

PRESIDENT LINCOLN;
HIS
FIGURE IN HISTORY:

A DISCOURSE

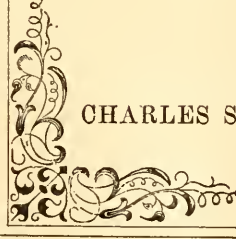
DELIVERED IN THE

First Presbyterian Church,

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY,

JUNE 1st, 1865.

By JAMES M. MACDONALD, D. D.



NEW YORK:
CHARLES SCRIBNER & CO., 124 GRAND STREET.
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PRINCETON, July 10th, 1865.

REV. J. M. MACDONALD, D.D.:

Dear Sir,—Many of those who had the pleasure of listening to your admirable discourse delivered in the church on the day of humiliation, June 1st, feel desirous of having the same published. The undersigned, therefore, beg leave to request that you will be so kind as to furnish them with a copy thereof for that purpose.

Very truly, yours,

P. HENDRICKSON,
E. OLDEN,
I. BAKER,
JAMES STEBBINS,
JOSEPH B. WRIGHT,
S. ALEX. HAMILTON,
LEAVITT HOWE.

PRINCETON, July 14th, 1865.

To Messrs. P. Hendrickson, E. Olden, Isaac Baker, Joseph B. Wright, S. Alex. Hamilton, Leavitt Howe, and the Rev. James Stebbins:

The discourse to which your note of the 10th inst. refers amounts to little more than the mere outline of a subject—or rather one aspect of the only subject pertinent to the day—which, with suitable skill and leisure, might have been made more worthy of the occasion.

Such as it is, however, I place it at your disposal for the purpose named.

Availing myself of this opportunity of returning you my thanks for many acts of personal kindness,

I remain, gentlemen, truly yours,

J. M. MACDONALD.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, By my direction, the acting Secretary of State, in a notice to the public on the 17th of April, requested the various religious denominations to assemble on the 19th of April, on the occasion of the obsequies of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the United States, and to observe the same with appropriate ceremonies; and, whereas, our country has become one great house of mourning, where the head of the family has been taken away; and believing that a special period should be assigned for again humbling ourselves before Almighty God, in order that the bereavement may be sanctified to the nation; now, therefore, in order to mitigate that grief on earth which can only be assuaged by communion with the Father in heaven, and in compliance with the wishes of senators and representatives in Congress, communicated to me by a resolution adopted at the National Capital, I, ANDREW JOHNSON, President of the United States, do hereby appoint Thursday, the twenty-fifth day of May next, to be observed, wherever in the United States the flag of the country may be respected, as a day of humiliation and mourning, and I recommend my fellow-citizens then to assemble in their respective places of worship, there to unite in solemn service to Almighty God, in memory of the good man who has been removed, so that all shall be occupied at the same time in contemplation of his virtues and sorrow for his sudden and violent end.

In virtue whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington the 25th day of April, in the year of our Lord 1865, and of the independence of the United States of America the 89th.

ANDREW JOHNSON

By the President.

W. HUNTER, Acting Secretary of State.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, By my proclamation of the 25th inst., Thursday, the 25th day of next month, was recommended as a day for special humiliation and prayer in consequence of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the United States; but, whereas, my attention has been called to the fact that the day aforesaid is sacred to large numbers of Christians as one of rejoicing for the ascension of the Saviour, now, therefore, be it known that I, ANDREW JOHNSON, President of the United States, do hereby suggest that the religious services recommended as aforesaid should be postponed until Thursday, the first day of June next.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 29th day of April, in the year of our Lord 1865, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-ninth.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

By the President.

W. HUNTER, Acting Secretary of State.

DISCOURSE.

IN the Proclamation of the President, this has been appointed to be observed as “a day of humiliation and mourning.”

The death of the highest ruler, under any circumstances, is an affliction to the entire people. He stands in the same relation to all. This is as true in elective and representative, as in hereditary governments. Indeed, it may be more eminently true in a system like ours, than in one where the highest office descends by inheritance. The Chief Magistrate with us is one of the people, taken from among the people, and raised to his high place by their suffrages, according to the provisions of a Constitution of their own adoption, or having their free assent. It matters not that a citizen may not have been old enough to join in the suffrage, or that he was out of the country, at the time the choice was made, nor even that he felt it to be his duty to support an opposing candidate ; his relation as one of the subjects of government, owing honor, obedience and subjection to the chief executive officer, is precisely the same. No higher obligation rests upon others than upon him. There

is to him, for the time being, no other living man in whom centres the supreme authority ; who, charged with maintaining the Constitution and Laws, represents the sovereignty of the nation. An indignity to him, from any foreign or hostile power, is felt by every man as an insult to the nation over which he bears rule. No section or party, at such a time, will assume that they have an exclusive right, or interest, in resenting it, or vindicating the nation's offended dignity. When the hand of violence is raised against the ruler, every man will feel the blow as aimed against himself ; and when that blow falls, the concussion will be felt through the whole frame-work of civil society. A blow directed against the head is against a vital part, and may prostrate the body, and destroy its life ; so that which prostrates a ruler, who, in his own person represents the supreme authority, every citizen feels endangers that government which is over him, for the protection of his property, person, and reputation. It makes the whole land reel and tremble. It shakes every man's house.

It is well said in the Proclamation appointing this day, "Our country has become one great house of mourning, where the head of the family has been taken away." It is under this touching figure of a household, gathered at the tomb of its deceased head, that the nation is invited to assemble, to give some becoming expression of its sorrow. The members of such a household may belong to different persuasions in religion, to different circles in social, and different parties in civil life ; they may even have conflicting interests, which have issued in serious contests ; but they all stand in the same relation to him who is no more,

and are summoned to bow, forgetting their differences and laying aside their animosities, in common sorrow around his lowly bed. The providence of God has solemnly called the people of this land to lay aside their bickering and party hate. Let this day be sacred to charitable and fraternal feeling, and remind us that, with all our diversities, we are not so far apart as we are prone to imagine ! We have much to stir and move our tenderest sympathies, and cause us to weep together ; and when men's tears flow and mingle in one common channel, their hearts cannot be far asunder.

“ There are rare instances,” to use the words of an eminent British statesman, Mr. D’Israeli, pronounced in Parliament with reference to Mr. Lincoln’s death ; “ there are rare instances when the sympathy of a nation approaches to those tenderer feelings, that generally are supposed to be peculiar to the individual, and to form the happy privilege of private life ; and I think this is one of them. Under all circumstances, we should have bewailed the catastrophe at Washington ; under all circumstances we should have shuddered at the means by which it was accomplished. But in the character of the victim, and in the very accessories of his almost latest moments, there is something so homely and so innocent that it takes the subject, as it were, out of the pomp of history, and out of the ceremonial of diplomacy.” If this could be said, with any degree of propriety and truth, by a foreigner, with how much greater can it be said, by the people of this land. The duty we are called upon to perform to-day, is indeed taken out of the class of mere ceremonies and parades. The appeal is directly to our household affections, and to those tender sympathies which are

awakened by the removal of one who stood to us in a near and most important relation.

The crime which has robbed this nation of its President receives no softening from time. It stands in unrelieved atrocity. In the record that shall be made of it, it will constitute one of the darkest stains on the pages of human history. It made all knees tremble, and all faces gather blackness. It caused the nations to stand aghast. A thousand leagues of sea seemed unable to break the connexion, or so much as to weaken the power of that current of electric sympathy that draws and binds human hearts together. It not only caused a fearful shadow to fall around the throne of monarchs, but the dwellers in the humblest cottages to feel a momentary insecurity, as the imagination conjured up those revolutions, and social convulsions, which have often invaded and laid waste the most peaceful, secluded homes. Whilst we felt called upon to abase ourselves under this new and awful proof which the crime afforded, of the deep depravity of that race to which its perpetrator belonged, we also feel called upon, in view of its condemnation, and the horror awakened by it, in men's minds, to recognize those lineaments of a once purer nature, upon which, by Divine grace, may be re-embossed the lost image of its God.

The history of the late head of our nation, is one of the most marvellous on record. Among the prominent figures in the annals of the world, I know of none precisely resembling his, or, in some respects, to be compared with it. By the side of those of Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon and Washington, it takes its place, with its own striking peculiarities of feature and costume. It can never fail to be

easily identified in that throng, however great it may become, of men whom Providence raises up to control the destiny of nations, as his bodily form, by its lofty height and peculiarity of outline, readily pointed him out, in whatever crowds or assemblies he made his appearance. To sketch his career will awaken the ambition of many a writer ; and he who would do it successfully must possess the highest gifts—the charity of the Christian, the mind of the philosopher, the heart of the philanthropist, and the graphic pen of the dramatist. “The romance of history” is an expression made familiar to us, by book-writers, who have sought to cull from its pages scenes and adventures, which, literally true, are more strange than fiction itself. The history of Abraham Lincoln presents just this sort of material, not in single episodes, but in its whole extent from beginning to end.

At the close of our last war with England, of which so many survivors have a distinct recollection, and in which some took an active part, he was a mere child of some six years of age. He was almost literally a native of the forest, having been born, and spent his early childhood, in Central Kentucky, then a new and sparsely-settled State. Here, although there had been some progress since the first settlers, among them his grandfather, had been exposed to the tomahawks of savages, he spent the first years of his childhood, in the hardy toil peculiar to families on the frontier, in incessant struggles for the plainest subsistence. School-houses and common schools were entirely unknown. Occasionally, there were what were styled neighborhood schools, taught for a few months in the year, in the cabin of one of the more prosperous settlers. His father had never

learned to read, and could barely form the letters, in the rudest way, composing his signature. His mother was able to read, but not to write ; both parents, however, are said to have been excellent Christian people, members of the Baptist Church. Their cabin was without a floor, with one door, and one window, having a few most necessary articles of furniture, made of slabs and split logs, by the same hands that built the house. The only books it contained were a Bible, a Catechism, and a copy of Dilworth's Spelling-book. His mother read the Bible to her family every day, and on the Sabbath, much of the time was spent in this way. While he lived in Kentucky, it is said, he never saw even the exterior of what was properly a church edifice. But he attended a school taught in the neighborhood, for a short time ; and with such further assistance as he received at home, was able to read well at the age of seven. Summing up all the days of his actual attendance on school instruction, it is estimated the amount would hardly exceed one year. The first book he read, after the Spelling-book, was his mother's Bible. We can easily imagine what an avidity there must have been in the mind of such a child for the narratives and parables of this blessed book, in the seclusion of his wilderness home. Two years later, the death of his mother doubtless served to impress still more deeply on his mind the pious lessons he had received from her lips, and had learned from the book she had loved so well. The second book he read was Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, borrowed for him, by his father, at a settlement eighteen miles distant from his home. He read it with eagerness. His next book was Esop's Fables, given to him by a neighbor,

which he perused till he knew almost all of them by heart. His next books were the "Life of Washington," the "Life of Franklin," and "Plutarch's Lives." Notice the hand of Providence, in the kind of books that were put in the way of this boy, whose home was so far from where schools and books abound, who was to be raised up to fill so high a place, and perform so great a part in the affairs of men. While his perceptive faculties and muscular energies were being developed, by the frequent employment of the rifle, in the pursuit of the wild game that filled the woods, and in the labors of the plantation, it was necessary that his intellectual and moral life should have something to feed and grow upon; and how wonderfully were the means provided by that Power that rules the world, whose child and pupil he was! What college of educators would venture to change one of the books, or so much as vary their order, found in his curriculum. A youthful neighbor and friend, who knew how to make the letters, taught him to write; but as paper could not well be afforded in sufficient quantity, he practised the art on slabs and the trunks of trees, with a bit of chalk or charcoal, and with his finger or a pointed stick, in the sand or snow. His first letter was written for his father, and addressed to a clergyman, an old friend of the family; and such was its excellence both in penmanship and expression, that he was soon called upon to write a large number of the letters of the settlement. His attention and memory were such at this time that he could repeat nearly all the sermons he heard. Who can estimate the important work performed in the education of the common mind by those self-denying men, who are borne on the

tide of emigration into our western wilds, themselves bearing the Gospel of the great Teacher ?

When he was little more than seven years old, his father, in the spirit of the true frontiersman, removed with his family from Kentucky, where the game was getting scarce, and neighbors were crowding in too closely, to seek a new home in lonelier wilds. The journey was made in true emigrant style, in a wagon, drawn by oxen ; the cow, so necessary to their comfort, driven behind. The Ohio was crossed on a raft. The mother and daughter ride in the wagon with the household effects. The father drives the team, and to the future President of the United States is committed the care of the indispensable cow. But it will not be possible, nor is it necessary to the design I have in view, to pursue these simple annals of a brave and cheerful struggle with a humble lot. Suffice it to add, that at a period so recent as when many who hear me, who are still vigorously pursuing the active duties of life, had entered on those duties, and had already reached stations of influence and usefulness, but little more than thirty years ago, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, according to the public accounts of him to which I have had access, was toiling to subdue the wild lands in what was then the far West, or as a boatman on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Can anything seem more strange than that one, who had been favored with so few advantages for mental culture in early life, and who, after arriving at the years of manhood, was still pursuing a humble calling, should, when scarcely more than fifty years of age, reach one of the highest and most powerful stations it can ever fall to the lot of man to fill ?

He could hold the plough, was a notable chopper and splitter, and inured to every description of the most hardy toil. It has been said of him, that he could adapt himself to any honest work which circumstances required, and with a cheerfulness and alacrity—a certain practical humour—rarely equalled. He could turn off the hardest labor as a mere pastime ; and his manly presence was as a constant inspiration and a charm to lighten the burdens of others. He continued to read the few books that came within his reach, with avidity ; and in the winter evenings, read them by the mere light of the blazing fire-place, when no better resource was at hand. The first office he was called to fill was that of a captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk War, having been elected to it by the company which he had been efficient in raising.

But we cannot follow him from step to step, as he entered on the most difficult work, under all his disadvantages, of preparing himself for one of the learned professions ; nor in his early and almost immediate success in that profession. Although he had risen to great prominence and influence in the West, having represented his district in Congress, still he was scarcely known, so much as by name, to the nation at large, at the time his predecessor in the office of President entered on his duties. The speaker confesses that he has no recollection of ever having heard of him at that time. It was his celebrated debate with the lamented Senator Douglass which first brought him prominently before the public.

He was elected PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, signally illustrating that sovereignty of Divine Providence,

which the Scriptures so distinctly recognize as controlling the appointment of the rulers of the world : “ The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will ! ” [Dan. 4, 16.] “ Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is judge : He putteth down one, and setteth up another. ” [Ps. 76, 67.] The land was not without its distinguished and tried men, great orators, great statesmen, acute publicists, learned jurists, wise diplomatists,—but no one of these was taken for the chief place at the critical period in its history which was at hand,—to sit at the helm during the storm that was about to strike the ship of state. “ There is a principle of movement,” says an eminent modern historian, “ emanating from God himself, in all the changes among nations. God looks upon that wide stage on which the generations of men successively meet and struggle. He is there, it is true, an invisible God ; but if the profaner multitude pass before him without noticing him because he is ‘ a God that hideth himself,’ thoughtful spirits, and such as feel their need of the principle of their being, seek him with the more earnestness, and are not satisfied until they lie prostrate at his feet. And their search is richly rewarded. For, from the heights to which they are obliged to climb to meet their God, the world’s history, instead of offering, as to the ignorant crowd, a confused chaos, appears a majestic temple, which the invisible hand of God erects, and which rises to His glory above the rock of humanity.”*

Mr. Lincoln’s history, following the appointment to his

* Merle D’Aubigne, Pref. to Hist. of Reformation.

high office, is known to every child, is familiar as household words. And it fully justifies, no less than its earlier and more private portion, the *sui generis* character I have ventured to ascribe to it, by which I think it will be distinguished in the annals of the great rulers of the world. From the time he entered the capital, in so unexpected a manner, his history has been made up of a series of surprises and thrilling events, which can occur only in the most momentous periods. Never had an earthly ruler a more difficult task imposed upon him. He fully realized it, and felt the awful sublimity of his position, when in his second Annual message to Congress, he used these eloquent words :

“FELLOW CITIZENS, WE CANNOT ESCAPE HISTORY. WE OF THIS CONGRESS AND THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL BE REMEMBERED IN SPITE OF OURSELVES. NO PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE, OR INSIGNIFICANCE, CAN SPARE ONE OR ANOTHER OF US. THE FIERY TRIAL THROUGH WHICH WE PASS WILL LIGHT US DOWN IN HONOR OR DISHONOR, TO THE LATEST GENERATION.”

We identify him with all the acts of his ministers ;—with all the successes, defeats, delays, victories, and the final triumph of his great captains. Their connexion with the terrible struggle through which the nation has been passing, is what will hand their names down to posterity ; and their histories will constitute but so many separate passages, or distinct chapters, in his. His memory will be associated with campaigns, battles, sieges, and bombardments, such as the world had never seen, on so

grand a scale, before ; and such as, by the mercy of God, we pray it may never have occasion to see again.

The scenes of April, thirty days, the history of which surpasses all that mortal pen ever essayed, close the drama of his life. He appears in the subdued capital of the Confederacy, the very impersonation of his own words, "With malice towards none, with charity for all ;" and may well congratulate himself that his painful and difficult task is nearly accomplished, the insurrection suppressed ; whilst in the process, slavery, agreeably to the anticipations and predictions of some of the wisest men at the South, when warning their fellow citizens against secession,* has been probably completely extinguished. Again he hastens back to Washington, while his generals are arranging the capitulation of the armies they have overcome, revolving the weighty problems involved in the restoration of the seceded States.

The whole country is bright with illuminations, and the welkin rings with the plaudits of a rejoicing people, welcoming the return of peace, as the 14th of April dawns. It is already a marked day in the nation's calendar. Precisely four years before,—it being only another of those striking coincidences which have marked the progress of the late war,—the country was startled with the tidings of the evacuation of Fort Sumter. When all are unsuspecting, himself the most so of all, murder haunts the steps of the

* Hon. A. H. Stephens, in a speech in the Georgia Convention, 1861, pronounced it an "unwise and impolitic act," by which they might lose all and have their last slave wrenched from them, "by stern military rule, or by the vindictive decree of a universal emancipation, which may reasonably be expected to follow."

chief magistrate, and a tragedy such as actor never played in, and the mimic stage never saw before, was enacted. On the anniversary of the day, when four years before, the hearts of the people had been so stirred and drawn together almost as the heart of one man, annihilating for the time party lines and names, by the proclamation of the President for seventy-five thousand men, their hearts are drawn together again as one, by the news of his death by the hand of an assassin. The event is too recent, the impressions too deep, and the emotions of that awful day too strong, to need any comment of mine. Almost petrified, fairly stunned, we fled to God's altars in this house.* We recall the solemn and impressive ceremonies, amidst the throng assembled here, on the day devoted to his obsequies.† The funeral pageant, as the dead President was borne to the tomb in his loved Illinois, was observed by millions of the people. And now, again, is the nation assembled, in accordance with the invitation of his successor in office, to express its sense of bereavement, and commemorate the virtues of the illustrious deceased.

I am fully sensible of my incompetence to estimate aright such a character as that of Mr. Lincoln ; but will venture, nevertheless, to refer you to a few of what seem to me to have been its more striking traits.

He appears to have been distinguished for an unaffected

* The following invitation was issued, in printed form, by the Pastor and Session : " In view of the very mournful events at the seat of government, the people are invited to assemble for prayer in the First Presbyterian Church, at 4 o'clock this afternoon." A numerous congregation assembled.

† A highly appropriate discourse was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Maclean, at the request of the pastor. The church was crowded in every part.

simplicity of character, such as would be naturally developed by that primitive state of society and plain style of life, in which he passed the days of his youth. He was a child of nature, receiving his first impressions in sequestered scenes remote from cities and the marts of trade. He was a man of the people, and seems to have found it difficult, in his high station, to surround himself with those conventional forms and rules which are probably essential to every such station ; and could never assume that chilling reserve which some, similarly exalted, seem to think necessary to the preservation of dignity. He bore his honors meekly.

It is evident he possessed, in no small degree, *sagacity* in practical affairs, and knowledge of human nature. In the university at which he graduated he studied men rather than books. He understood the common mind. He knew what was fitted to move the masses. He weighed well the principles of human action. He understood what power there often is in mere delay, or waiting ; that a measure which would be altogether unsuccessful to-day, may be carried into successful execution to-morrow. This was illustrated again and again in the course of his administration. But he was called to deal not only with the common mind, but with experienced statesmen and practised politicians. And he so administered affairs in so trying a period of our history, during his first term, that leading and powerful men of his own party, notwithstanding their unmistakable wishes and plans for some different result, found his renomination an inevitable and foregone conclusion.

But it is to the excellence of his *private moral character* that we refer with the greatest satisfaction, on an occasion

like this. With such vast resources at his command, no advantage appears to have been taken of his position for his own emolument, or that of his family.* No bribe ever polluted his hands. He leaves, in this regard, as an inheritance to his children, and as a lesson to his country (God grant it may not be lost, needed so much as it is, in times like these !) a character of spotless integrity. It has been said of him, that he was a “man without vices.” Sure we are, that in the purity of his private morals, and in his habits of the strictest temperance, he is a worthy example to be set before the youth, and all the rulers and men of the earth. He appears to have cherished a deep sense of his dependence on Divine Providence. Many of his expressions, in his public utterances, indicate a familiar acquaintance with the Sacred Scriptures, such as could be acquired only, in continuance of the habits to which a pious mother had trained him, by a diligent perusal of them. And his repeated requests to be remembered in the prayers of Christian people, made, as we believe, not for form’s sake, or mere effect, but in the sincerity of a truthful nature, are deeply affecting.

To this purity of morals and spotless integrity, there seems to have been joined a most *amiable disposition* and a singular kindness and goodness of nature. There are no anecdotes told of Mr. Lincoln more honorable than those which relate to his condescension and attention to humble, friendless people, who had made their way to the doors of

* The administrator of his estate has informed the public, that it will not amount to more than \$75,000. A considerable portion of this must have been the fruit of his successful practice of the profession of law.

the White House, with some petition for relief, or act of clemency. He seemed never to forget that he was once lone and friendless himself. A woman's voice, an infant's wail, would cause that door to fly open, which was so hard of entrance to mere speculators and office-seekers. And may not Divine Providence have selected him for this very reason, or for this especially, to be the ruler in times which must necessarily bring so many bitter woes and griefs on private families and obscure men and women. He was one who from his natural kindness of disposition could do as much as any other to alleviate the pain and animosity which distinguish times of civil war. It has been said that the commanders of the armies sometimes complained, that when they passed a sentence which they conceived to be not more than just, the President was almost sure to temper its severity. And when the armies were at length victorious, it was this peculiar character that would have qualified him "to temper the pride of victory, to assuage the misfortunes which had been felt, and especially to show, which he was well qualified to do, that respect for valour on the opposite side, which has been so conspicuously displayed. He had, moreover, an authority (the authority of a man tried and proved) which no one else had, to temper that exasperation which always happens in civil strife."*

The close of his career shed a lustre on his character, and seemed almost to transfigure him. Above the smoke and flames of war, to adopt the language of one of our eloquent journalists, "he rose superior to the evil passions of the hour, and stood in Richmond a man less lofty in his gigantic per-

* Lord J. Russell, in Parliament, May 1.

son, than he was in gifts of soul. The army of the North had surrounded him with all the pomp and circumstance of the conqueror. Unintoxicated by power, moderate in the hour of triumph, as he had been firm in the hour of defeat, he stood upon the abandoned earthworks of Richmond with an outstretched hand which glowed for every man willing to grasp it in fraternity, with a genial human heart. No animosities, in that moment of dizzy triumph, blurred his intellect, or arrested his humanity. He rose to the level of a great opportunity. A tenderness of nature, a simple earnestness of human sympathy, taught him that souls of men can be subdued but by loftiness of soul. The advance of bayonets, and rifles, and artillery, had but brought him within reach of the Southern heart, and he grasped the opportunity in a fashion, that, whether the suggestion of intellect, or the promptings of a grand soul, touched the key-note of true statesmanship."

May his mantle, and a double portion of his spirit, fall upon his successor ; and the influence of his great example not be lost upon the people over whom he ruled, and who have cause so deeply to deplore his death ! Then it may be said of him as an eminent historian has said of one of the most conspicuous men of antiquity, whom he so closely resembled in his fate ; "The conspirators had imagined that twenty poniards would suffice to take Caesar's life. But never was Caesar so truly living, so powerful, so formidable as he was when their blows had pierced the mere case and garment of Caesar, his worn and weary mortal frame." *

This day has been assigned not merely to mourning, but

* Michelet.

to another duty altogether germane to it, to wit : “ for again humbling ourselves before Almighty God, in order that the bereavement may be sanctified to the nation.”

Afflictions are sent for our humiliation. They are not to be treated as of no account, or submitted to with stoical apathy, or interpreted as only one of the mysterious methods of expressing the Divine loving-kindness. There is no alchemy by which we can transmute chastisements and judgments into smiles of approbation. When the Most High uses the rod of correction, he means that we should feel and cry out under his hand. It becomes us to “ consider ” in the day of adversity, and “ not despise the chastening of the Lord.” Our first great duty is deeply to realize that our afflictions come from his hand. It has been one of the most hopeful signs, that the acknowledgment has been so general, not only from all classes of religionists, even errorists, who are so apt to go astray whenever the doctrine of God’s sovereignty is involved, but worldly men also, who so seldom recognize his government, that the loss of the President, although it was brought about by an assassin, was nevertheless in accordance with his providential will, “ his most holy, wise, and powerful will preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.” Then let us meekly and patiently bow to that will. “ Be still and know that he is God ; he will be exalted among the nations, he will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46, 10.)

Let us humble ourselves on account of our sins, and honestly inquire what those sins are which are rebuked of Him. O may the fiery trial through which we have been passing, “ purely purge away all our dross, and take away all

our tin. And then will the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, restore our judges as at the first, and our counsellors as at the beginning : afterward we shall be called The city of righteousness, The faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." (Isa. 1, 25—27.)