
LIFE AND DEATH

OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

A SERMON

BY REV. C. COOKE, D.D.

1878

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A S E R M O N

ON THE

LIFE AND DEATH

OF

A B R A H A M L I N C O L N,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

DELIVERED IN SMYRNA, DELAWARE,

JUNE 1, 1865.

BY REV. C. COOKE, D.D.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

SMYRNA, DEL., June 7, 1865.

REV. CHARLES COOKE, D.D.

Dear Sir: The undersigned, in behalf of the Trustees of Asbury M.E. Church, Smyrna, and that of many members of your congregation, who heard, with much interest and profit, your Sermon delivered on the occasion of the National Fast, on Thursday morning, 1st inst., respectfully and earnestly request a copy of the same for publication and distribution.

Permit us, personally, to express the hope that you will grant this request.

We beg leave to subscribe ourselves,

Respectfully and truly yours in Christian love,

W. T. COLLINS,
JAMES P. HOFFECKER,
J. S. HUFFINGTON,
THOS. S. WILLIAMS,
J. W. MARINER.

SMYRNA, June 8, 1865.

DR. W. T. COLLINS, REV. THOS. S. WILLIAMS AND OTHERS.

Brethren: Yours of yesterday, requesting for publication a copy of my Sermon delivered on the day of National Humiliation is before me. Though not written for the press, a request from such a source, and so earnestly expressed, I am not at liberty to decline. I therefore herewith place the manuscript in your hands.

Very respectfully, &c.,

C. COOKE.

S E R M O N.

“ WEEP YE NOT FOR THE DEAD, NEITHER BEMOAN HIM; BUT WEEP SORE FOR HIM THAT GOETH AWAY : FOR HE SHALL RETURN NO MORE, NOR SEE HIS NATIVE COUNTRY.” JEREMIAH 22 : 10.

WE meet to-day, in compliance with the recommendation of the President of the United States, to observe the day “in humiliation and mourning,” in memory of his late predecessor, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, “that all may be occupied at the same time in contemplation of his virtue, and in sorrow for his sudden and violent end.” The Governor of the State of Delaware having also recommended, that we “humbly invoke the Great Ruler of Nations to grant us his favor in the mitigation of the nation’s grief.”

It is written both in the Old and New Testament, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy people;” and in the Discipline of the church in which I have the honor of being a minister, we are taught that one of the evils for which a member may be expelled from her communion is, “speaking evil of magistrates or ministers;” that is, official men in the State or the Church. In the same little manual the ministry are taught not to “mend,” but “keep our rules.” Professing to be a loyal citizen, an honest Christian, a Methodist of choice, and a minister by the grace of God, I shall address you in full view of this teaching and of my responsibilities. If any one, therefore, expects me to originate or retail evil concerning Mr. Lincoln in this discourse, he will be mistaken. I did it not while he lived, and will not be rude enough to do it now he is dead. My Bible, my Church, and my self-respect forbid it. I shall, in speaking

of him, ignore any faults he may have had—who has none?—and say what good I can of him in truth.

The President has designated this day as one of “humiliation and mourning,” in view of “humbling ourselves before Almighty God, in order that the bereavement” the country has sustained “may be sanctified to the nation;” or, in the language of the Governor, “in mitigation of the nation’s grief.” Now, if by the death of Mr. Lincoln the “country” has been “bereaved,” according to the Proclamation of President Johnson, and the “nation” has cause to “grieve,” according to that of Governor Saulsbury, my first duty, it seems to me, is to sketch the life of the deceased, that we may know whether the nation *has* cause to grieve on account of her bereavement. That will not be preaching politics, will it? If it should be, the President and the Governor must take the responsibility. They have set me at this work.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was born of humble parents, on the 12th of February, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. When about seven years old, he went to school some six months to a teacher who could only give instruction in spelling, reading, and writing, the latter of which his young pupil does not seem to have attempted to learn. About this time the family removed to the State of Indiana, and soon had a cabin in the wilderness as their dwelling. “Abe,” as he was *then* called, in about a year lost his estimable mother, to whom it is said he was much indebted for some of his best traits of character. In the solitudes of his desolate home, he spent his long winter evenings in reading such books as were within his reach. His stock of acquisitions was increased in learning to write by the generous teaching of a young man who chanced to come into the neighborhood. A stepmother now came into the family, but whether owing to *his* virtues or *hers*, none of that jealousy arose which, alas, too often makes home anything but an epitome of heaven. The new mother and son were as affectionately attached as if he had drawn the first draught

of life in her maternal arms. Again another light penetrated the darkness of young Lincoln's forest home, bringing to his knowledge the science of arithmetic. A short time was spent with the new teacher, and the education of the future President was "finished!" Six months was the full extent of time spent by him in attendance at school; whatever else he learned was gathered amidst the toils and cares of life.

The following is his own account of the first dollar he ever made. Having prepared a little flat-boat for trading, he stood looking at his work, when two men came down to the river to await the passing of a steamer, with trunks and other baggage to be put aboard. They looked at his boat and said, "Will you take us and our trunks out to the steamer?" "Certainly," he said; for he was glad to have the chance of earning something. "I supposed," he relates, "that each would give me two or three *bits*. The trunks were put on my flat-boat, the passengers seated themselves on the trunks, and I sculled them out to the steamboat." All aboard, and the steamer about to start: "I called out that they had forgotten to pay me, when each of them threw half a dollar on the floor of my boat. That was an event to me, and the world seemed wider and fairer before me." He subsequently engaged to assist in another flat-boat expedition, at \$10 per month.

In 1830 the family removed to Illinois, a small farm was bought, and "Abe" proceeded to *split the rails* to inclose it. Hence the sobriquet, "*The rail-splitter.*"

When 22 years of age, he deemed it time to start out for himself, and, gathering up his all, left the old parental home. At first he aspired to no higher position than he had occupied; but his industry, probity, and skill led to preferments, and with each ascending step the diligent use of every spare moment introduced him to richer stores of mental wealth, while replenishing his pockets with, if not "the one thing needful," at least a very needful thing. It was while making this progress in the employment of

others he earned for himself the creditable title of, "*Honest Abe.*" The "Black-Hawk war" was on hand, and, in response to the call of the Governor of Illinois, he offered his services and was elected captain of a company. He was now, as politicians say, "before the people," and gradually rose to the position of postmaster, merchant, and member of the State Legislature. Having been made by the people a *law-maker*, he studied and became a *law-practitioner*. In 1836 he was admitted to the bar, and the next year settled in Springfield, Illinois, where he remained, attending to the duties of his profession, till called out by his fellow-citizens to move in a still higher sphere. In 1858 he was a candidate for United States Senator, but the legislature, being opposed to him in politics, gave the honor to his competitor, the late *Stephen A. Douglas*, known in former years as "*the little giant.*" His friends, regarding him as too valuable a man to remain shut up in a law office in a country town, on the 16th of May, 1860, at the Republican National Convention at Chicago, nominated him as the Republican candidate for the Presidency, the highest civil office in the country, if not in the world. Being duly elected, on the 4th of March, 1861, he was inaugurated President of the United States, the oath of office being administered by Chief Justice Taney. He took the reins of government in a stormy hour, nor did the tempest cease during the entire term of his administration. In 1864 he received a renomination at the Convention in Baltimore, and having been again elected for a second term, was reinaugurated on the 4th of March, 1865.

In stating these naked facts, we have necessarily made some allusion to his *mental capacities*. Let us now notice more in detail what evidences he gave of a mind equal to the position to which, in the providence of the Supreme Ruler, he was exalted. He has been called "a political mountebank;" "a professional joker, whom nature intended for the ring of a circus, but whom a strange freak of popular delusion elevated to the Presidency;" "a crowned buf-

fool;" "a cowardly knave;" "a dastardly poltroon;" and almost everything else but an intelligent gentleman. But while not a few have been lavish of abuse, many others, perhaps as free from prejudice, have expressed a very different opinion. They have supposed, to speak in a less skeptical style, that the God of Nature, not Nature herself, formed his mind with wise purposes, and invested it with strength for the exigencies through which it was to pass; and that this native power of intellect burst the circumstantial fetters in which it was bound, like Samson snapped the cords with which the Philistines hoped to have secured him, and by this extraordinary mental energy he rose from obscurity to eminence, and not by any freak of "popular delusion" whatever. Mr. Lincoln has been *accused* and *treated* as a very *bad man*, not worthy to live. But we have now to say that, if that charge can be verified, most assuredly that of being a *fool* cannot. Without an education to start with; without wealth to buy, in this venal age, sustaining patronage; without family antecedents to give him prestige; he rose to, and sustained himself in, the highest office known among men. These are facts not to be accounted for if *his* was a weak intellect—if he was little more than an *imbecile*. A writer in the North American Review of last year says: "Never did a President enter upon office with less means at his command, outside his own strength of heart and steadiness of understanding. All that was known of him was that he was a good stump-speaker, nominated for his availability; that is, because he had no history; and chosen by a party with whose more extreme opinions *he was not in sympathy*. Certainly no one ever entered upon office with so few resources of power in the past, and so many materials of weakness in the present."

With respect to his *moral* and *religious character* we should have more to say than in regard to his humble origin, astonishing rise, and intellectual status. I regret, however, that the materials are too meagre to enable me to say much without drawing largely on mere surmise, or the extrava-

gant laudations of political eulogists, who have dipped their pens in the more brilliant colors in describing his virtues to compensate for the dark shading of the picture by malignant foes. I am, however, under no obligations either to color highly my own delineations or to caricature him as a monster thirsting for human blood! If he was all his ardent admirers represent him to have been, he was a *saint* worthy to be canonized; but if what his foes insisted he was, he was a *tyrant* unworthy to live, and met a just fate. We shall probably find the truth midway between these extremes. So far as I can learn, Mr. Lincoln *never* was an immoral man. A religious editor of a weekly journal, speaking of his assassination in a *theatre*, judiciously says: "Millions of hearts have felt the wish, though in most cases it has not been uttered, that the sad event of the President's receiving his deathblow had been in some other place. A good many not very superstitious people feel that a *theatre* is not a very good place to die in; that the transition from the play-house to the bar of God is fearfully abrupt. We fancy a good many of those who frequent the theatre would prefer that his assassination had been in the church at public worship, or in his family circle, or even in the council of his cabinet occupied with public affairs." We should be cautious, however, in forming a judgment drawn from such a solitary *circumstance*; or, if it was his habit, from such a solitary *habit*, of what the self-denying followers of Christ will consider an impropriety. It is but just that one's general conduct should form the basis of judgment; for it is really *that* that forms the character. Let us, then, with such lights as we have search for the moral and religious character of the lamented and honored dead.

It is said that he was a pew-holder and a Bible-class teacher in the Presbyterian church at Springfield, though not a member on account of some local reason. That he was a firm believer in the Bible as a divine revelation, and in its Author as exercising not only a general but special providence in the affairs of men, there is abundant reason

to believe. While he very properly believed it was the duty of men of all grades to know and obey the Divine will, he as firmly believed that all, in every relation, are dependent on God for wisdom and strength to meet their obligations. On leaving his Western home to take upon him the responsibilities of his high office, he uttered the following language: "A duty devolves upon me which is perhaps greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. *He* never would have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that *I* cannot succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him; and in the same Almighty being I place my reliance for support; and I hope you, my friends, will all *pray* that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain." On his way to the Capital, as he passed through different cities, and met the crowds who came out to welcome him, he seemed full of the pious thought, and from the abundance of his heart his mouth again and again expressed his trust in God. At Buffalo he used this language: "Your worthy Mayor has thought fit to express the hope that I may be able to relieve the country from the present, or, I should say, the threatened difficulties. I am sure I bring a heart true to the work. For the ability to perform it, I trust in that Supreme Being who has never forsaken this favored land, through the instrumentality of this great and intelligent people. Without that assistance I surely should fail; with it I cannot."

After his inauguration, do we find him forgetful of his dependence and derelict of his duty still to trust God? On the 12th of August he recommended a day of fasting and prayer, and used the following language: "When our own beloved country, once, by the blessing of God, united, prosperous, and happy, is now afflicted with civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible visitation, and, in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation and as individuals, to

humble ourselves before him and to pray for his mercy—to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though most justly deserved.” Similar language characterizes all his proclamations for fasting, prayer, or thanksgiving. On the 16th of November, 1862, an order was issued to the soldiers and sailors, recommending and enjoining, as commander-in-chief, a proper observance of the Sabbath, and concludes thus: “The discipline and character of the national forces should not suffer, nor the cause they defend be imperilled, by the profanation of the *day* or *name* of the Most High. ‘At this time of public distress,’ adopting the words of Washington in 1776, ‘men may find enough to do in the service of God and their country without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality.’” A gentleman, who professes to know, recently uttered the following: “No wrecked mariner, storm-tossed ’mid ocean upon a raft, ever felt more thoroughly his dependence, and that of those around him, upon God, than Abraham Lincoln felt the dependence of this nation and himself.” The following I take from a religious periodical: “Probably no President of the United States was ever the subject of more earnest prayers than has been Abraham Lincoln, and from published statements it is gratifying to believe that those prayers have been answered. At a recent Sabbath-school convention in Massachusetts, a speaker stated that a friend of his, during an interview with Mr. Lincoln, asked him if he loved Jesus. The President buried his face in his handkerchief and wept. He then said, ‘When I left home to take this chair of state, I requested my countrymen to pray for me. I was not then a Christian. When my son died—the severest trial of my life—I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and looked upon the graves of our dead heroes that had fallen in defence of their country, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. *I do love Jesus.*’ Rev. Mr. Adams, of Philadelphia, stated in his Thanksgiving Sermon that, having an appointment to meet the President at 5 o’clock in the morning, he went a quarter of an hour before

the time. While waiting for the hour, he heard a voice in the next room as if in conversation, and asked the servant, 'Who is talking in the next room?' 'It is the President, sir.' 'Is anybody with him?' 'No, sir; he is reading the Bible.' 'Is that his habit so early in the morning?' 'Yes, sir; he spends every morning, from 4 o'clock to 5, in reading the Scriptures and prayer.'" If these statements are *true*, then was Mr. Lincoln a Christian. It was his error, however, I am sorry to say, as it is that of too many in high positions, not to have identified himself with the Church by a public profession of Christian faith. Alas, that in this respect he should have followed in the footsteps of all his illustrious predecessors, *Washington only excepted*. The example has been injurious.

It would be obviously wrong, on such an occasion, to make no allusion to the late President as a *statesman*. I do not think myself, however, competent to discuss this topic either profitably or acceptably. I shall, therefore, say but little about it. The more am I inclined to this course from the fact, that it would be impossible for me to do it, in a community where the views of the people are so conflicting, without giving offence. I could not hope to make a convert, and if I did, the good that would result is not apparent. I may be permitted, however, I trust without giving offence, to express an *opinion*. Homer, the justly renowned author of the Iliad and Odyssey, is said to have earned his bread by singing ballads from door to door, no one appreciating his remarkable talents while he lived; but after his death seven cities contended for the honor of giving birth to so great a man! If I am not mistaken, history will do Abraham Lincoln the justice to own his abilities as a statesman, by many of his countrymen denied him during life.

It will be reasonably expected that I should say something on the *exciting topic* which runs like a thread through Mr. Lincoln's entire history; not on its merits or demerits, but in its relations to and influence upon him. He was always an apparently sincere *anti-slavery man*. If it be true

that his parents were so before him, and on that account left Kentucky, and settled first in Indiana and then in Illinois, it may have been to parental training he was first indebted for his opposition to the institution. He soon, and without disguise, announced his views, and never after abated his maintenance of them. There are those who can be pro-slaveryists or abolitionists by turns, just as interest or the popular voice dictates. Whether right or wrong, Mr. Lincoln had but one creed on the subject. With this, well understood, he was elected President. It was, however, with the understanding that, whatever his moral views were, he would not, unless necessity compelled, interfere with the institution in the *States*. *It was a matter of theirs*. He did, however, believe it was not unconstitutional to exclude it from any and all of the new territories that might knock at the door to be admitted to the Federal Union, and also from the District of Columbia. When he found the rebellion a much more formidable evil than he or any one else at first supposed it would be, he first called out more troops, then employed colored soldiers, and finally issued—*purely*, he declared, “*as a war measure*”—his emancipation proclamations of September, 1862, and January 1st, 1863. He had previously proposed that it should be gradual, and that compensation should be made. As this was not accepted, his next step was that for which he has received the most blame, and will probably receive in the end the highest praise. All *I* have to say is, I believe no man was ever more honest in the discharge of duty than he was in these measures. Whether they were wise the future will determine. As a Christian minister, I have no more to do here with *these war measures* than I have with any that have succeeded or failed since the breaking out of the war, or the political creed of any President. But I think I see the evidences of an *honest*, not an infallible mind, and that I am pleased to commend.

Let us now contemplate for a moment Mr. Lincoln's *tragic end*. Every one knows that on the evening of April

14th, the anniversary of our Saviour's death by violence for the sins of mankind, *he* fell by the hand of an assassin,—a pistol-shot in the head. For whose sins did *he* die? Not surely for his own. What had he done as a man, or as the President of the United States, to deserve such a fate? And yet his death, though *not vicarious* as was Christ's, was as truly *providential*. Roman soldiers, who crucified the Saviour of the world, were only instruments in the hands of his murderers; and the assassin of the President was but the willing agent of *his* murderers. Though the former was taken by wicked hands and slain, the event was providential, and resulted most favorably to the world; so the latter has fallen when human wisdom would have said his life was indispensable, but the Supreme Ruler will cause the wrath of man to praise him, and make the death we mourn a blessing. Who were the guilty murderers of the Lord of life? All such as said by word or deed, "His blood be on us and our children!" To whom is the shedding of Lincoln's blood chargeable? To all those who have participated in the sin of representing him as a tyrant, a knave, a buffoon, a villain, whose life was justly sought as he was on his way to Washington in 1861, and as justly taken in 1865!—in whose behalf the only plea that can be set up is, that he was but little better than an *idiot*! It was such language that fanned the flame of unhallowed passion, that unchained savage ignorance, and culminated in the infamous plot whose daring success has filled the arching heavens with sighs and steeped our country in tears!

But let me say to you, as the Prophet did to his countrymen on the occasion of Josiah's death: "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

Let us now turn our attention to the lessons of this Scripture. We learn that though death—especially that of a virtuous ruler, such as the King of Judah was—is a suitable occasion for National grief and weeping, there are other

and greater reasons for shedding tears. The death of the pious young prince was, indeed, a sufficient cause for grief. His father and grandfather who preceded him in the throne of Judah were exceedingly wicked, and caused much evil to abound through the kingdom, and especially in the capital—at Jerusalem—whose very streets, the sacred historian informs us, were made to flow with blood! Josiah, though but eight years old when the people of the land made him king, was a pious youth. When he came to manhood, he adopted prompt measures to undo the mischief of his predecessors, to restore the worship of the true God, and to give prosperity to the whole country. After a reign of thirty-one years, during which the whole face of things was changed for the better, he was slain in battle. It was the error of his reign to go into the conflict. But he went and fell; and the history informs us, that “all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for” him. And well they might, for a dark cloud hung in the horizon, only held back for his sake, which soon blackened the whole heavens, and burst in violence upon the land. Jehoahaz, otherwise called Shallum, succeeded, was taken prisoner by Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and carried away into captivity, never to return! Jehoiakim, also called Eliakim, the brother of the exiled Shallum, was placed upon the throne, under a heavy pecuniary tribute by the Egyptian conqueror, but after an inefficient reign of a few years was bound in chains and carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiachin, his son, but a boy, was made king in his stead, and enjoyed its honors but a few months, when he, too, with the wealth of the temple, was carried to Babylon. He was succeeded by Zedekiah, of whom it is written, “He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.” Under this administration the whole land became corrupt. In Divine displeasure the Chaldeans came up to Jerusalem, put many to the sword—having no compassion for “young man or maiden, old man, or him that stoopeth for age”—burnt the temple built by the illustrious Solomon, and,

finally carried the remnant left in hopeless captivity to Babylon. Their deluded king was captured after his army was defeated, his children slain before his eyes, his eyes put out, and he taken, in total darkness and without sympathy, to end his ignominious life in a strange land. Well might the "weeping Prophet," as he is very properly called, seeing such dire calamity coming upon his church and country, exclaim, "Oh, that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

Death, indeed, is always a just occasion for mourning. That of the *wicked* is especially so. With them it is the end of *probation*. Up to that period there is space for repentance in most instances, and a remedy is at hand for the ills inflicted by sin. But then "the harvest is past;" "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." The hopeless soul is banished from its only theatre of trial, and despair, like the fabled vulture, flaps its raven wings over its miserable victim, shutting out the last gleam of hope from its dismal abode. It not only once was on its probation; but, though unhappy by reason of sin, its cup was not unmixed with pleasure. It had at least dreams of happiness, and many waking pleasures. Some of its very vices were occasions of joy and means of sordid bliss. But, disembodied, its cup is full of bitterness. There is no longer an appetite to be indulged, nor a splenetic feeling, whose gratification was once wont to afford some diabolical enjoyment, that can now be gratified.

" Ah, then, its torment must transcend
The reach of time—despair a distant end!
With dreadful growth shoot forward and arise
Where thought can't follow, and bold fancy dies!"

Could the lost soul have another trial, however distant in time, and however short in duration; though we might weep for it, our sorrow would not be as those who have no

hope. Could *it* have any hope in the future, or any mixture of enjoyment in its overflowing cup of grief, or any occasional respite in its agony, our tears might be checked. But, alas, hopeless misery is a thought of woe! Surely, then, it is not unmanly to weep for those who die in their sins—who are driven away in their wickedness!

Is it not also proper to weep for the *pious dead*, to “*be-moan him?*” There are deaths that are a *national loss*, at least for the time being. This is the teaching of both sacred and profane history. A good ruler, an honest and competent judge, a great statesman, or a pious and talented minister of the Gospel, in the prime of life, and in the midst of usefulness, is a great blessing. Indeed, every good man, however obscure, is an invaluable national blessing. All such are the “*salt of the earth*”—the “*light of the world.*” When this salt has lost its savor, or this light has been put out by the chilling breath of death, is it not justifiable to weep? The wail that has swept over this land has found an echo beyond the seas. And is there a heart in all this great Republic, unless it should be among those who participated in or sympathized with the murder of our President, that does not beat in unison with the sighs of this stricken land? Is there a man, woman, or child capable of appreciating the national loss that has not shed a tear of grief? The death of the good is in many instances a great loss to families, individuals, or communities. The father, whose personal skill and industry supplied the wants of a dependent family—a son, the hope of aged parents and the pride of affectionate sisters, perhaps the support of a widowed mother—a wife, the charm of society, the angel saviour of her husband, and the mother of his little children—dies! Will any one be cruel enough to rebuke a tear, or can any one be hard enough not to shed one? Was it no just cause for trouble when that greatest and best of Preachers—“the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world”—was martyred? Was it no cause of weeping when the Christian martyrs fell at their posts, leading

forth the sacramental host in the great battle of truth against error, light against darkness, righteousness against vice, and happiness against misery? It not unfrequently happens that a congregation mainly leans on one man—the key to the arch which holds up the whole edifice. Remove it, and calamitous are the results. At such a loss there is not only no impropriety in tears, but there would be criminality in withholding them. And what is true of churches is no less so of communities. When Dorcas, a benevolent lady of Joppa, died, a messenger was sent to the Apostle Peter requesting his presence. It is said that when he came, “all the widows stood by him *weeping*, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.” Do we find the Apostle rebuking their tears? Could you have seen him, who had learned of Jesus, doubtless you would have recorded, as the Evangelist did of the Master—*Peter wept*. Solomon informs us that a “poor wise man” once delivered a besieged city, though a great king had encamped about and built great bulwarks against it. Suppose he had died just when his wisdom was in requisition, would not the loss of a city have been a cause of mourning?

But *we ought not to mourn for the dead as for the living*. David mourned for his son, as only a father can mourn, while he lived and suffered; but when death put a period to his sufferings, like a philosopher, and more than a philosopher; like one taught of God, he said: “Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? He cannot come to me, but I shall go to him!” In God’s hands are the issues of life and death; hence death is *always a providential* occurrence. True, he may permit a very wicked man to be the immediate instrument; but *he* cannot exercise his instrumentality till God sees that the greater good may result. See this doctrine exemplified in the death of our Lord. Before his hour had come, however much his enemies thirsted for his blood, they were not permitted to tap the fountain of life. Did they *then* do the bidding of Heaven? Not they, indeed. To will was present with

them before, but they found not the opportunity. When they did find, they but carried out their own murderous purpose. And yet death, in that instance, was not only providential, but was the greatest favor ever shown to the human race. However sad the hearts of the disciples were, and right it was to weep when the Shepherd was smitten and the sheep scattered, there was much greater cause to be sad in view of his murderers. Even should the victim be taken away with a stroke, and entirely unprepared, it should be remembered that God sees the end from the beginning, and will not suffer the destroying angel to breathe upon a living man he knows will ever return to him should he live, or who does not at the time of his death deserve all he suffers. This should so far, at least, check our grief as to restrain us from saying, in the spirit of complaint, "What doest thou?" In the death of a good man there is always this soothing thought, though we do not see it, "*Precious* in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." However valuable their *lives* may have been, their *death* may have a *higher worth*. Should we, then, not say with Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" The death of the Martyrs was like putting out the lights of the world; and it was due to their memory that the Church should mourn. But their blood was the seed out of which other and more flourishing churches grew. Dr. Coke was on his way to India to establish Christian Missions, when he was found, one morning, dead in his berth. They buried him in the Indian Ocean. It was a sad event to the young missionaries he was taking out? They could not return, and were thrown at once upon their own resources. Instead of remaining *boys* and trusting to a *father's* judgment, they had to swim or sink. They chose the former, and it made men of them, and the Mission still exists.

There is yet to be considered the great fact, that, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." They have gone

where "the wicked cease to trouble, and the weary are at rest!" The wicked here trouble themselves, trouble the Nation, trouble the Church, trouble their neighbors; they are the troublers of the world. But the pious dead get beyond the reach of their influence, and for that reason we should check our sorrow on their account. Theirs, however, is more than a release from annoyance—it is "*rest.*" From the hour of man's apostasy from God he has been doomed to *labor* and get his bread by the sweat of his face. There are a few exceptions to the rule always, who get their living by the labor of others. They may have inherited their possessions, or they may be the fruit of honest industry; in either case, they are released from physical toil. But their rest is disturbed. They hold the means of its continuance by precarious cords—cords which often break and reduce them to the painful necessity of returning to the drudgeries of life, and mingling with the toiling millions, who rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness and exhausting effort. From all this, the dead in Christ *rest*. Here also *pain* is as common as toil. Scarcely any one escapes it entirely, while the many inherit no fruit of the fall more abundantly. And not a few spend life in *torture*. When night comes and invites the weary to rest, *they* wish for day. And when morning dawns, its light reveals their case in painful contrast with every sentient object around them. From all this there is rest in heaven for the people of God. There is another class of evils, if possible, less bearable than any of these. "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities, but a *wounded spirit* who can bear?" A manly will, a hopeful heart, and a conscience void of offence toward God and man, will enable one to endure any amount of physical suffering; but when the *soul itself* is the seat of conscious misery, whither can we go for relief or support? A sense of guilt to an awakened spirit, it is common to say, is "a burden too intolerable to be borne." But even the *virtuous*, by painful experience, know themselves to be in a vale of tears. Nor is it possible

to occupy a position in this world free from some source of trouble—I should rather say, from *every* source. There is the painful care of wealth, the annoying disadvantages of poverty, with the perils connected with each; there is the distraction of office, and the chagrin of disappointment; there are the temptations of invisible spirits, and the corroding passions of a diseased nature. No matter what we are, who we are, or where we are, we are doomed to have more or less mental disquietude. But, from all this, death removes the righteous to a blessed rest. In heaven there is a perfect release from physical and mental toil and suffering. But is this negative happiness the sum of heavenly bliss? If it be, then is man less perfect in heaven than on earth; for unquestionably here our happiness is not mere freedom from toil and pain. If that were so, the trees of the forest are happier than those to whom the Lord says: “Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.” We ask, then, in what does the additional bliss of heaven consist? We confess there is a veil over our face, so that we cannot see the excellent glory that shall be revealed in the saints. For “it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we *know* that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” So wrote St. John concerning the future state of the good. But how the inhabitants of heaven will be employed, and to what new sources of refined delight they will be admitted, we have no adequate information. But all the revelations we have convey the idea, that there will be a “*fulness of joy*,” and that this will last “*forevermore!*” Can we, then, weep more than tears of *respect* for the pious dead, accompanied with tears of *sympathy* for the bereft, and tears of *sorrow* for our own loss?

The Prophet plainly enough teaches, that *there is a propriety in the indulgence of more pungent grief for the living*. All Judah mourned for Josiah, but certainly there was, as we have seen, greater cause to lament the fate of his successors and the people they ruined. It is equally appro-

priate to mourn over other sinners. They are going away *from God*, while the pious dead have *gone to Him*. Jesus prayed to be received to the glory he had with the Father before the world was, and assured his disciples that where he would be, in the spirit world, there they should be also. And Paul evidently supposed that to depart from this world would be to enjoy the presence and glory of Christ. But, alas, the wicked, by forsaking him here, will go away from him in the great day of his wrath "into everlasting punishment!"

They are also going away from their *best interests*. Every step in sin and folly's ways involves in moral impurity, deprives the soul of peace, throws it open to the inroads of vice, and puts its every interest in jeopardy. Is not such a wanderer a spectacle better adapted to excite one's sorrow than the departure of a soul, full of joyous hope of a triumphant entrance into the home of the pure and happy, just about to take its flight to the better land?

They are going away from *heaven!* We are represented in the Holy Scriptures as strangers and sojourners in this world, travelling by different routes to another. One of these leads to heaven, the other to perdition. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way" that leads to life, while "wide is the gate and broad is the way" that leads to death and destruction. In the latter, all who are not following the Saviour are walking, and every step taken in it leads *from*, not *to*, the Holy Land. Now, could we suppose ourselves spectators contemplating the two companies, ever and anon seeing one in the narrow way ending his journey, and being taken on angels' wings and borne away to a temple of magnificence not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; but more frequently one in the broad way ending his, and being seized, amidst unutterable agonies, by harpies, and dragged into darkness profound, whence might issue shrieks of despair and the saddest wailings ever heard! Could we witness such scenes, over which class should we shed the most bitter tears? Those of the one class are just

getting home where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. But those of the other are just entering upon a state of being in which there is nothing to make existence desirable, and where, therefore, there will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever. Oh, “weep not for the dead; but weep sore for him that goeth away” to perish! Oh, to perish forever!

I would not chide the nation for the tears it has shed on the occasion of its late sad bereavement; but I would have it remember that thousands have gone away from homes, and families, and friends, never more to return to see the loved ones they left behind, or to enjoy the fruits of their native country. Oh, how many widows and orphans, and sonless parents, there are scattered all over the land, from Maine to Texas, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, whose stalwart relatives went forth flushed with hope of success, anticipating joyous family greetings when their term of service should have expired, who will return no more! Let us indulge the luxury of weeping with them; and, as far as we can, contribute to their relief. Blessed is the hand that will brush their tears away!

Now let us turn our thoughts to the conquered and vanquished. Let us not sin in cultivating a wrong class of feelings toward them. This is not the place to discuss the duty of the Government in the premises—how severe or how lenient it should be—how it should balance between obligation and pity—how far it should go in vindicating the right as a terror to evil-doers, and forbearing to exact the utmost penalty of crime. We leave such questions to those who must meet and decide them for themselves, as those who are to give an account of their work to the Supreme Ruler. But, as individuals, what is *our* duty? There are, I think, two extremes to be avoided; on the one hand, that

unpitying vindictiveness which would make it a joy and bliss to contemplate the woe and misery that the offending South has brought upon itself, and which inspires the desire of revenge; and, on the other, that mawkish sympathy for the miseries endured by the transgressors, which would instantly blot out every record of offence; and, to assure offenders that they are cordially forgiven, would ignore the sufferers at home in the exuberant blandishments bestowed upon those who so lately sought our lives. If we guard against these extremes we shall do well for ourselves, for our country, and for the honor of our holy Christianity. The crime of the President's assassination was great, and doubtless involves many more in its guilt than the reckless man who so soon paid the forfeiture of his life. But in our mingled feelings of sorrow and indignation, let us not forget that it is *misery* which should wring from us our tears, and wherever *it* is there we should have a tear to shed. There are many sad hearts and desolate homes in the North—there are many more in the South! There, too, are thousands of widows and orphans. There fierce War has spread a wider ruin than in the North. And there, it is natural to suppose, feelings of fiercer vengeance rankle in many a breast. Whether they thought they were right or not, it is not pleasant to be subdued. The feelings they probably indulge, therefore, are not likely to be favorable to their happiness or spiritual safety. In proportion, then, to their *misery* and *danger* should we mourn for them; aye, and *pray* for them, too. Some of them may endure forfeitures at home, and others, like Shallum, may think it safe to flee from their native land to return no more. But let *us* not be vindictive even to them; and though we cannot pray for them as the martyred Saviour did for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do*;" we may leave them safely in his hands, as he has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay;" and pray that they may have *repentance unto life*.

Thank God, our Country lives, though our President is

dead; and he, we trust, though dead, shall live again! As he lives in the hearts of his countrymen, that so he shall live forever in heaven! Thank God, that though our country has suffered and is still suffering, and the man whom the people delighted to honor lies cold and silent in his grave, Jesus, the Supreme Ruler, lives, and saves, and reigns! No sinner's heart is so vile that He cannot pardon and renew; no one's circumstances so wrecked that he cannot turn to profit; no widow's home is so desolate that his presence cannot cheer, nor helpless orphan's wail so sad that he cannot change to a song of joy. Let us commend the sorrowing to Him, and invoke His blessing upon them. Let us obey and trust Him; then may you each say,—and oh, may it awake an echo in my own case,—

“ When the pangs of death assail me,
 Weep not for me.
 Christ is mine; He cannot fail me;
 Weep not for me.
 Yes, though sin and doubt endeavor
 From his love my soul to sever,
 JESUS is my strength forever!
 Weep not for me.”

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