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ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE

Funeral Solemnities

OF THE LATE

President of the United States,

IN THE

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

APRIL 19, 1865.

BY REV. H. DUNNING, PASTOR.

BALTIMORE JOHN W. WOODS, PRINTER,

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ADDRESS.

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS :

IT is no common event which calls us together to-day. It is no common grief which bows the heart of this whole nation to-day. It is no common scene which is witnessed over our whole land to-day.

The eyes of this whole nation, and the sorrowing heart of the whole nation are, at this moment, turned, with an intensity of painful interest never before experienced, to the national Capital,—and *what do we there behold?* The representatives of the power and authority of the nation;—Governors, Judges, Senators, Legislators, Heads of Departments of Government, Military authorities, the highest Representatives of all the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive authorities of the land, congregated together, bowed in sorrow, and as the representatives of the national power, and the national heart, paying the last, sad rites of respect and love to the remains of our murdered President. Never before was a nation's interest, sympathy, sorrow, centered, with such intensity of emotion, upon any one point, as, at this hour, upon the Capital of this nation. This whole people from Atlantic's coast to the Pacific, bows together in deepest grief around the bier of our smitten President—with our State's and City's rep-

representatives there, with the whole smitten and sorrowing nation everywhere, do we also here, around our altar, in the house of our God, bow together in token of our sorrow, veneration, and love of our departed Chief Magistrate. May God, in his mercy, sanctify to us and to the nation this hour of our unity in sorrow and respect for the immortal dead.

This is not the time, my friends, for the indulgence of reflections upon the enormity of the crime, which has laid the representative of national life, authority, and power in the dust—nor is it the time to attempt to take the gauge of the influence of that nameless crime, or of the untoward event to which it led, upon the present final struggle with rebellion, or upon the future of our country. Nor yet, is it the time to attempt an estimate of the life, character, and services of that great and good man, whose name has already passed among the immortal names of history, and whose fame will be commensurate with man's reverence of lawful authority and love of human freedom. A century hence, when the race shall have passed far beyond its present low stage of civilization and improvement, and when the great results of our present conflict shall have realized their measureless blessings to this continent and to the world, then and not till then will God raise up the man whose pen shall delight to portray the true character and influence upon the race of *the saviour of his country*, ABRAHAM LINCOLN. And yet, it is proper for us at this time, and duty too, to indulge such reflections as may present themselves in regard to his character and life, whose untimely end we all with hourly in-

creasing sorrow deplore, and whose funeral solemnities, in common with the whole sorrowing nation, we are now met to celebrate.

And what were the *characteristics* of that man upon whose shoulders God threw the weight of as momentous responsibilities as ever were laid upon man? Some of these traits are manifest to the whole world, and need but to be mentioned to secure the assent of friend and foe.

Strikingly prominent among other traits of his character was his imperturbable *calmness*. Amid all the trials of faith and patience, all the scenes of strife, and excitement, all the perplexities arising from the failures of friends and the bitterness of foes, he was never betrayed into excitement, or manifestations of wrath, or undignified and useless petulance. This unshaken self-possession, this imperturbable equanimity formed in his character that wonderful patience, and gave him that wiry spirit of *patient endurance* under all the trials to which he was subjected, which so remarkably characterized the man. Who ever saw him excited to passion by even the greatest of crimes or under the greatest provocations. What public word has he ever, while in the Presidential chair, uttered, which indicated passion or personal resentment towards either his political enemies and villifiers, or the country's foes at home or abroad? In and through all storms *he* remained ever calm.

Equal to his calmness, and doubtless the basis of it, was his *honesty and integrity* of purpose and life. This is confessed by all. No man ever spent even a few moments in the presence of that man and left him with

doubts of the honesty of his heart, or of the sincerity of his patriotism. No man in the land to-day believes he was a bad man, a dishonest man, a mere political partizan, a designing schemer, or any other than a most honest man, and a most sincere patriot. It was to me most gratifying, at the same time that it excited my indignation, to see, in the first issue after his death of one of the most bitter and violent of the journals, which has spared no means, foul or fair, to oppose his administration, and to malign his character, a retraction and denial of all its base slanders by the acknowledgment of the intense honesty and of the personal and political integrity and patriotism of this great man.

And hence, because of his calm, natural self-possession and patient honesty he was necessarily an *unselfish* man. The generosity and magnanimity of his nature are witnessed by all his official acts, and by none more clearly than by his dealings towards those who arrayed themselves against the nation's life and authority, and yet had fallen into the power of the Government. His unselfishness is witnessed by his whole administration of the authority of Government, during the most critical period of our national history, in all which, no one act can be pointed out, no one word spoken which indicated, that the President was therein seeking his own personal advancement or honor. Singularly free is that public life from all suspicion of desire or aim to advance personal selfish ends to the detriment of the country.

Characteristic also in a high degree was the *humility* of this great man. In no public mes-

sage or address, in no report of private interview, have you ever yet seen or heard the slightest boast from his lips, or intimation or indication in public or in private of pride or arrogance in his heart. Humble in his estimate of his own abilities, yet confident of the sincerity and integrity of his aims and principles, he was ready to receive suggestions and advice from every source, and was accessible to the humblest man or woman in the land. Called by the providence of God to a position of honor, power and responsibility second to none in the world, he bore himself to the highest or the humblest with equal dignity, condescension and kindness. Naturally allied to this trait was his undeviating *conscientiousness*; his unalterable adherence to his moral convictions, and his honest annunciation of them in the midst of enemies and before the world.

This most valuable characteristic exhibited itself in his pertinacious adherence to the great principles of human freedom on which our Government was founded, and which, by his oath of office, he was solemnly bound to maintain. It was because of this his intense conscientiousness that he was when once he had "set down his foot," so unswervingly *firm* to all his purposes and faithful to all his promises. Conscientiously sincere in his aim to rescue the nation from the most formidable rebellion the world has ever seen, to prove in reality, what was so sneeringly cast into the face of them who aimed to arrest the tide of madness which swept over the whole Southern land, a *Union-saver*, he steadily, faithfully before

God and man persevered until he was permitted to see the blessed prospect of a preserved nation and a perpetuated Government opening with cheering assurance before him. No voice of bitterest foe, save that of madmen who know not what they say, will this day or ever hereafter charge that man, as President, with treachery to his convictions of truth and duty. Born and reared in a Slave State, yet his clear moral perceptions and convictions brought him to that memorable conclusion and declaration, "*If Slavery be not wrong, nothing is wrong;*" a declaration strikingly in harmony with that of Thomas Jefferson, that "*the Almighty has no attribute that can take the side of the Slaveholder.*"*

Closely allied with his conscientiousness, and growing out of it, was his unshaken *trust in God*. I shall

* There is a historical appropriateness in the fact that President Lincoln should be mourned most of all by the slaves. History judges men especially by their relation to great ideas and great movements. The removal of slavery from this continent will by and by be thought the grand act of this century; an era like the Reformation in Europe, or the establishment of a republic on this side of the Atlantic. Public men will be measured by their opposition to or approval of it. Mr. Lincoln will be especially remembered as the great emancipator, and the leader of the American Republic when she first shook off the fearful burden of slavery. The "friend of the slave" will be his lasting title with posterity. Men will not cease to remember and relate his gradual, reasonable, patient efforts to rid the nation of this curse: his sympathy with those in bonds, the tenacity with which he adhered to his policy of emancipation, his increasing sense of the guilt of slavery, and his final tragic death, suffered in part from his devotion to an oppressed race.

It is most fitting that for such a statesman the poor and the bondmen should most of all mourn, and that with the tears of the nation he led to a higher justice and unity, should fall also the tears of the subject race for whom he effected so much while living, and for whom, in part, he died.

[*N. Y. Times.*

never forget the solemn and tearful earnestness with which he responded to the Synod of Pennsylvania when in its session in Washington, in the autumn of 1863, he said in answer to an address which had been made to him, "*Gentlemen, if God be with us we shall maintain this Government, if not we shall fail;*" and this was uttered with that deep solemnity and peculiarity of manner which produced the conviction that he firmly believed that God was with the nation and would bring it through all its great trials.*

His last inaugural address is replete with the same humble trust in the justice and fidelity of God. His known habit of spending the hour from 5 to 6 A. M., in private devotion speaks in certain language of sincerity of trust in the unerring guide of nations, which might shame many a more pretentious christian.—Such were some of the traits which happily blended in the character of our late President, combined together to peculiarly qualify him for the great trials and responsibilities to which, in the providence of

* The London correspondent of the Philadelphia *North American*, in narrating a personal interview with Mr. Gladstone, says :

"I ventured to express the hope that he appreciated the advantage the United States had had in this great crisis in the admirable character of the President. He replied at once, with much animation, that he did entirely. He had always, he said, thought well of Mr. Lincoln, as probably as good a leader as the country could have, but his recent address on his inauguration showed a moral elevation which commanded the respect of every right feeling man. "I am taken captive," Mr. Gladstone said, in substance, "by so striking an utterance as this. I see in it the effect of sharp trial when rightly borne to raise men to a higher level of thought and feeling than they could otherwise reach. It is by cruel suffering that nations are born to a better life, and to individuals, of course, a like experience produces a like result."

God he was called. How humbly, how patiently, how perseveringly, how conscientiously, he met them all is now before the world, and history will delight to write it in lines of gold and glory to his imperishable honor. It seems an infinite calamity, but there is almost a moral fitness that the salvation of his country should be crowned with his own martyrdom, and sealed with his own blood. If anything more were needed to wreath his fame, as SAVIOUR OF HIS COUNTRY, with immortal glory, the assassin's dagger has supplied the need, and now, a martyr to the holy principles on which he sought to plant the nation, he rises to equality with the great and good Washington, and, under God, the one as *Father*, and the other as *Saviour of his Country*, they together, *Par nobile fratrum*, shall go down the stream of the immortal ages, honored, revered, beloved, while memory of what is great and good and patriotic and true shall endure. Even now, ere what was mortal of this man has been borne to the tomb, detraction hastes to retract her foul slanders, and to testify to the coming ages that a truer man, a purer patriot, a firmer friend of humanity never lived.*

* Since uttering the above estimate of our beloved President's character and future position in history, I have been gratified in finding in the *New York Times*, of this date, copied from an editorial of the *Toronto (Canada) Globe*, the following confirmation of my judgment :

"His simplicity of character, his straightforward honesty, his kindness, even his bluntness of manner, seem to have won the popular heart, even among a foreign, and, in matter of opinion, a hostile nation. We may judge by that fact of his popularity among the citizens of the Northern States. Almost all of us feel as if we had lost a personal friend. All mourn his untimely fate * * * * * He was sagacious, patient, prudent, courageous, honest, candid. * * * * *

But he has fallen; fallen in the midst of his days of usefulness, and of success in the preservation of our imperilled national life and liberties; fallen while four millions of freed hands were lifted to heaven imploring blessings upon his head, and when a grateful nation had just confidingly entrusted its destiny, a second time, into his faithful hands; fallen by the hand of violence, aiming at the national life, striking only the national representative; fallen by a new crime; not homicide, not murder, not suicide, but a crime as yet in our national vocabulary without a name. The nation does well to clothe itself as never before in the emblems of mourning. From ocean to ocean, over the high mountain tops, shadowing all our vallies and plains, let the pall of sorrow fall. Great is the nation's woe; such a death! by such means! for such a cause! at such a time! well may the nation bow itself in sorrow, and mourn.

It seems to us that he had gone through his worst trials, that his patience, sagacity and honesty would have borne even better fruits in the settlement of the affairs of the South than during the wild commotion of the war.— He has been cut off at a time when, certainly, he had accomplished a great deal, but leaving much undone which he was well qualified to do. A naturally strong man, of only fifty-six, he might have hoped to live many years after finishing his work as President, in the enjoyment of the respect and admiration justly due to one who had saved the life of his country. He will be held, we think by Americans, if not equal to WASHINGTON, second to none but he. But he had not the gratification of his great predecessor, of seeing his work completed and enjoying for a long period the gratitude of his countrymen and the admiration of strangers. There are few so hard of heart as to not shed a tear over the sudden and bloody termination of so bright a career. As great as WASHINGTON in many moral and mental qualities, his genial character was calculated to win far more popular sympathy than his predecessor. Ability and honesty all admire, but when to them are added kindness, simplicity, and freedom from selfishness, haughtiness and pride in high position, they win love as well as respect.”

And yet it mourns to day "not as a nation that has no hope:" It mourns with heart full of hope and blessed assurance, in the midst of success to all its toils and struggles; and with heart and purpose under God more than ever firmly fixed in the consciousness of its own power, stability, duty and destiny. From the burden of this great woe the nation will arise, and soon address itself to its great and glorious work. Meanwhile, the duty of this hour is humiliation and sorrow. Brethren and friends, let us join that sorrowing throng of the great and the honored of our land and representatives of all other lands that moves at this hour with slow and solemn tread from the national mansion, so late the scene of a nation's joy and congratulation, and let us pass through that long pathway of sorrow, our national *via dolorosa*, until we reach that chosen honored spot which is to hold what is mortal of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and there will we drop our final tear, in sorrow and hope, crying, *rest, rest, good and faithful servant! Rest, friend of man! Rest, saviour of thy country! Rest, rest, in honor and in peace! Thy works shall follow thee.*"

