* shall not escape. Oh, be warned that a righteous God is upon the throne, Who, though, “long-suffering and abundant in goodness, — keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,” “*will by no means clear the guilty.*”

And here I cannot but recall what has been said in this house on another occasion and on a related topic. These times — through our own very doings — ‘all but speak, sending forth a voice.’ This friend of ours whom we mourn to-day — how lost he his life? And *we* sent him forth; you, my Friends, — some of you, at

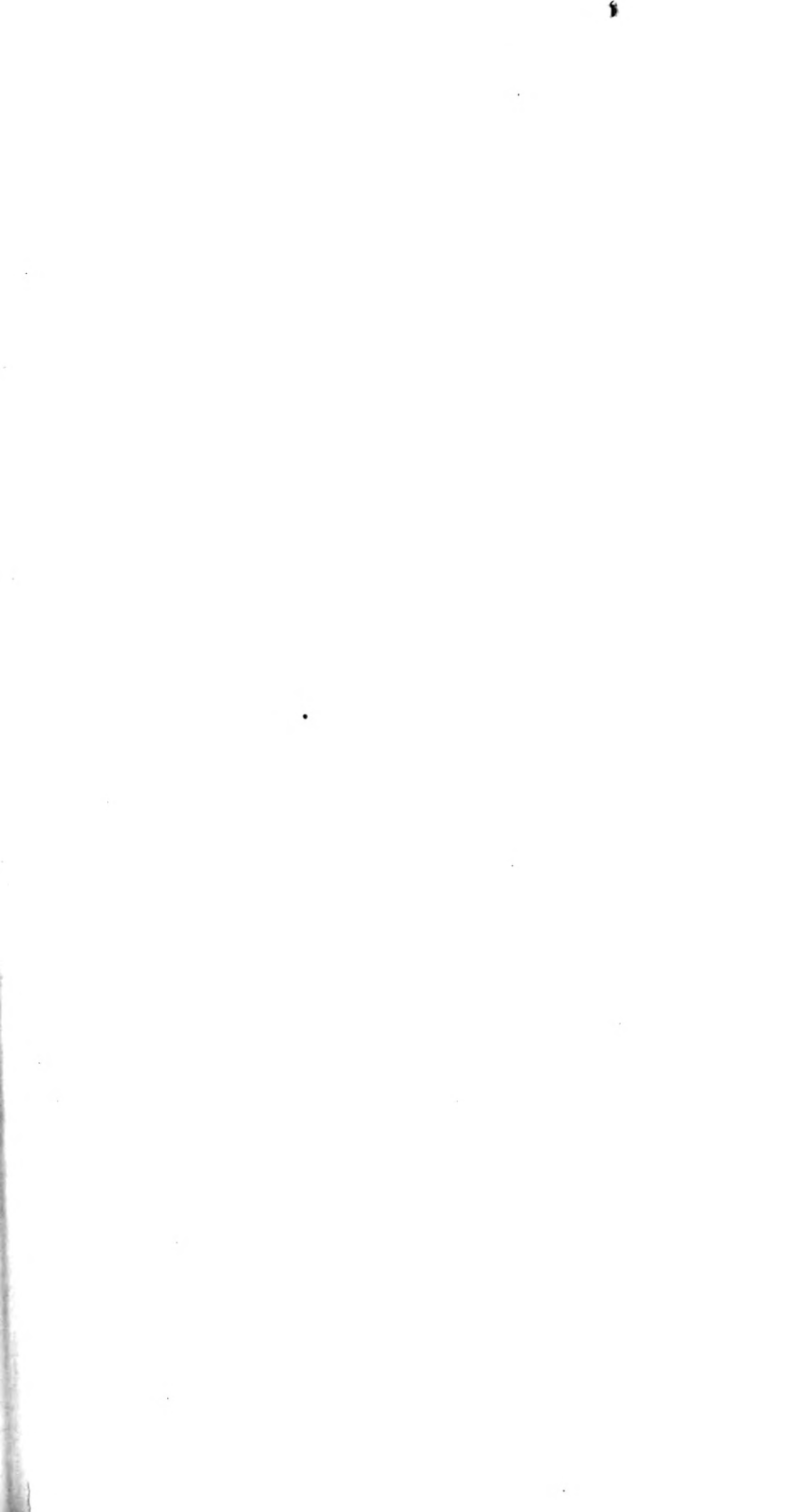
least — girt upon him as it were his sword. Wherefore ? To suppress rebellion against a rightful government — to uphold the majesty of law — to protect the common weal. For this, he went; in going thus, you bade him Godspeed. Will you, then, O my Friends, will you dare, even by neglect, to array yourselves against the Best of governments ? By cold-heartedness, if not worse, will you venture to cast your lot with that rebellious host which Satan leads against the laws of God and the highest welfare of man ? My hearer, you condemn the sin of our recent brethren; you abhor what you rightly call a wicked rebellion : in God's own words I ask you — “ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and *doest the same*, that *thou* shalt escape the righteous judgment of God ? ” I say to you once more, Be warned that a holy God is upon the throne !

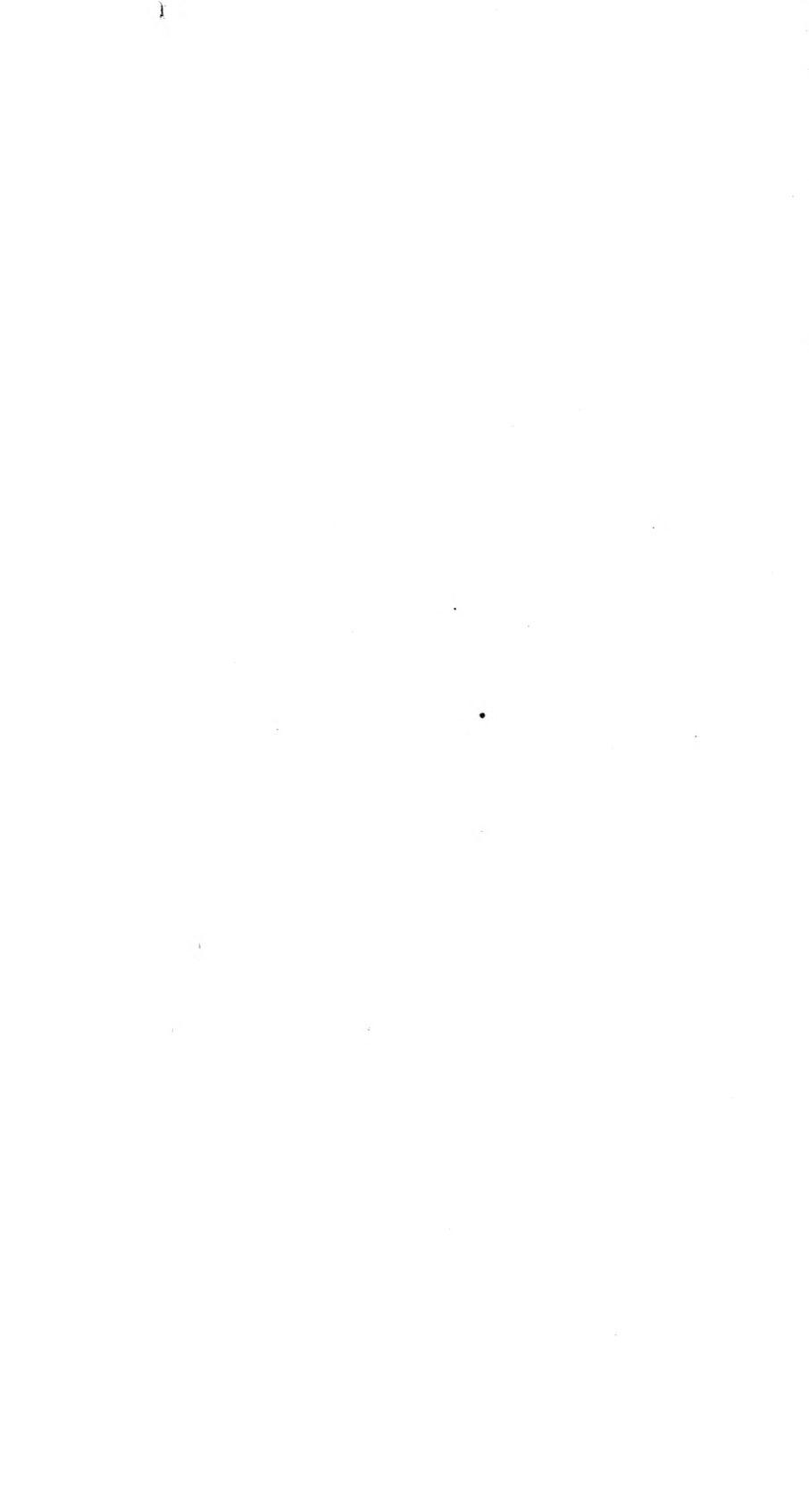
But, before I close, I must revert to that precious truth of the exceeding long-suffering of Jehovah. It is a manifestation of that Gospel which is for us preëminently as individuals. Yes, there is a Gospel for us. “ Now, then,” says His word, “ we ” — His ministers — “ are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Dear hearers, “ *be ye reconciled to God.* ” It is He Himself who invites you ; give up that enmity of yours, renounce that indifference of yours towards Him. He desires to be your Friend ; He invites your friendship ! Oh that my lips might be touched as with a live coal from off His altar to-day, as in his name I “ beseech you ” to delay no longer. Would that I could unfold with fitting power the Saviour's love. Would that I could set forth justly the attractiveness of Him who died that we might live. I cannot ; nor can, indeed, any mortal tongue. Let, then, this occasion add its voice to mine. It is the death of a fellow-man that has brought us here. Let us forget that this is an unusual occasion. Let us remember that our friend, had he escaped all the perils of the camp and the field, must have died at last. Somewhere — in some manner — at some time — he must have died. In his own home, it may be, on the familiar bed, he would have died. He has only anticipated, perhaps *not* anticipated, the day of his departure. Died, he must have, sooner or later.

It is so with us all. We need not leave our quiet New England homes, to die. Nor is there any less *uncertainty* about the hour of our death, here. Nor are *the realities that follow death* any less solemn to those who die here. I “pray you, then, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Go forth, again, my Friends, to your wonted duties — remember with genuine sympathy this widow and these children (God have her and them in His keeping, and animate us with a fitting spirit towards them) — aim to be faithful citizens and true patriots, — but, in all, and above all, “BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD.”











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