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The Son of God calleth the Dead to Life.

A

S E R M O N

SUGGESTED BY THE ASSASSINATION OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

PREACHED IN THE WESTMINSTER CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1865.

BY

AUGUSTUS WOODBURY.



PROVIDENCE.

SIDNEY S. RIDER AND BROTHER.

1865.





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AT a meeting of the Westminster Congregational Church and Society, held April 16th, 1865, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

*Resolved*, That, as members of the Westminster Congregational Church and Society, in common with our loyal fellow citizens, and our fellow Christians of every name, we would hereby express our profound and heartfelt grief for the sad event, which, by the hand of an assassin, has deprived the nation of its honored and beloved President.

*Resolved*, That we will cherish the memory of Abraham Lincoln as that of a good, true and just man, an honest and sagacious statesman, a wise and humane ruler, and a faithful servant of the Most High God, in promoting the welfare of the children of men.

*Resolved*, That we hereby pledge and consecrate ourselves anew to the unwearied support of the great principles of liberty and justice, for the sake of which the President has fallen a sacrifice, until every vestige of barbarism, injustice and slavery shall have disappeared from our country, and the land shall enjoy her peace.

*Resolved*, That we offer our cordial sympathy to the family of our deceased ruler, in their severe affliction, and earnestly pray that God, in his infinite mercy, will give them consolation in their bereavement, and that the truths of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will be their stay and comfort.

*Resolved*, That the Church in which we worship be appropriately draped for the space of three months, as a slight token of our sorrow, and a mark of respect for the memory of our departed Chief Magistrate.

SETH PADEFORD, *President*.

WILLIAM B. DART, *Secretary*.



## S E R M O N .

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The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.—JOHN V, 25.

TWO interpretations of this passage have been given. The advocates of the theory of the resurrection of the body are disposed to find, in the language, a warrant for their belief, confirmed by the words of the 28th verse: “The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth.” Those who believe that the Gospel of Christ is performing a spiritual work in the hearts and souls and lives of men; that Christ speaks the word which calls those who were dead in trespasses and sins to a life of righteousness and virtue; that the soul has its resurrection; that the spirit of man is to be endued with power to break its bonds, and rise into newness of life when it hears the Divine Word, regard the language as strengthening them in their faith. The words, “All that are in the graves shall hear his voice”—are but a repetition of the same thought, expressed in stronger and more emphatic terms. The Divine Word has such exceeding power, as to call up from death to life not only those that were dead, but those also who were buried. If they had done good, they should

receive resurrection unto life. If they had done evil, they should be condemned by the enlightened conscience of mankind, and by the just judgments of God! When Jesus came and taught his truths, He lighted up the darkness of the world, applied new principles to the conduct of men, awoke those that were asleep, and called the dead to life!

Consider then, first, what that which we call death, is—that familiar, yet mysterious event. It is, in its most obvious aspect, the cessation of bodily activity. The body, at its death, returns to its original dust. It moulders away. It enters into the soil in which it is buried, or, if it be burned, it is turned to ashes. St. Paul, who rarely uses language incorrectly, has expressed the exact truth, when he speaks of this “earthly tabernacle” as being “dissolved.” The word which he employs means to “disband,” to “dismiss,” to “dis-unite.” It is as though the spirit had dismissed the body as of no farther use. The connection was forever dissolved. There was no more union between the two. The body and the spirit had done with one another. They needed not to act together any longer. Is it possible that, after the lapse of uncounted ages, these original elements are to be again combined, are to have the gift of immortality bestowed upon them, and are to be re-united as a body to the renewed spirit? What then, meanwhile, is the spirit to be engaged in? Is it to be unconscious and inert, with no vital power, waiting for that final day, when all things earthly will come to an end? Is it then to take upon itself the body which it had lost so long ago? Must it be compelled to delay all active life, all enjoyment of the bliss of Heaven, the praise of God, the loving service of man,

the sublime duties of the heavenly life, until it can again secure the body which once it had? Is Heaven to be a place of silence and Hell a solitude, until the last great day? It certainly derogates and detracts largely from our ideas of the power of the spirit to believe, that the blessed life and the grand attainments of Heaven are dependent upon the re-union with the spirit of the body which was its feeble instrument during its brief sojourn on the earth. Whatever some among the Apostles may have thought, I doubt if Jesus or Paul ever believed or ever taught any such doctrine.

St. Paul taught a resurrection, not of a natural, but of a spiritual body. The natural body would die and return to the dust. It would fall away, like the husk or outer shell of the seed. But the principle of life, the spirit, would rise out of that decay, and ascend up on high, wearing the spiritual body. What was that body? It was the form which the spirit would take upon itself, which, indeed, it would produce from itself, shaping itself according to the proportions, the quality, the attainments, the power of the spirit. "There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial." What particular form the spirit will take from out of the infinite variety of the Divine mind, it is not for me or any other person to say. But, I think, that there can be no difficulty in believing, that the predominating faculties of the spirit will make their own forms; that the spiritual body will be shaped according to the productiveness of the spirit in beauty, goodness and virtue. If the spirit of a man or woman is vicious, vile and wicked, it will assume a corresponding form. If it is faithful, true, lovely in its consecration to things beau-

tiful and divine, it will clothe itself in the beautiful garments of the heavenly life. Perhaps, as sometimes happens, the noble and beautiful soul is here allied to a deformed, decrepit, ungainly body. But, in the spiritual world, it will take upon itself its native grace, nobility and beauty. The spiritual body will be the form of the spirit. Shall we, by such means, recognize our friends? Most certainly we shall, and much more readily, it seems to me, than though we took again the bodies that now we have. For what is it that we love to recognize in our friends here? Is it not the innate grace and virtue that shine out of the eyes and give expression to the face, and illuminate every feature of of the countenance? Who are our friends indeed? Are they not those, with whom we have most affinity in thought, temper and spirit? Do we chose them for their outward or their inward beauty? Do we know them, except as we know the character of their minds and souls? How can we recognize them in Heaven, except through the medium of their high spiritual qualities? The beauty of the soul which here attracted our admiration and love, will be more attractive still in the heavenly life, and will draw us more closely to its love. Do we need the medium of the body to be thus again united? Having a "house not made with hands," "a building of God eternal in the heavens," we certainly shall not sigh to occupy again "the earthly house of this tabernacle" which has been once "dissolved."

I am aware that there is a difficulty in understanding this truth, because of our liability to carry into our thoughts of the heavenly life, the same ideas which we have respecting the functions of the body and the spirit



here. The body is, here, the instrument of the spirit. We are in communication with each other through the medium and by means of the senses. We speak to, hear, and see each other, and we cannot understand how otherwise we can do our proper work in the world. But I do not think that we are justified in carrying the same ideas into our communication with one another, in the world to come. We know nothing about our methods of intercourse there. But, presuming that they will be the same there as here, we have scarcely made the attempt to ascertain what they really are, and have contented ourselves in the belief, that we shall require the same sensuous medium; and so many have hoped, and have believed, indeed, that the body will have its resurrection, and be rendered incorruptible and immortal. What methods of intercourse the Divine love will bestow upon us, in the heavenly life, we cannot tell. We would not, indeed, assume to be able to determine. But we can well believe, that they will be such as will conduce most effectually to our highest spiritual welfare, and our completest spiritual growth.

There is another thought connected with the subject. We are apt to look upon the bodily senses as methods of expression only. We must also bear in mind, that they are methods of constraint likewise. We are sometimes fettered by the senses. We sometimes chafe against the power which holds us fast. Our souls sometimes cry out, "Would that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away from this earthly scene." We seek to stretch beyond ourselves, and to rise up into a purer atmosphere and a more blessed state of being. But we soon find that such longings are vain. We earnestly seek to be free, and we are made, some-

times painfully, to feel that we are bound. If the senses sometimes afford us enjoyment, if they are also the instruments of our labor; they are also sometimes our masters, and the enjoyment which they give is but the recreation which they furnish to alleviate our servitude. We are subject to constraint here, and the hour of our freedom is yet to come. Is it possible, then, that in the future life, we are to be bound by the same constraint, limited by the same force, confined by the same bonds? The spirit struggling with difficulties and temptations here, hopes that its freedom hereafter will be for its glory and joy. But the spirit, which here conceals its iniquity and baseness, must be unveiled hereafter, and left free to pursue its evil tendencies; must pass through the experience of shame and sorrow, for its discipline and purification. Thus, the future life, either to satisfy our aspirations, or to correct our wickedness, must be a life of freedom.

Consider, once more, if you please, the fact that the spirits of just and good and true men—of saintly and excellent women departed—exercise an influence upon the world after they have left their earthly state. We are encompassed with a “great cloud of witnesses.” We are guided by unseen agencies. We are watched over by invisible beings. “Are they not all ministering spirits?” Every thoughtful man knows, that he is not living to and within himself alone. Every studious and devout reader of the Bible knows and feels, that there comes down to him, from those holy men of whom he reads, an influence to instruct and elevate his life,—nay, he feels that they are a part of himself. Abraham, and Moses, and David and Isaiah, and the prophets of the olden time; Christ, and the Evangelists and the

Apostles of the later time, live again in him and he holds sweet counsel with them over the inspired pages of the Divine Word ; he is purified and blest by their presence with him. There are saints and martyrs, too, and the brave and good of all ages, that come and teach us all to live as bravely and faithfully as they. When we read the biography of a good and great man, when we contemplate his character, what is it that touches us, and instructs us and lifts us up? What is it but the spirit of the departed that, for the time, converses with our spirits ?

But, it is necessary to bear in mind, there is a certain experience, even in the present earthly life, which may well be called death. There is a species of deadness—there is a kind of burial, even while the body lives. The soul may be dead. The best part of human nature is buried beneath the worst part. Pure desires, holy aspirations, the spirit of prayer, the love of virtue, truth and God, may all be so weak as not to exhibit any signs of vitality, or life or power. Life seems to have departed from the soul. As a person of feeble physical constitution succumbs to the power of disease, so one of feeble moral and spiritual nature falls beneath the attacks of sin. Or, it may be that the difficulties and troubles of this earthly life overpower and subdue the spirit. Faith and hope disappear. Virtue is but a dream, liberty a delusion, justice an impossibility, truth a vain and empty pretense. The soul dies within the body of doubt, disappointment and despair.

We read, in the New Testament, of those who are “dead in trespasses and sins.” There are, unquestionably, those whose evil propensities so predominate as to warrant the declaration, that they are naturally dis-

posed to wickedness. They seem to have a genius for crime. They are born with the stamp and stain of depravity upon their souls. Education, culture, association, the power of law, of society, of public opinion, exercise all their influence in vain. The tendency is so deeply seated and ingrained within the souls of such persons, as to pervert all their faculties. The mind is turned away from the truth. The conscience is darkened and cannot see the way of righteousness. The will is enervated for any act of goodness. But, on the other hand, the faculties of mind, soul and body are wonderfully active in the practice of evil. The passions, appetites and desires are all turned towards the commission of sin. The mind sustains, the conscience approves the wrong. The will is almost irresistible in its power to carry to a horrible consummation the most criminal plans. Is not the soul, in such a case, dead? Ignorance has oppressed it. Folly has ensnared it. Passion has strangled it. Sin has slain it. It is dead and buried in the grave of earthliness!

“The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” There is a resurrection from the dead. The spirit freed from the body, hears the voice of the Son of God, and rises into newness of life. The spirit within the body hears that voice and lives. If weak, it is strengthened, as it feels the new and divine impulsion which is applied to it. Christ comes to the timid and trembling soul and gives it courage, vitality and power. His voice is a voice of comfort and encouragement to the struggling, doubting, despairing spirit. He helps it out of its difficulties, teaches it how to trust in God, awakens its hope, inspires its faith. It is the voice of Jesus, that animates the droop-

ing spirit and bids it live. To the soul dead in trespasses and sins, it is a voice of warning, as the Son of God admonishes of the consequences of wrong-doing, and of "the second death," from which there is no resurrection. It is a voice of persuasion and entreaty, as He calls the sinning soul back to its duty and its love. It is even a voice of forgiveness and mercy, a voice full of pity and compassion—a voice plaintive and sad as when a mother would woo a disobedient child back to its obedience. What benignity to the sinner breathes through the Gospel! What freedom from a spirit of animosity or vengeance! How willing is Jesus to receive, how ready is the Father to pardon the sinner returning tearful and penitent, to ask for forgiveness! But will the soul that is dead in sin refuse to hear that voice, still prefer its error and sin, and still pursue its course of malevolence? What then saith the Scriptures? "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for, if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven." Ah! let us rather believe, that "they that hear shall live"—that the Son of God will not speak in vain to the souls of guilty men!

In the hour of its resurrection, the soul rises into new and better life. It is freed from its weakness, its despair, its doubt, its sin. It takes upon itself strength, hope, goodness. It puts on the robes of righteousness, of joy, of peace. It forsakes the evil way, and walks thence forward in the paths of virtue. It comes out of the darkness into God's exceeding light, the beautiful day of the divine love. It gives up its own willful purposes, and surrenders itself wholly to the will of God.

Its weakness is gone. The clouds that were about it have dispersed. Dead to sin, it is alive unto God. Then, indeed, it truly lives, for it has heard the one all-animating voice!

The truth of the spiritual resurrection which I have endeavored to illustrate, and to which I have turned your thoughts, as most fitting to this occasion, is the only sure source of consolation in the hour of bereavement. There is some essence of life, in a good and true man or woman, which cannot die. The frail body, overcome by disease, overtaken by accident, overborne and destroyed by the blow of open hatred, or the secret assassination, must be always subject to death. But the spirit that dwells within the body for a time, cannot die. It rises out of the grave. It is not subject to death, neither, indeed, can be. Separated from the body, it enters into heavenly life and heavenly blessedness. It puts on its heavenly garments, and in the courts above, dwells forever free from the accidents, misfortunes, pains and troubles of the earthly life. It still lives, moreover, in the world. It still diffuses its influence among all the communities of men. It broods over the hearts and souls of those who still remain upon the earth, and gives to their lives a blessing whose value they may not be able to estimate. There can be no death to virtue. It may be subject to great persecution, it may fall by the hands of traitors, it may be carried to the cross. But it is the body only that can become the object of such indignities. The tortures of persecution, the sword of violence, the agony of the cross, only affect the body. The spirit rises above all such enmities and violence, and, with ever renewed strength, goes out into the world of living men, and

moves through all ranks and conditions, with its beneficent impulses and inspirations. From the scaffold where the champion of liberty lies bleeding and lifeless, proceeds a voice which rouses the nations to a better manhood. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church of God. The cross, to which the hands of cruel men affixed the innocent Christ, becomes the symbol of the world's redemption. Have any of the champions of human freedom died? Is the martyr, who was slain for the Word of God and the testimony which he bore, without life? Is Jesus dead? Do they not all live more forcefully in the spiritual power which they exercise? And is not the Christ with His disciples, even unto the end of the world?

In what other words than these could I speak to you this morning? From what other source could I seek consolation for the terrible affliction which has come upon us? The intelligence of yesterday struck us all aghast. The crime of assassination, we had thought, was a stranger to the American mind and conscience. When it was committed, and our kind, humane, beloved ruler was the victim, we were shocked and stunned into silence. The blow, which was so fatal to the President, seemed to shatter our own hearts. How willingly would we have died, if he could have been spared. Why Divine Providence should have permitted such an atrocious deed, we cannot tell. Why this man, on whom we have so much and so trustfully depended, in whom we have confided so completely, and under whose guidance we had hoped, by the blessing of God, to witness a national resurrection,—why he, above all others, should thus be selected so unerringly for the sacrifice,—we do not know. Words are powerless to

express our grief. Our loyal communities weep copious tears. We had learned to love him so well,—we had learned to look through the ungraceful form, feature, bearing and utterance, to the noble, beautiful, honest, true and graceful soul within; he seemed so important to us and so necessary for the national welfare, that we cannot, even now, endure to think that he is dead. Are we evermore to be deprived of the wisdom of his counsels? Shall we no longer be guided by that shrewd, sagacious, honest, truthful intellect? Are we no more to feel the tranquillizing influence of his calm, tender, cheerful, humane heart? We ask each other,—we ask ourselves almost in fear: What next shall we do? To whom shall we go? Who will lead us through the mazes of the future? What mind so stable for justice,—what heart so fixed in its love of liberty, will now direct us? What soul so reverent and so strong in its faith in God and His truth, will now teach us the way of national salvation? Had we been among the disciples of Jesus, the day after the crucifixion, we should have heard them discoursing in tones of sorrow which could not be comforted. For their hope, their love, their all was gone. What darker day than that could have dawned upon the world? But the third day was brighter. <sup>4</sup> The resurrection morning came, and the Eternal Father taught the disciples then, as He has been teaching the whole race of man since—as He is teaching us now—that truth and nobleness and justice cannot die; that the Christ has risen; that the Son of God had a voice that could call the dead to life. We seek our comfort from the same source. There must also be a day of resurrection for us. The truth of Christ and of God cannot fail, and we must patiently



wait the development of the Divine plans. The disciples waited, and they were rewarded by an increase of power. The church has waited for these many centuries, and the church has been blessed beyond compare. We, too, must wait in patience and faith, until God shall indicate His will.

It is impossible, to-day, to speak at length of the character of Mr. Lincoln. The estimate which we are to make of it must be formed in some calmer hour than the present. I can only sketch, in brief, the outline which, on some subsequent occasion, I will endeavor to fill. During my absence from you, in the early days of the war, I enjoyed the privilege of seeing Mr. Lincoln almost daily. He was a frequent visitor in our camp, and we were enabled to observe his character in its most familiar aspects. He walked about among the soldiers in the freest manner, and with a kind word for every one whom he met. I saw him at graver times. On the Tuesday after the battle of Bull Run, he visited our quarters, in company with Mr. Seward, to hear the story of our regiment, to inspect its condition, to examine its flag rent with the bullets of the foe, and to inquire into the losses which we had suffered. As he listened to the tale, his grave face grew graver still, and it seemed as though he felt the affliction as a personal bereavement, so warm was his sympathy, so sincere his sorrow. A man of the people himself, he fully appreciated the sacrifices which the people were making for himself and the country. He had reached, in despite of the most unpropitious circumstances, the highest position within the attainment of an American citizen. Yet his elevation had detracted not a whit from his simplicity. Undaunted by failures, unspoiled by suc-

cesses, he passed through all fortunes, and, at the height of his glory, still simple, unaffected and sincere, he has died without a stain. His heart was affectionate, generous, magnanimous and trusty. His mind was clear, perspicuous and exact. Honest and guileless, just and truthful, he went forward on his course of duty, if slowly, always surely. He has conducted our public affairs through difficulties from which the most experienced statesman might well shrink, and with a success of which the ablest might be proud. He has exhibited a caution and a courage, a skill and wisdom which the impatient and the unwise could not comprehend till they witnessed the permanent results which he had wrought out. He has been subjected to slander, ridicule, misrepresentation and calumny of the meanest and most malignant kind—making no answer—till, by his patient continuance in well-doing, he has outlived all the slanders of his foes, and has proved, by a complete triumph, the honesty of his intentions, the wisdom of his plans, the firmness of his purposes, and the ability of his performance. Withal, he has shown such loyalty to liberty, such devotion to the rights of his humblest fellow-citizens, such love of justice, such faith in truth and such trust in God, as to attract and command the esteem and love of all the loyal people of the Republic and the friends of freedom throughout the world. All classes and conditions of men unite in paying homage to his excellence.

Amidst the lamentation of the hour, one or two thoughts become prominent. The first is this:—Mr. Lincoln has died for the sake of a great, true and just principle. He has been “slain for the word of God and the testimony which he held.” He stands, forever-

more, before the eyes of mankind, as one of the chief martyrs of freedom—chief among those whose life blood has been licked up by the flames or devoured by the sword. It is for his unswerving devotion to the cause of his country's deliverance, and to the liberty of all within its borders—for his genuine, unselfish patriotism and humanity, that his life has been wrenched away from him. How false and foolish the words of the murderer: "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" "Thus always to tyrants!" He was the farthest possible from being a tyrant. No man was ever so free from a love of despotic power. Up to the very last moment, his mind was given to thoughts of pacification, and plans for the welfare of those who madly and wickedly sought to take his life. He loved justice indeed, and he endeavored to do justice. But he loved mercy no less. He has done all that he could to remove the foul stigma which slavery has put upon the Republic. He has ever been the faithful friend of the oppressed. We thank God, that he has been spared so long, and that he has done so much for the welfare of those who were ready to perish—that he has done his work with such perfect fidelity. He has been the redeemer of an entire race of men. The people whom he redeemed felt a gratitude of which we scarcely know. They rejoiced in him. They trusted in him, as no man was ever trusted before. They thought that he could do everything, for had he not already wrought miracles in their behalf? He did not disappoint them. With unpretending goodness, he struck off their chains, invoking upon the solemn act of Emancipation, "The considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

They were not unmindful of the gift which they received. You remember what was the character of the President's reception at Richmond—how those enfranchised people thronged his steps, calling down blessings upon his name, with tears of joy streaming down their swarthy cheeks, and praises to God bursting from their grateful lips. In their eyes, the homely features of the President were transfigured, and they hailed him as a Messiah—a man really sent from God. If they had had palm branches, they would have strown them in the way, and shouted "Hosanna!" The last time I saw Mr. Lincoln, was about a year ago, when I stood by his side, as the 9th corps passed in review before him, on its way to the Virginian campaign. In that corps was a division of colored regiments—nearly six thousand men—the first colored troops that had ever passed through Washington. As those soldiers caught sight of the tall man who, with head uncovered, witnessed their march, a spirit of wild enthusiasm ran through their ranks. They shouted, they cheered, they swung their caps, in the exuberance of their joy. The good President looked smilingly on, courteously acknowledging their expressions of affectionate respect. They were now freemen. They had a glorious object to live for. They would now make a history for their race, and there was the man who had done it all for them! That was a sight at which many eyes grew moist and dim. To no persons in all the country, will the tidings of his death cause a sincerer and profounder sorrow, than to the freedmen and their families. His enfranchised spirit goes up to the gates of Heaven with the blessings of those who were ready to perish, as his passport to the realms of eternal bliss.

His memory will be cherished among the simple-hearted people whom he has freed, as the memory of a sainted benefactor. He will live in the grateful remembrance of mankind, as the ruler of the American Republic, who, in the day of compromises, stood faithful to justice; in the day of treason, was always loyal to liberty; and, in the day of national distress, preserved his country from destruction and saved her from the sin of slavery! We read what he says in his inaugural address, with a sorrowful interest:—“Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills, that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, ‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’” How little did he think, how little did we think, that, in the dawning of the day of peace, his sacrifice—the blood of the innocent—should be the culmination of the woe we were to suffer. Yet, if ever he did think of it, there can be no question, that he was ready—entirely ready, always ready—for that sacrifice. If it were necessary that he should die for the people, whom he had delivered, he was fully prepared. He could say, with St. Paul: “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.”

The second thought upon this painful theme is this: The sacrifice assures the victory of freedom. Henceforward, the cause of the rebels is stripped of all disguises and shows itself the monstrous, vile, loathsome,

crime that it really is. There can be no sympathy now, among reasonable or humane men, with a cause which seeks such instruments and perpetrates such iniquity. "A struggle for independence" is now proved to be only a name for cold-blooded murder and midnight assassination. Among our own communities, it is deprived of every vestige of support, except from those who rejoice in blood. The abettors of the rebellion,—wherever they may be, whoever they may be,—hereafter become accessories of this great crime, and are to be so marked, by a just and indignant people. In the nations across the sea, also, the cause of the rebellion must sink beneath the execrations of the civilized world. The most hardened and the most prejudiced of the allies of despotism in Europe are not yet prepared to sympathize with such an enormity of wickedness. The barbarism of slavery, in striking this blow,—for this is the power which is behind all this war, and bloodshed and murder,—has committed suicide. The cause of the South is doomed to be forever, after this, the horror of the human race.

Yes, my friends, the sacrifice assures the victory of justice. It has been so in the past. Many and many a time has the cause of liberty and truth seemed to depend upon a single man's life. Yet, when that life has been extinguished, the cause has still gone forward to triumph. The spirit of the martyred statesman, leader, soldier of freedom, has still breathed upon those who remain, and they have girded up their loins with renewed energy and a more resolute determination, and the invisible power of the great man departed, has led them on to victory. Encompassed with dangers, Mr. Lincoln has been spared by divine mercy, to witness

the triumph of a portion of his great plans, and to have the assurance of greater triumphs still. He has led us, as Moses led his delivered countrymen, to the very border of the promised land. He caught a sight of the glory, but was not permitted to enter in and enjoy it. It is a terrible calamity. But Divine Providence is always wise and good. I can recall no parallel in recent history, more striking than the death of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange. The people of the Netherlands, in the 16th century, accepted the Protestant principles of the Reformers. They wished to be free from the dominion of a despotic church. Philip II, of Spain, bigoted, cruel and tyrannical, endeavored to force upon these people, then under his jurisdiction, the accursed institution of the Inquisition. The people revolted against such an attempt to deprive them of their religious liberties. William was their great leader, and, by his wise administration as a statesman, his bravery and skill as a soldier, he succeeded in baffling the plans of the despotic Philip, and of securing, in part, the independence of his country. In 1580, Philip offered a large reward for his assassination. Several attempts were made upon his life, which were unsuccessful, till at last, on the 10th of July, 1584, he was shot dead, in his house at Delft, a short time after dinner, as he was passing from the dining room to an adjoining staircase. The assassin was soon captured, and executed. The character of William was that of a great deliverer, and had many traits strikingly similar to that of Mr. Lincoln. Silent as to his plans, he carried them forward with unwearied constancy. Exact, practical and just, he was steady in the pursuit of the chief object of his life. He was fearless in spirit, saga-

cious in mind, quick in perception, but cautious in maturing results. He was constant in disaster, hopeful in defeat, magnanimous in victory. He had a rare faculty in managing men, and a rare honesty in regulating himself. He was eloquent as a speaker, "sometimes impassioned, oftener argumentative, always rational." So able, upright and truthful was he, that "there was always a hope, even in the darkest hour, for men felt implicit reliance, as well on his intellectual resources as on his integrity." "His temperament was cheerful. In his hours of relaxation, he was always animated and merry, and this jocoseness was partly natural, partly intentional. In the darkest hours of his country's trial, he affected a serenity which he was far from feeling, so that his apparent gaiety, at momentous epochs, was even censured by dullards, who could not comprehend its philosophy nor applaud the flippancy of William the Silent." Unaffectedly pious and fearless, he took little or no precautions against danger. "God, in his mercy," he said, "will maintain my innocence and my honor, during my life, and in future ages. As to my fortune and my life, I have dedicated both, long since, to His service. He will do therewith what pleases Him, for his glory and my salvation." Such a man, the "Father William" of his people, fell by the hand of a hired assassin. "But the victory was to the dead hero, not to the living monarch." William, says the historian, "was a conqueror in the loftiest sense, for he conquered liberty and a national existence for a whole people." A nation, deprived of its beloved head, mourned as those who were bereft of hope. Yet, the cause for which he died was not thus defeated. The spirit of William,



having a glorious resurrection, led on his country—the “United States of the Netherlands”—to the heights of national greatness. It became, in after years, “the first naval power and one of the most considerable commonwealths in the world.” Mr. Lincoln—the “Father Abraham” of our affections—pursued by the same malignant hate, has fallen in the same holy cause, has achieved the same glorious triumph. “Liberty and a national existence for a whole people” are now assured to us by this great sacrifice. The week which we began with rejoicing, ends in gloom. But, out of the gloom ariseth the light of the resurrection morning. The dead shall live. The voice of the Son of God calls us all to life. The national resurrection comes through this great sacrifice.

Yes, a national resurrection! For this great affliction, with those seasons of sorrow through which we have before time passed, is for our purification as a people. We have slumbered in times past. The nation seemed dead. It had no great word to speak, no great work to do, for the welfare of the human race. The Union as it was, existing and enlarging itself for the strengthening of slavery, was the natural body, in which the spirit of liberty was gradually sinking to destruction. But Divine Providence does not permit a people to perish whose death would be a misfortune to mankind. The Son of God calls them up to life. The Divine Word is spoken. It will be heard. The nation is not dead, but sleepeth. It arouses itself at the voice which calls it unto life. Its eyes are opened. Its heart is quickened. Its mind is enlightened. Its conscience is vitalized. It begins to love justice and liberty. It repents of its sins, and, inspired by the new

power which it feels, it becomes the most potent instrument, in the hands of Divine Providence, for the enlightenment and elevation of the human race. What magnificent achievements it then aspires to! What greatness it becomes capable of! What virtue it seeks to practice! It has become free from its old body of sin, and lives henceforth to righteousness and God.

This, then, is our day of resurrection, my brethren. The Union as it is to be, existing and enlarging itself for liberty, is the spiritual body which we, as a nation, are to put on. We have come back to life,—not the old worldly, selfish, cowardly life, that once we had, but—to a brave, generous, just and true life, full of vigor and full of promise for the future. We have, indeed, been smitten and chastised. The heart of the Republic has wept even tears of blood. The best and bravest have been given up. The noblest man of our American Democracy has been stricken down. Slavery and treason had clothed the Republic with cerements for its burial. We have cast them aside, and are putting on the garments of salvation. Surely all this experience cannot be for naught. It cannot come and go and leave no trace behind. These habiliments of grief, these sorrowful countenances, these tearful eyes, are not the hollow manifestations of a people's ostentatious woe. They are the sincere expressions of our sorrow. They are also the pledges of our future fidelity to the memory of him whom we mourn, and to the principles which he practised. We can take no step backward. Our present ruler can take no step backward. Inaugurated into office under such solemn auspices, he will not retreat from the grand career which now opens

before him. We all hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to our souls. We hear and live!

I have only this more to say, dear friends, we must consecrate ourselves anew to the principles for which our President has died. The truths which he has lived to illustrate and died to seal, are the truths for which a greater than he has lived and died. Pledging our cordial support to his successor, let us go forward in the course, which the illustrious dead would have us pursue. The end is not doubtful, if we are still faithful to him and to ourselves, if we are still trustful in our God. Let us be comforted in our sorrow, and believe that there is a day coming to us—a great and notable and glorious day of the Lord—a day of national resurrection, when we shall come forth and live in newness of spirit, a just and free and righteous people, for the well-being of the world. Again, I recall the words of the inaugural address—fitting words to be spoken on the verge of the unseen grave that was opening before him who spoke: “With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.” O day of resurrection! shine in upon our souls for our strength and peace forever!

R.H.













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