

The Life and Character of Abraham Lincoln.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE M. E. CHURCH

AT A UNION MEETING OF THE

Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Congregations of Panama,

April 30th, 1865.

BY REV. C. BURGESS,

Pastor of Presbyterian Church.

Published by Request.



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WITH SOME LESSONS FROM HIS DEATH.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PANAMA, June 1st, 1865.

REV. C. BURGESS:

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, having listened with great pleasure to your sermon preached at a Union service held in the M. E. Church in Panama, April 30th, 1865, in reference to the death of our late and lamented President, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and believing that it contains sentiments of great importance, and worthy of a wider diffusion than they had on that occasion, we therefore respectfully request a copy for publication.

W. L. SESSIONS,

L. B. SESSIONS,

E. H. SOUTHLAND,

LESTER CRANE,

D. MOORE,

L. C. RUNDELL,

W. J. WALRADT,

W. K. COOK,

J. J. MOORE,

REV. I. N. PEASE,

REV. J. R. LYON.

PANAMA, June 1st, 1865.

MESSRS. SESSIONS AND OTHERS:

GENTLEMEN:—Your note, asking a copy of my discourse, is just received.

Since, in my judgment, whatever has any connection with our late martyred President derives, from that fact alone, an importance which it could not claim from its own merit, I cheerfully comply with your request.

Yours, Truly,

C. BURGESS.

DISCOURSE.

“Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils.”—[Isaiah 2: 22.

“The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.”—Lam. 5: 15.

It is an ancient maxim that he has lived a day too long, who has survived by a single day, his country's ruin. And this sentiment is as just as it is ancient, for what generous mind could wish to linger upon the scene when all that is august and noble, all that is virtuous or good, or glorious in the institutions and prospects of his native land had vanished forever.

The force of this sentiment is not weakened by the lapse of time. It is felt as deeply to-day, and it glows as brightly among us who dwell in these western climes, as when it throbbed in the veins of the gallant Greek or the haughty and valiant Roman, prompting them to those deeds of civic skill and martial prowess which have filled the world with the fame of their temples and the glory of their arts and arms. It is not the design nor is it the effect of christianity to diminish the force or ardor of this sentiment. While it points us away indeed from all transitory scenes, and reveals to us a “better and more enduring country,” and while it bids us fix our affections and place our treasures *only* there, it does not teach us to be indifferent to our present home. It rather inspires a more genuine love of country and places it on broader foundations. It feeds the fires of true patriotism by nourishing the virtues which give them birth. Though you may search the scriptures in vain for any single precept enjoining attachment to one's native land, yet they everywhere call into exercise all those feelings which give rise to such attachment, and hence nowhere, in either ancient or modern story, is there exhibited a purer or stronger patriotism than that which has prevailed in christian lands. Where among the illustrious patriots and heroes of pagan antiquity can you find names which shine with purer lustre than those of Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Jeremiah. or Nelson, and Wellington, or Washington, and Hamilton, and Adams, and Franklin, and Lincoln of more modern times? And what is true of these heroes and patriots of the ancient

and modern world is true also of the fields of military glory. Salamis, and Marathon, and Thermopylæ, and Cannæ, and Pharsalia are matched and more by Waterloo, and Dunbar, and Saratoga, and Yorktown, and Donelson, and Gettysburg, and Fort Fisher, and the scene of those brilliant victories which ended in the capture of Richmond. The deeds performed on these late fields we think surpass those of the earlier, just as the principles which were here put at stake were broader and deeper than those of the earlier. In our judgment no thorough and candid student of history can fail to reach the conclusion that the truest religion is the best nurse of the truest patriotism. Just in the ratio in which mankind have advanced in knowledge, and virtue, and piety, has the love of country grown broader, and deeper, and purer. With the Greek and the Roman, patriotism meant little else than the advancement and the glory of his own state, though purchased at the expense or the ruin of every other. With the true christian the love of country which he cherishes is a far nobler and more expansive principle. He plans, he labors, he pours his blood on his country's altars, not simply that his native land may be rescued from faction and continue to greatness and smile under the reign of law and order, but that from it a glory and a blessing may go forth upon other lands and other peoples. His feeling is not unlike that of David when he implored the Divine favor upon Israel that thus God's "way might be known upon the earth and his saving health among all nations." His desires therefore are not expressed by that narrow motto, "My country for itself," but rather by this nobler one, "My country for the world."

But while we thus claim for patriotism in christian lands, that it has constantly become purer and broader with the widening stream of christian civilization, and that its champions far outshine the illustrious heroes of the past, we are compelled to admit that in no country or age has treason, and rebellion, and crime reached such heights of audacity and infamy as in our own age and our own land. It is not simply that crime is now seen in a stronger light and set in more striking contrast with its opposite virtue, but we have to confess that it has indeed darker stains and more colossal proportions. This may be but a necessary attendant upon every high degree of christian civilization so long as that civilization is not itself universal. It is in the torrid zones of our globe, where vegetation puts on forms of beauty and luxuriance unknown to colder climes, and where bird and beast attain their highest degrees of strength, and swiftness, and beauty, that poison plants and noxious reptiles most abound. It is here pre-eminently that serpents hiss and vipers sting. The solar orb seems to call up, as though by a necessity of its nature, alike the beautiful and the deformed,

so that the vilest of creatures are oft found nestling and sheltered under the noblest of trees and the fairest of flowers. Is it not on this principle that we are to explain the occurrence of such tragedies and the existence of such wretches as have lately clothed our land in mourning? Nowhere has christian light shined so brightly as here, and nowhere have good and evil reached such giant growth or been in such deadly grapple. The serpent of slavery has crawled over other lands and left there his slimy trail; but nowhere has he fomented such a rebellion, or in his dying agonies inflicted such a stroke. As when the harpoon is buried in some monster of the deep that monster in his mortal rage and pain is sometimes able, with a single stroke of its tail, to sweep off the boatmen and dismantle the vessel. So has slavery, in its dying convulsions, been permitted to strike off our pilot and fill our hearts with horror; but, thank God, the staunch ship still rides the sea, and has not waited a day for a commander.

It is now more than two weeks since a crime, which scarce finds a parallel in history, was enacted in our nation's capital, and the nation is but slowly recovering from the first stunning effect of the blow. We hardly thought it possible that a creature clothed in flesh and blood could be capable of such an atrocity. But four years ago we hardly thought it possible that such a disaster could overtake us as the Great Rebellion. We live, truly, in a time of strange events. It seems as though some mighty sorcerer had walked up and down our land, sowing the mists of an infernal enchantment among our people. And from such sowing there had quickly sprung up a wide harvest of treason, and rebellion, and assassination, and wo;—for all these woes have come from the same fruitful source. The leaders of the rebellion and the assassins of our civil rulers have danced around the same witches' cauldron, and have fed upon the same "viper broth." It is as though Macbeths were multiplied among us in real life by the hundred thousand. It is as though

" Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owl's wing,"

Had indeed been mixed into a "charm of powerful trouble," and had crazed the brain, and caused a third part of our people to fall from their first estate. We are not forgetful that other rulers have been assassinated and other governments assailed; but we affirm that history shows no instance like ours. It was an awful scene, indeed, when the Roman Senate, venerable and unresisting, were cut down by the Gallie invader; but this did not happen in an enlightened age and in a christian land. The act, shocking as it was,

was the act of rude, ignorant barbarians. Henry the Fourth and William, Prince of Orange, fell by the hands of assassins, and perhaps they furnish the nearest parallel to the case of our murdered President. In most respects they were both excellent rulers, and live embalmed in the affectionate memory of their people; but the Burgundian who killed the one, and the fanatic monk who slew the other, did not at the same time aim the dagger or the pistol-shot at the purest and the mildest of rulers, and the freest and most beneficent of governments. Brutus, Charlotte Corday, Lewis Sand, Ravallac, Gerard; all the regicides and assassins of the past stand confessedly outdone in infamy by those fiendish murderers who killed our President and stabbed our Secretary of State.

To-day we meet to pay a tribute of respect to this best of Presidents—a victim to the worst of criminals. We come to twine a wreath for his coffin and to weep the tears of patriots over a patriot's tomb. Called out from the obscure position of citizen-life, and placed in the high seat of our government, in the most difficult point of its career, the life and character of Abraham Lincoln the nation would do well to study and ponder the lessons taught them by his death. Time will allow us only the briefest outline on this occasion. Born in 1809 in the State of Kentucky, of humble parentage who earned their daily bread by daily toil, Abraham Lincoln possessed but few early advantages for acquiring knowledge or distinction. His father, Thomas Lincoln, becoming disgusted with slavery, and seeing no chance of successful competition with that species of industry, removed to Indiana when Abraham had only reached his eighth year. We are told that on this occasion the home was sold and the household goods placed on a raft, and young Abraham with his father and the family floated off toward the free State of Indiana. Now, we think that raft was emblematic of his future life; for to our mind he seems never to have ceased floating farther and farther from the black sea of slavery, until at last he stood quite disenthralled on the fair shore of *universal emancipation*. The home of the future President for twelve years, or until he had reached the age of twenty, was a log hut with only one room below and one above. Here his pious mother taught him to read that best of books, which has done so much to form his character and conduct him in paths of goodness and greatness. At about the age of twenty-one he set out to seek his own fortune, laboring on the farms in the neighborhood, acting as clerk in a store, and serving as Captain in the Black Hawk war, and gaining credit for bravery and fidelity. His short military career closing, his political life began, as candidate for the legislature of his State, and though unsuccessful he gained all the votes in his precinct except seven. In '34 he was elected to the Illinois legislature, in '36 was

licensed as a lawyer, and the following year removed to Springfield and entered on the practice of his profession. He was chosen to Congress in '46; took ground in opposition to the Mexican war; favored the right of petition; moved the abolition of slavery in the District, and voted, as he himself says, in one way and another, for the Wilmot Proviso about forty times. In '48 he was delegate to the convention which nominated Taylor to the Presidency and canvassed his State in his behalf. In '49 he was nominated for Senator from his State, but failed on account of the opposite politics of the Legislature. In '54 he took strong grounds against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. In '55, '56, '57 he was prominent in denunciation of the outrages in Kansas. In '56 he was put in nomination with Dayton as candidate for the Vice-Presidency. In '58 he canvassed his State with Douglas as rival candidate for the office of U. S. Senator. And here occurred that famous, curious race between craft and honesty, impersonated in the two rival candidates, in which honest, plain, good sense got so much the advantage, that the great debate was used as a most valuable campaign document by Lincoln's friends, on the occasion of his nomination and election to the Presidency, which occurred in 1860.

Such is a brief outline of the career of Abraham Lincoln up to the time of his taking the Presidential chair. He had earned the confidence of the people before, in an unusual degree, and we think that we shall but echo the sentiment of every loyal heart, when we say that that confidence had been steadily increasing in volume and strength up to the very hour of his assassination. He came to the office when it was surrounded with difficulties never known before; when himself was the object of a hate and a party rancor unprecedented in the government, and yet no man has been more conspicuous for the absence of all bitter feeling than he. No man has shown a more constant and uniform regard for the interests and welfare of the whole people than he. No man has more sedulously and impartially guarded the rights of both friend and foe than he, and perhaps no man more emphatically deserves the title of "The People's President." Taking the helm of our national Ship when she had drifted out to sea; when the preceding helmsmen had played into the hands of a mutinous crew; when the dead calm of concession and compromise had given place to the high winds of treason; when the heavens were covered with cloud and the sea lay boiling under the lash of the gale, his head has been clear and his hand has been steady, and under his firm and skillful management our noble ship has breasted every billow, and now with a majesty and grace she never had before, every mast standing and every pennon flying, is rapidly nearing the port of universal freedom and we hope perennial peace. In short Abraham Lincoln has ad-

ministered our government in the most difficult crisis of its history and administered it successfully. He had but just entered upon his second term of office. The most stupendous and unprovoked rebellion the world has ever seen was fast sinking under his well-directed blows. He had visited the captured seat of its false and surreptitious government. He had given a reception to loyal citizens in the very mansion of its infamous chief, and had safely returned to Washington, with the admiration and love of the people, and the reasonable prospect of enjoying the reward of his incessant toils—the presidency of an undivided, peaceful, prosperous country. Exactly four years had elapsed since the opening of the war. He had moved amidst snares from the first; had been the object of several organized conspiracies against his life, and had escaped them all. He had breathed in an atmosphere of treason and had come out unscathed from its malaria. He had lived to rejoice with the unspeakable joy which thrilled through the country on the replacing Sumter's flag. His life seemed more precious than ever, the day he was to die at the seat of government by the hand of a brutal assassin. On the same day of the month that Cæsar fell by the hand of Brutus, expired the idol of our people in the nation's capital. "Remember the ides of March" was long the succeeding cry heard at Rome. Remember the ides of April, may well be the motto of loyal men when they come to adjust the claims of traitors on national clemency.

A few hours before the nation had been intoxicated with joy. Now, as it were in a moment, "Our joy is ceased and our dance is turned into mourning." Is it possible that such an event can happen in this country? Are we living in the nineteenth century—in a land of freedom and law? Are we to believe that goodness and paternal tenderness exhibited in a ruler, can draw down upon him the same fate which sometimes attend the blood-stained usurper in monarchical lands? Such are the questions which rise to the lips of loyal men in this time of national grief. Shakspeare's words in regard to the death of Duncan, only changing Duncan for Lincoln, are far more applicable now than when first spoken.

"Besides this, Lincoln
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead, like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking off."

What vengeance is fit to be visited upon such an assassin and upon the leaders of such a rebellion; for one spirit animates both, one blood circulates in both. For nearly two weeks the body of our Martyr President has been passing from State to State and from city to city through the land, and thus his slain, lifeless form

has been making a mute and touching appeal to the people, asking for justice—not simply like the blood of Abel crying from the ground, but rather like that abused companion of a certain Levite, of whom we read that her lifeless body was divided into twelve parts, and a part sent to each of the twelve tribes, calling in this silent and visible way, more expressive than any words, for justice. And on each of the tribes to whom a portion of that dead body was sent, was called upon to “consider of it, to take advice and to speak their mind.” So is this nation now called to consider this national calamity. And as those tribes, upon inquiry of the Lord, were directed to avenge the crime, so let this nation prostrate itself before God, and learn the duty of the hour, not certainly an unrestraining, pitiless vengeance upon the masses in rebellion, *but an unsparing infliction of the proper penalties of the law upon crime and the execution of the demands of justice, upon those whose hands are red with ten thousand murders.* May it not be with reference to this needed infliction that God has permitted the removal of one ruler and the introduction of another. He may have thus thought best to spare the tender hearted and merciful one the stern work which may yet require to be done. While we are gathered in this house, paying these funeral honors to our martyred President, his body, conveyed with such solemn pageant and splendor, has nearly reached his beloved Springfield. All that is mortal of Abraham Lincoln will soon be consigned to the tomb. His spirit is engaged this day in other scenes. Ah! how different from those of earth. From all the cares of state; from all the warrings of earthly passions, he has ascended to the eternal tranquility of the skies. But we will not attempt to imagine or portray the scenes in which he is now mingling. We leave him as we must every departing soul, in the hands of his Father and his God. Four years ago he went forth from that same city of Springfield, to assume the duties and perils of an untried and most responsible position. He then asked the nation’s prayers, and he has had them. He now returns at the end of life’s journey amidst a nation’s tears, and he deserves them. Yes, thou good and noble man, thou illustrious patriot, made immortal by a nation’s struggle and the manner of thy death, a nation’s affection shall guard thy dust, and a nation’s tears shall fall around thy tomb.

“ Our hearts are sad, our eyes are dim,
 We hoped long years of rest for him;
 To enjoy the peace for which he wrought,
 The peace with his own life-blood bought.
 But he has rest,
 Among the blest,
 And with the Christ he loved.
 Enough—his work was done,

The victor's crown was won;
 And God himself removed,
 The patriot martyr to his home.
 Enough—his task was done;
 For us remains to guard his tomb;
 To bid the willow wave
 Around the sacred grave,
 Of him who loosed the slave;
 And weave the fame,
 Of Lincoln's name,
 With that of Washington."

Let us now turn for a few moments to survey the character of the late President. And we premise that we do not intend an exhaustive discussion. We shall simply glance at some of the chief and most prominent traits. And we will name that first which would doubtless be first in the mind and on the lips of every man whether friend or foe—his *unimpeachable honesty*. Abraham Lincoln was an honest man. His course had been so marked by this before his presidency, that he was best known by the title, "*Honest Abe of the West*." And what was true of him in the humble spheres, as he advanced through them step by step, was still more conspicuously manifested in the fiery ordeal of four years' continuance through which he has but just passed. Where this quality of character has been scarcest, he has caused it to shine the brightest. It had come to be regarded as nearly if not quite impossible for a man to keep this jewel of the soul at the seat of our government, and especially when entrusted with the management of large public affairs. It had been so apt to dissolve in the furnace-heats of temptation, that most of those who had gone there with the reputed possession of this treasure, on coming away were found quite insolvent, their treasure all dissipated and gone. President Lincoln has in this particular, redeemed the presidential office and the honor of political life generally. He has shown it possible to mingle with the selfish, the ambitious, the tricky, and yet to live above suspicion. He has shown it possible to acquire and to keep the character of an honest man, his enemies themselves being judges. Now we regard this as no unimportant acquisition to the moral wealth of our country. For now once more we behold the highest office under our government, decked with that fragrant, imperishable laurel—honesty. Human nature and the American name have been at once honored in the view of all lands, and another shining example of this cardinal virtue has been added to that given by our first president for the benefit of the youth of *this* and succeeding generations.

Another trait in the character of our departed president we shall call *sagacity*, or what an old writer calls "clear, roundabout, common sense." He seemed to have a sort of intuitive perception of

the merits of a case. It was not easy to confuse his mind with side-issues. However entangled a question might become in the course of debate, though the web of sophistry might appear to other minds inextricable, he would often by a single sentence cut through the whole and lay the fallacy bare. There is no evidence that he had what is called a metaphysical mind, or one trained to abstract thought, but his ready apprehension of the truth seems to have been almost an instinct. His mind operated like a magnet. When brought in contact with an argument it quickly extracted the truth from amidst a mass of surrounding error. This, so abundantly evident in his great debate in Illinois, became still more conspicuous during the progress of the war. In all the knotty questions arising so constantly during the past four years whose mind has been so uniformly right as that of the President? And even at times when he seemed to have made a mistake, how often have the lapse of time and succeeding events justified his position. Time will not allow illustrations or further expansion of this topic, but we can all see how inestimably important in our national exigencies was just such an endowment. Called to conduct the affairs of our nation in circumstances altogether new—in the midst of a gigantic civil war—with a thousand and one advisers in all parts of the land, and all inexperienced as himself, he needed just that sagacity, that intuitive perception of what was fit and true, which he so eminently possessed. Indeed, we think that when the bustling and tumultuous events of these times and the actors in them shall have settled into the calm repose of history, the *sagacity* and the ability with which Abraham Lincoln has met each event, as it arose, and conducted this nation through a trial which has no precedent in the past will but appear the more conspicuous the more it is pondered by succeeding ages.

We name as another characteristic *his great kindness of heart*. It is believed by those who have been associated with him in the daily intimacies of life, that never by a written line, or by a spoken word, or even by a look, has he indicated any bitter or rancorous feeling toward even his most inveterate enemies. And when we remember what bitterness of invective has assailed him—how his steps have been thronged by enemies and tracked by assassins, how the entire south not only, but a vast company of traitors and semi-traitors at the north also, have by every possible misrepresentation and abuse tested to the last extremity this temper of his mind, we are inclined to think him the more remarkable for the possession of this trait than either of the preceding. That he should in no single instance have been thrown off his balance and returned railing for railing. That he should stand year after year as a target for the evenenomed shaft

of traitors, and yet to the last, with a paternal tenderness seek to woo them back to paths of loyalty and safety—that he should place himself as it were, like another Moses, between his foes and the wrath they so richly deserved, is truly unique in the history of public men. And in this respect we deem his example worthy universal imitation, with this sole exception, that mercy should never be suffered so to obstruct the demands of justice, as to weaken the authority of law or jeopard the safety of society. A beautiful instance of this kindness of heart was that scene of which you have all read, and which occurred not many months since, when after the weary hand-shaking of two hours or more with the dignitaries and other citizens, who pressed their way into the reception room, he brightened up and rallied his strength to receive with a smile a large and motly company of colored men and women, who half distrustful before now sought his hand, only to feel re-assured by his warm and friendly greeting and retain pleasant memories for the rest of their lifetime. This trait of character shines all the brighter when we think how early and how long he was placed in the school of adversity. That in such circumstance he should have contracted no acerbity of disposition, but on the other hand have grown constantly in mellowness and kindness of heart, is surely most convincing proof of intrinsic greatness of character. This severe discipline of adversity in early life renders it the more singular that he should have possessed another trait for which he was distinguished—*that of humor*. This trait, like a vine climbing over a somewhat rough frame-work, relieved what might have otherwise appeared angular and dry. He loved to hear a witty story and to tell one but it is said that his anecdotes though sometimes exceedingly droll and laughter-provoking were never coarse and always illustrated some important point. His view was sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the comical as well as the sober side of things. Those who have read his speeches will not lack for specimens illustrative. We forbear citing any on this occasion. We will however quote his first political speech as an illustration not mainly of his drollery but rather of his simplicity of character. It was made in 1832 when he was in nomination for the Illinois Legislature; “Gentlemen fellow citizens, I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet. I am in favor of a National Bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful. If not it will be all the same.” There was also in the character of our deceased President a remarkable *symmetry*—or happy balance of faculties. There was no one-sided or monstrous development of one faculty, while others.

were left in the shade. Conservative and radical tendencies were so harnessed together as to preserve a salutary equilibrium. It was thus that he was enabled to keep abreast with the march of events and fulfill so well all the demands of the hour. He did not so anchor himself to an old opinion as to be incapable of discerning the current of progress or moving along with it. In reference to his own progress, he says that he "had not so much controlled events as events had controlled him." And, for one so firm in his own convictions, he was singularly ready to listen respectfully to the advice and opinions of others, always reaching however his own independent conclusions.

His character as a writer too is remarkable when we consider how he had to pick up his knowledge and training amid the chill of poverty and the hurry of business. His style is not indeed ornate or elegant but it has a quality more essential than either—*perspicuity*, or directness. It is never difficult to tell what he means. There is also great brevity and force. No more words are used than are necessary to convey the meaning and convey it well. His style has been flippantly called "homespun" by some, but it were certainly easy to select passages, not a few, that are conspicuous for their rhetorical beauty, as witness his last Inaugural, which contains some exquisite gems, both of thought and style. Language as used by Lincoln was not employed, as it would seem to have been by some others in high station, to conceal ideas, but to express them. And as he had the rare faculty of putting a great deal of thought into a few words, his state papers, however much they may lack in polish, will compare, we think not unfavorably, with those of some of his predecessors whose long-drawn and fine-spun specimens of rhetoric seem to have been written as though on purpose to see how close one may come to saying a thing and yet not say it,

To crown all, our lamented President was distinguished by a truly *reverent and religious spirit*. He never lost faith in God or a sense of his responsibility to him. In one of the darkest hours of the great struggle, when all around seemed to despond, he said to a company of clergymen and others who had called to pay their respects: "Gentlemen, my hope of success in this great and terrible struggle rests upon that immutable foundation—the justice and the goodness of God. And when events are very threatening and prospects very dark, I still hope that in some way man cannot see all will be well in the end, because our cause is just and God is on our side." He was familiar with the scriptures and was evidently guided by their divine counsels. He recognized his dependence upon God and realized his sustaining power; for he is said to have observed to a friend that he believed he should die under his bur-

dens, if he could not retire to some secret place and roll them upon an Almighty arm.

President Lincoln was not ashamed to pray or ask the prayers of God's people in behalf of himself and the nation, and devout christians will find great satisfaction in the following incident which I have seen several times in print. To one visiting Washington, and charged by a friend with the special request that he would ascertain the President's feelings toward the Saviour, asking him in so many words "Do you love Jesus?" he made this reply, "When I left Springfield to assume the duties of this responsible place I asked the nation's prayers, but I was not a Christian. When I lost my son—the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian then. But when I went to Gettysburg and looked on that field covered with our brave heroes who had there given their lives for their country, I then and there consecrated my heart to God. *I do love Jesus.*" And who that has read that short speech of his at Gettysburg which will thrill the hearts of posterity as will not even the eloquent words of our most eloquent orator, and the main thought of which urges the dedication not so much of the cemetery as of American hearts still living and glowing with patriotism, can doubt that our good President then dedicated himself anew, not simply to the work of serving his country, but to the still higher work of serving his God.

In short, his stainless morality—his tireless industry—his incorruptible integrity—his wonderful simplicity—his firmness and independence—his intuitive perception of truth—his sagacious wisdom, his amiable temper—his happy balance of faculties—his gentlemanly bearing—his paternal kindness and readiness of access by the poor and the friendless—his drollery and wit—his gentleness and unselfishness—his reverent spirit toward God—his intense and fervid patriotism—yea his entire absorption in the one work of saving his country and his tragical end as a martyr to the cause of human liberty, combine to form a character which will always be justly dear to the common people and dear to all in every land who regard the rights of the common people and labor for the moral and political elevation of man.

We have occupied your attention already perhaps sufficiently long, but we should leave unsecured one of the chief objects of this occasion, did we conclude without pointing your minds to some of the lessons which God is teaching the nation by this death. We presume not to interpret with certainty all the purposes which God had in the removal of our beloved chief. But we think this is evident that among other things God is teaching this nation the lesson of the text: "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils." For we see in it most impressively the vanity of man "at his best

estate," and how the tower of a nation's confidence may in a moment, be removed. God would have us look more to him and less to any outward instrumentality. He must be recognized as really the sole ruler--the only source of national success and prosperity. He requires us to look through and beyond all earthly agencies and ascribe unto him "the glory due unto his name." Now the natural and universal proneness of man to overlook the Divine authority is perhaps increased by the very nature of our institutions: for it is the tendency of our free form of government to exalt man and clothe him with power and dignity. And in this general elevation, this new sense given to every man in the republic of his own importance and essential dignity, this consequence very naturally flows that we should be apt to lose sight of our dependence upon a Supreme Power. There has been nothing more remarkable all along in this great struggle than the pains God has taken to teach us our dependence upon himself. He has not suffered us to center our regards long around any *our* earthly deliverer. He has either removed such an one from his place or permitted him to betray our confidence. He has thus caused to stand out before the eye of the nation these admonitory words, "Put not your trust in princes. Make not the arm of flesh your trust." Perhaps the great man and pure patriot we mourn to-day had come to be too generally regarded as essential to our success, and the Divine arm too little thought of, and God has found it necessary to remove him from our sight. Whether this is so or not the chastisement thus brought upon us should have the effect to increase the nation's sense of dependence upon the arm of Jehovah. The carnage of our battle-fields, the disasters that have been sustained during the war, the unparalleled sufferings endured in rebel prisons, sufferings which it shocks our nerves to read of or even to think, sufferings by which the Black Hole of Calcutta has been relieved of its immortality of infamy, men having been systematically starved to death by thousands, or knocked down and fed to blood-hounds, while yet alive--these inflictions have not sufficed to stay the tide of extravagance and worldliness and pride in our land. And God has now touched the nation in a new way, and poured upon it a universality of sorrow which compels the giddy to stay awhile from his levity, the hand of greed to relax its covetousness, and the whole nation to stop suddenly every sound of joy and join in a general wail of grief. The morning of the President's death, it were as though the pulse of the nation's life stood still, and like the clock in Fifth Avenue Hotel, "which goes no more, but ever points to one sad hour, the hour of 7:22," a sudden arrest was laid upon all business and all rejoicings, and all other griefs even, and the whole nation was summoned to listen, while, as with a voice from heaven, these words were proclaimed in the

national ear, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils."

Let us take this providence as a rebuke to our proneness to trust in man whom a pistol shot can in a moment remove. Let us take it as a reproof to our pride and arrogance, our hot chase after wealth, our awful profanation of God's name, and the many other forms of sin so aggravated and so generally unrepented of which characterize us of the North. Let us not make the South a scape-goat for the sins of the whole nation, or with Pharaaie pride regard ourselves as righteous above others, but let us each humble our way before Him to whom "the shields of the earth belong." If we will live as a nation, we must be distinguished for the opposite of pride, for our simple virtues and humble feelings. Pride and luxury and oppression, have killed all the empires of the past, and we shall be added to the number unless we build upon the foundations of equal and impartial justice and are pervaded by the spirit which was exemplified in the Redeemer of men—the simple and childlike spirit. It is written "The meek shall inherit the earth," and that nation which is least characterized by pride and boasting, and most distinguished for that simplicity so finely illustrated in the character of our late President will be most likely to live. The removal of our Chief Magistrate is teaching our nation to *renew its devotion to liberty and the union and to secure the just punishment of treason and crime*. God, who is "rich in mercy and would not that any should perish," yet inflexibly insists upon the maintenance of law and justice throughout his realm. And we have abundant evidence from the scriptures that he is not well pleased with the indiscriminate pardon of great criminals by human authority. Now he who by his qualities of character has been so fitted to conduct us successfully through this struggle, was perhaps by one of those qualities quite unfitted for the work now before the government. He had perhaps an excess of caution. He certainly had an excess of mercy, so that, as Saul spared Agag and for it was removed from being king, our merciful President might have been tempted to spare the arch traitor himself. Now we believe that the men who have been at the head of the rebellion, and who will stand in the pillory of time as exceeding all the cruelty of the past, cannot be suffered to escape the penalty due his crimes without doing serious injury to the authority of law, and bringing upon us the Divine frown. The Magistrate "must not bear the sword in vain," and rulers must be a "terror to evil-doers as well as a praise to those who do well." It is one of the characteristics of a free government that it allows great scope and play to popular sympathy, and thus under the illusion of a false magnanimity, sometimes defeats the end of justice. It is our belief that if these high criminals go unwhipt of justice, we may as well throw open our prison-doors, cast away our

statute books, and govern the state throughout by persuasion.

The calamity that we mourn to-day, though it fills all hearts with unspeakable sadness, *beautifully illustrates the stability of our institutions.* For the most important officer of our government and the most popular man in the nation has been suddenly removed and the next highest functionary disabled, and yet not a function of that government has been paralyzed—not a wheel but moves as regularly and as powerfully as before. The solemn pageant which began with the nineteenth of April—the day which saw the tyrant Andros deposed—which saw the first gun of Lexington—the first blood of this struggle shed in Baltimore—a day for long years dedicated to liberty now more solemnly set apart by the death of its latest martyr—that pageant which beginning on such a day has been daily moving westward with the daily motion of the sun, and is not yet completed, we regard as truly the most touching spectacle in the annals of our history. And yet we think the sublimest fact of all that stand connected with this national tragedy, is this, that when the Head of the nation is stricken down and the national heart throbs wildly with mingled grief and indignation, the machinery of our noble government moves harmoniously on, as though not a cog were gone, or the least friction felt. From a monarchical government take away the head and it might lead to a war of many years duration, like that of the Spanish or Austrian succession. It might convulse the land from one end to the other, but here it is followed by no more derangement than when a like change takes place in a ship's commander, when the captain's place is supplied by the mate, or by any other one of equal skill among the crew. So difficult is it to kill the sovereign of a republic, where all are sovereigns. And here let me commend to your earnest prayers and hearty confidence that patriotic man, whom this providence so suddenly elevates to the highest office in the nation.

The removal of our beloved President, and indeed the entire struggle in which we have been engaged, *pours new light upon a certain passage in the "Farewell Address" of the Father of our Country, "Beware of all secret associations."* The author of this tragedy and his accomplices, are supposed to be connected with that secret order known by several names, but best perhaps as "Knights of the Golden Circle." We have reaped fruits enough in the arrested plots, and developed conspiracies of this most wicked association, to teach us the soundness and utility of Washington's advice. The principle upon which such organizations are built, is a principle capable as we have seen of the most extensive and irreparable mischief. If other lands have at various times found it necessary to banish from their realms the order of the Jesuits, the necessity is

far greater with us to break up all such organizations, and to discontinue the principle upon which they are founded.

Once more we are reminded by this event of the *national need of a national baptism by the Holy Ghost*. It is not in the power of fleets and armies to preserve a nation's life. They may successfully battle against the visible and organized enemies of the land, but there are foes vastly more powerful, subtle, and universal than those which array themselves with sword and bayonet upon the open field. It is a nation's vices and these alone which procure a nation's ruin. And unless other and still more glorious victories are gained in this land, the retaking our forts, the surrender of rebel armies, the disappearance of all organized treason from among us, and the welcome return of smiling peace to our troubled land will be in vain. The victories to which we refer are those which are gained by the Holy Spirit, when he subdues the rebel in the human heart, and establishes the supremacy of law, through the medium of grace. That religion which has power to save a human soul is the only conservative force which can avail to save a nation's life. The destroyed seats of ancient empires, the solemn warnings of God's word, the terrible infliction of divine wrath which we have suffered for the last four years preach one and the same lesson—the lesson that christianity alone can save the state. Who does not know that if the simple virtues enjoined and produced by true religion had prevailed in all sections of this land, the treason, the rebellion, the assassination which we deplore would never have occurred, and who does not believe that were this nation now to prostrate itself before God in humble and sincere penitence—each one from the highest magistrate to the lowest subject, turning every one from his iniquity, and crying “What have I done?” Were our churches to be filled and our Sabbaths to be honored, and God's name and law to be revered, that peace and unity would soon return, to continue so long as the nation kept humble and walked in ways of piety. Oh, how would that inveterate hate of the South toward the North, that mad ambition for mere party power and all that pride which disintegrates into rival sections, and corrupts so many of our people, melt away under the mighty subduing power of the Spirit of God. Let every christian then pray for a revival. Let every patriot pray for a revival of religion. Let all do this and join action to prayer. Let all live holier, purer, engaging earnestly in doing without delay whatever duty, whatever moral work may lie nearest to him. Thus blending and supporting patriotism with piety, the national sky will be serene and the national life will be healthful and parenial.

We cannot conclude without commending the life and example of our departed President to the youth of our land. It is worthy your

diligent study, your earnest imitation. A new and most striking illustration is here furnished of what is possible to the young man of most obscure origin, even when surrounded with the greatest difficulties. Very few in our entire land can be more humble in their birth or early career than the late, or the present incumbent of the President's chair. If he who lived on the frontiers of civilization, who labored constantly for his own support, who was himself almost his sole teacher, who picked up his knowledge in scattered fragments of time, could work his way up to positions of great influence and usefulness in early manhood, and finally reach a station which earth's proudest monarch might envy, and die embalmed with a nation's affections, let every young man take heart, and fired with the same noble purpose of self-improvement, make the most of his time and of his faculties. It is lamentable to see what a waste there is of intellectual endowment, and of opportunities for moral and literary culture, and useful exertion in our land! What a nation of great and useful men, yea of lofty intellectual and moral stature should we become, could every young man be animated with the resolve to make the most of himself, and live as Lincoln did, true to his convictions of right from first to last. That a young man of his rising reputation and his limited means and his strong aspirations after political elevation, should so steadfastly adhere to his convictions when his party was hopelessly in the minority and all chance for elevation in that direction was cut off, that he should conscientiously decline large lucrative employment from the opposite party lest he might seem to compromise his principles, that this young man by an undeviating course of honor and honesty, should rise step by step to the highest place in the nation, and be enshrined as he is now in that nation's heart of hearts, is an instructive example to all who wish for permanent success in life. Looking upon the life of Abraham Lincoln to-day does not the truth of that old proverb appear, "*Honesty is the best policy.*"

Young men, the man in whose honor this funeral gathering is held, and whose body lies in state to-day in the capital of Indiana, said in that same capital four years ago, "In all trying positions in which I shall be placed my reliance will be upon you, and upon the people of the United States, and I wish you to remember now and forever that it is your business and not mine; that if the union of these states and the liberties of this people be lost it is but little to any one man of fifty-two, but a great deal to the thirty millions of people who inhabit these United States, and to their posterity in all coming time. It is your business to rise up and preserve the union and liberty for yourselves and not for me." Acting in the spirit of these words, living not for himself but for others, he has, with the assistance of the people, and the blessing of God, saved

this republic, and saved it not for himself. *He has saved it for you.* He has illustrated the virtues of honesty, of industry, of temperance, of kindness to friend and foe, and of piety toward God, and he has illustrated them for *you*. Contemplate his virtues. Gather up your energies. Form your resolution, and emulate his example.

Two constellations have now gathered in our American firmament, and are sending down their serene and cheering light upon this and upon other lands. One of these constellations has been now, for more than half a century, pursuing its solemn, silent march across the heavens. The stars that compose it are the patriots and heroes of the Revolution. Each shines with its own unborrowed light, with its appropriate breadth of disk, its distinct and peculiar lustre. With beauteous and blended rays, they hang a glorious diadem on the brow of night, ever guiding the true patriot, near or from afar, as he seeks on life's stormy sea, the sure haven of liberty. But the star of first magnitude, that magnificent orb which is central to the rest, and which shines steadiest and purest and brightest, is the **FOUNDER** of our nation, our own immortal **WASHINGTON**.

When the smoke of this bloody war shall have fully cleared away, there may be seen a little way from the first cluster, gleaming out upon night's deep azure, another and more numerous galaxy. The stars that compose it have ascended from "much tribulation," from many a blood-stained field, from many a hospital and rebel prison, and from many a station too of official trust, and civil duty. Joyful they take their places on the blue field of their glory. They follow in the track of the elder cluster. Already they send down from their pure spheres a sacred fire and a holy light—a fire which sheds a genial glow on their comrades yet in the battle, a light that shall deepen with the progress of ages and reach the remotest generation. But the central orb in that vast and brilliant group—the orb which sends out its pure flame farthest into the darkness, is that great and noble man, that incorruptible patriot, the **RESTORER** of our nation, our own plain, simple, honest, pious, beloved, martyred, immortal President—**LINCOLN**.

