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ADDRESS

LUTHERAN CHURCHES

McAlisterville and Thompsontown,

THURSDAY, JUNE 1st, 1865,

BEING A DAY APPOINTED BY

THE PRESIDENT AS A DAY OF

HUMILIATION,

In Honor and Memory of His Excellency

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

Late President of the United States,

BY

REV. N. L. SHINDEL,

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCHES.

Preliminary Correspondence.

McAlisterville, June 25th 1865.

To THE REV. N. L. SHINDEL,

Dear Sir,

We the undersigned citizens of McAlisterville, being present and hearing a sermon preached by you on the evening of last past day, June 1st, we ask you to favor us with a copy for publication, if you see proper. By so doing you will much oblige the following Committee, and many citizens.

FRANKLIN CASSEL, HUGH McALISTER, RUFEN CAVENY, J. T. McALISTER, JAMES DAVIS.

McAlisterville, June 25th, 1865.

To F. CASSEL, R. CAVENY AND OTHERS.

Your note, requesting a copy of the sermon delivered on the day of our National Fast is at hand. In reply I would say that it was not intended for publication, and did I follow my own conviction, would not consent to give it. But as you have considered it worthy of publication, and have addressed me for a copy, I yield to your wishes and herewith furnish you a copy. Do with it as you think best.

Yours Truly,

N. L. SHINDEL.

THE ADDRESS.

We are assembled again in the sanctuary of God, in obedience to a call issued by the Chief Executive of the nation.

During the last four years, that "have tried men's souls," tried the permanency of our Republic, frequent calls, have proceeded from the same Mansion, but not from the same heart. Often have we assembled here and our houses of worship have resounded with the voice of thanksgiving and praise then again have we prostrated ourselves as humble supplicants, confessing our many sins, both as individuals and as a nation and unitedly have we implored the Most High to vouchsafe unto us peace and happiness.

This long looked for and prayed for period has, we believe arrived. Our hopes of final success have been realized and we are at peace. But while this is the case we have also realized the truthfulness of the declaration that there is no bloom without the blight. No sun without the cloud, and no joy but is soon overwhelmed with sorrow. A nation exalted may be soon speedily humiliated.

The hand that matured plans for the safety and welfare of the nation has gone to Him who gave it. The hand that held, with an iron grasp, the helm of the ship of state, while rocked and tossed by the storm of political strife and war's wreckage, lies palsied and cold in death—unseen in the grave. ABRAHAM LINCOLN is no more, assassinated by the vilest of wretches and killed. Gone, while standing as Moses, on Pisgah's top, and gazing into a land made glorious, because made free. Gone, while the stars in our nationality beamed in beauty and shone over hill and vale, forest and field, river, lake and ocean. Gone, as the last armed rebel was fleeing and the last echo of war's rattle was dying away in the distance. He sleeps his last sleep, and as we gather around, the spot that holds his remains and gaze upon it, already moistened by a nation's tears, and as we touch the white marble standing in silent beauty to his memory, we exclaim, "How are the mighty fallen!"

It may be that we can, at this late hour, consider the circumstances connected with the life and death of our late President, more dispassionately, with less fear of being influenced by any improper spirit of opinion than if we had immediately undertaken the task.

It is true it seems but yesterday that the unwelcome news flashed over the wires, startling a nation. But yesterday that the funeral cortege ended its journey and the body consigned to the tomb.

Every where as the solemn procession passed, a nation's love was manifested in tears, in sighs and in mourning.

That the departure of great and useful men should be particularly and with proper solemnity noticed, is founded upon reason and not without precedent in the sacred volume. Josiah died—the tears of Israel flowed, and to his memory the solemn dirge was sung.

But why do we ask for either argument or example to arouse our feelings or awake our sympathies under circumstances, such as have passed before us. The death of the great and good and noble benefactors of their race fills the heart, and it can only unburden itself by an outburst of grief.

At the death of Washington, at the mere mention of whose name a thrill of patriotism trembles upon the altar of every heart, a nation was mournfully moved, and they wept. All the attention and service that a nation could render to enshrine his memory and perpetuate his fame were freely given, and to-day, notwithstanding many years have elapsed, his memory is still cherished, and around every hearthstone he is honored and remembered as the "Father of his country."

Such, also, and indeed more particularly has been the death of Abraham Lincoln. Alas! how the tidings moved us, chilled our hearts, curdled our blood!

But how different were the circumstances attending the death of these two great men. Washington died quietly at an advanced age—he was surrounded by family and friends—many, no doubt, were there to minister to his wants, wipe the cold sweat from his brow and address him in words of kindness and cheer. He was conscious that his departure was drawing near—that soon all earthly glory would vanish from his reason, and his soul appear before God, calmly, and as serene as a summer air, he breathed his last.

A nation beheld his departure with sorrow, and they wept. But while they wept, they looked upon it as a customary providence, were submissive to the will of God, and trusted in his sovereignty. While it is true, we believe that our people are disposed to be submissive, and to regard it providential, we cannot but observe a marked difference in the circumstances attending the last days of Mr. LINCOLN. His assassination and death was the result of long, deep and wicked deliberation. Four years ago it was made necessary that he should proceed quietly and secretly to the Capitol, in order to escape the dagger of the vile assassin who then awaited his arrival at the city of Baltimore.

Notwithstanding many made light of the matter and regarded it as a ridiculous farce, yet it must be confessed that during the four years of his administration, he has been followed by that same wicked spirit, culminating at last in what was then fully intended his cruel murder. Coming at the time it did, however, it was simply the last struggle—the last blow of a wicked and gigantic war against the life of the nation, a feeble straw floating upon the surface, at which the drowning man in his death struggles vainly grasped.

It was a perfect exhibition of the spirit of this rebellion—an offspring of southern institutions.

All the circumstances connected with it were planned with remarkable coolness and the instrument of death leveled and discharged before a large and fashionable audience. How sudden and unexpected. Neither the victim of this foul deed nor the nation has a moment for preparation or reflection. As a clap of thunder in a clear sky alarms, so indeed was this nation awakened to a proper realization of its humility and sorrow. Scarcely had the voice of rejoicing over victories achieved, died away, the chiming of bells were yet echoing along the hills and the valleys, were borne upon the breeze of heaven, to every village and hamlet, the sound of gladness was swept along on every gale—a people long afflicted were congratulating themselves upon the prospects of a speedy recovery. The national sky, which four years had been darkened by cloud and storm, were rapidly brightening, and many rays of the sun of peace had already warmed and gladdened a nation's heart, and all eyes were directed to him as the instrument, in the hand of God, who should soon introduce us to a nation disenthralled and direct our vision to the sun of peace in his full meridian glory.

It was in the midst of such prospects and hopes, in the midst of bonfires and illuminations that this dark deed was committed. O how wonderful and how mysterious are thy providences, Lord of hosts. "How are the mighty fallen!"

In venturing to speak of his life and character, we confess our inability, at least to do him justice. But he needs no eulogy from us. In the great purposes of God his work is finished. He has performed his part of the stupendous programme, and death has taken him beyond our censure, and through grace far above our praise. What his professions of piety were, we were not very familiar. We know, however, that he was a constant reader of the Bible, and in all his public acts seemed to be guided and influenced by its solemn teachings. He was regular upon divine worship and observant of the means of grace, and we are informed that when he visited Gettysburg and stood upon the ground just consecrated as a nation's burial place, here he solemnly dedicated himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Though never before had he made a public profession, but there, surrounded as he was by the graves of the noble dead, and standing upon the very ground, where was fought a battle, that more than any other, decided the fate of his Country! He was deeply impressed and yielded himself to hisavior. So then, if we are correctly informed, we are not ignorant in whom he believed and what were his hopes.

As a man he seems to have had impressed upon him the stamp of greatness, and had he enjoyed the advantage of early training, would have towered far above many of his fellows. In whatever sphere in life, he moved the faithful and the poor always found a friend—always ready and willing to render all the assistance in his power to the distressed. We see this trait of his character fully evinced in his public life. When the lives of many were placed, as it were, in his hands, when it required, but his sanction to insure their execution, he withheld that justice seemed to demand, and through the kindness of his heart said to the guilty offender, "Live!"

In principles he was correct and pure, a mind deliberate and strong—a judgment discriminating and ready—always himself and always great. When victory crowned our banners and success attended our efforts—when all appeared hopeful and bright and when a nation's heart bled at the prospect, he was unusually calm, yet appreciating the situation gave God the praise. If cloud and storm overcast our national sky, and the thundering of battle rolled along the banks of the Potomac and shook the walls of his mansion, if the lightning of discharged instruments of war and death illuminated the surrounding hills and cast a melancholy reflection upon the dome of the Capitol, when "dread fear" crept over a disappointed and disheartened people, he was unmoved. If the tide of party ebbed and flowed, pressing on every side, if confusion of sentiment and interest presented themselves, he stood firm like the rock in mid-ocean lifts its mystic top above the waves and remains unshaken by the storms which agitate the waters." No ble man, pure and good, a "bosom transparent and deep, in the bottom of whose heart was rooted every tender and sympathetic virtue." He has fallen, but not without bearing with him the love and admiration of a great people. He has fallen a martyr to liberty, the brightest martyr that ever crimsoned the throne of Liberty, with human blood. He has fallen but there linger around his grave many memories of his truth and gratefulness, and his spirit is followed by the exultations and prayers of four millions of a race, whose shackles unloosed lay harmless at their feet. He is dead, but his record lives—lives engraven upon the hearts of his countrymen.

Whatever may have been his faults, if faults he had, and however much he may have been censured, ridiculed and slandered it is an indisputable fact that there was not a heart, within our vast domain that beat higher and warmer for the glory of his country, none who felt a greater interest, and none who were more willing to make sacrifices for her peace, safety and happiness. The Union one and inseparable—the Union as framed by our forefathers and made sacred by their trials and love, seemed to be the climax of his

ambition. When inquired of in reference to southern institutions, he replied, "My duty is to save the Country. I will save the Union if it must be at the sacrifice of their food and cherished institution. How faithfully he kept his word and how far he succeeded in his effort, we know, the world knows, and generations yet unborn, will learn if it with proud and grateful hearts. As Washington's name is honored, and as he has ever been looked up to as the instrument in the hand of God, of bringing into existence and developing this great republic, so indeed will the time come all prejudices having been buried, that the name of LINCOLN will be passed around every fireside, and with even more pleasing and grateful remembrance, as the instrument in the hand of God, of saving our country. Honor to whom honor is due.

While, however, the mighty have fallen, the great and good have been laid low; over whose deaths the country has manifested its humility and sorrow; we must not forget the thousands of brave and noble boys who have also fallen; who have offered themselves as willing sacrifices upon the altar of their country; who lay unobserved, perhaps by the multitude in their cold and lonely graves. Let their sacrifices be fully appreciated! Let their memories have a seat in our hearts! Let us fly on the wings of thought to the distant spot where sleeps their remains and bedeck their homely graves with garlands of flowers! Let us speak of their names, and of their glorious deeds with gratitude; and with hearts lifted to God in thankfulness try to emulate them in their devotion to country. For some of us it will be a proud answer to give to the inquiry—

"Where is your son, your husband, your father and your brother?" to say "he died for his country." He sleeps away yonder near the battle ground—a battle that spoke well for the valor of our men, and aided much in bringing to a favorable issue this terrible contest. We may miss them at home, a link in the family chain has been broken, but they rest with the love and admiration of a great people hovering around their graves. Methinks I hear, warm from the heart of my patriotic countrymen the solemn declaration, "peace to their ashes."

During the four years of war; but more particularly in this last cruel act of rebellion, two important facts are forcibly presented to the mind.

1. We have revealed, as already intimated the deep wickedness of this rebellion, far deeper indeed than we were wont to consider it. Not content with the most inhuman treatment of our prisoners of war, many of whom were destitute of food, raiment and shelter, compelled even in sickness and pain to lay on the orchard sand of Belle Isle, a mould in the damp dungeon of Libby—many have been reduced to mere skeletons—while many a starved veteran's bones lay bleaching near the "dead line." Not content with this we say, they resort to the degraded alternative, and in cold blood assassinate and murder noble and defenceless citizens. How lost to honor and principle—to what a great extent have they departed from those fine impulses that move upon the hearts of the morally enlightened and refined. They have evinced a barbarism that casts the dark ages into the shade and causes humanity to blush. Their retribution awaits them. Let justice be done and whatever may be our private judgments or opinions let the laws of the land be executed—let those who have been guilty of treason, suffer treason's penalty. Let those who have violated the law and have endeavored to destroy the Government, that has fostered and nourished them, receive the condemnation their offences merit. The peace, safety and happiness of the country demands this. Humanity demands this. The wounded fathers, sons, and husbands demand it—a nation insulted and humiliated demands it—the blood of our countrymen demands it, yet a voice seems to come up from the graves of our fallen heroes saying let treason meet its reward.

This being the demand, where is the man who has a spark of patriotism in his bosom or who has the least regard for law, order and justice, or believes in the sacredness of government will say nay. There may have been some, but it seems to us, that the cold remains of a murdered Chief Magistrate as it lay be-

fore them, "marred by traitors," has fully convinced them of their error and has taught them that treason is a crime—a crime the highest in the whole catalogue of crimes and must be punished.

2. There is another fact which has been brought out and it is one in which every American may be proud. It has been made apparent during the great struggle through which we have passed, that our government is one of beauty and permanency—that it cannot be destroyed at the will of evil and designing men; but founded as it is and defended by the Great Power and a noble people, all earthly efforts to subvert it are unavailing.

The great and leading idea, of the leaders of the rebellion, was to destroy this government; and upon its ruins build a great slave empire. They imagined this government was assuming or would assume a position antagonistic to the creation of the contemplated empire; and in order to face these measures they inaugurated this war. They have prosecuted it with a fierceness and barbarism unparalleled in the history of the world. Finding that they were fast failing—that Gen. Grant, the great hewer down of Slave Confederacy, was tightening the ends, that walls in the shape of the sturdy sons of the North, were almost around them; they sought to parody our efforts—create anarchy and confusion leave a nation without its head, and thus if possible, create a cleftvice, through which, weasel like, they might escape. But again are they baffled and disappointed. Though they succeeded in laying low a noble ruler—though they succeeded in darkening a brighter star, yet even crasing it from a nation's firmament; another instantly appears, with almost equal brilliancy to cheer the sad heart of our people. In the great design they failed. Instead of dispiriting and causing us to languish in the great work; it inspired us to new and nobler deeds more firmly united our hearts, and gave us stronger determination to stand to the storm, until the last armed traitor was vanquished. While it had this effect upon us, it showed to the world that, although a Ruler in America may be dethroned, another soon takes his place—not a moment lost, the government in all its departments never ceases but moves harmoniously along. A glorious country is this in which we live! The sun never shone ever a better nor let fall a ray upon a brighter land. Through the pain and struggle of the revolution was it born, for many years it grew and waxed strong; yet it must be confessed it had within it the seed of its own destruction. That seed was fostered and nourished by treason until 1861 when it burst forth in all its deformity and fierceness, but to its own destruction. For four long years we have battled with this element; until to-day we find it prostrate at our feet and a nation Eves.

It is true, as a lion, we long slept—sleep, indeed, while ball and shell were crumbling the walls of Sumter: and it was not until the danger became imminent, that he aroused from that slumber shook his heavy mane, and leaped upon the enemy. It required months and years of experience to teach us the character of those with whom we were battling, and what was really necessary in order to meet them and secure our peace and safety. We have been renewed and regenerated, made more glorious—even in the midst of battle and blood we have grown. We grew at Bull Run, at Pittsburg Landing, at Vicksburg, at Port Hudson, at Gettysburg and in the Wilderness, &c., We grew in population—we grew in resources, in wisdom, power and truth. We grew in conscience and in liberty, and now, that the last sound of war has been hushed, a nation mighty and free will rise in the greatness of its strength; and by the aid of Almighty God go forth, performing a great and glorious mission.

Let us in conclusion consider some lessons that have been taught, particularly in this last cruel act. 1. We have here a lesson of providence. We have learned that God is over all—the Ruler and Governor of all the nations of the earth. His control not only extends to the mightiest orb that flies through space, but also to the minutest particle that lies at our feet. He notices not only the fall of the great and good of his creation,

but also the sparrow falls not without his knowledge. We presume there are but few who disbelieve this great truth, and believing it, cannot help but see His hand in the great struggle and in every event of it.

Defeat taught us many salutary lessons—it showed us the folly of trying to win before we slew, and to continue thus, was but tramping the road to inevitable ruin and death.

The providence of God has taught us that treason is a crime deep, dark and hateful, upon which high Heaven frowns and at which a christian people shudder. It has taught us that human bondage is a nation's curse—that subverts the great fundamental principles of the gospel, and towers to the level of the brute its victims and its advocates; and the only course for a nation that wishes to be great and glorious, is to sound the voice of freedom until its echo flies round the world.

We cannot fail, especially, to observe the providence of God in the death of the President. Notwithstanding many plans were devised—plots laid to take his life yet in the whole term of his office he was mercifully protected. His work was not yet done, his mission was not yet performed, and it was not until God saw that his part of the great task had been completed, that he gave permission and the foul murderer succeeds in his butchery.

"It must need be that offences come, but so unto that man by whom the offence cometh."

Does it not appear, providential, my dear brethren, that ABRAHAM LINCOLN should be spared until the rebellion was riven, shattered and dismantled, and struggling in its last spasm over the gulf that lay wide stretched for its reception. Does it not appear providential that he should be permitted to hold the helm until the last storm had been passed and the last angry billow had been overcome and the old ship was pointing, and within hailing distance of the harbor of peace; a wonderful providence indeed, wonderful and mysterious though it be let us be submissive.

2. We learn that government is divine. This appears from the declarations of scripture and from matters of fact. Government is of God. "The powers that be are ordained of God: therefore let every soul submit to the powers.—Every individual that is protected in his person and property, enjoys the benefits and privileges of his government, is bound to yield obedience and aid in its maintenance. We conclude that it is divine from the fact that it has withstood great efforts to subvert it, God has defended and preserved it, the mighty powers which were hurled against it have failed and as a rock along the ocean's shores has withstood the long and severe dashing of the waves, so has our government stood noble and strong. Beloved America! the land of our fathers, the land of our birth! we love your institutions! your fair fields—your mountains and valleys, your lakes and rivers and your rolling ocean. May the Lord of Hosts continue to preserve and bless thee and having brought thee out of the furnace cause His face to shine upon thee continually.

3. We should be lead in humility to confess our sins, both individually and as a nation. That this dispensation may be sanctified to our good we should prostrate ourselves before God and plead for pardon. And to day as a nation of mourners, assembled before Him, let our hearts and our united prayers go up, as the prayer of one man, let us lay our petitions at His feet and in faith await His blessing in our churches—in the closet and around the family altar let the voice of prayer be heard, and this prove that we are a "Nation whose God is the Lord," in whom alone we trust.

A clergyman in Mobile went to Gen. Granger, and asked him if he proposed to compel the rebel clergy to pray for Andrew Johnson. "Compel you!" was the General's reply; "why if your prayers don't do the President of the United States any more good than they have done Jeff Davis, it is of no sort of consequence about your prayers any way."

Quilt when requested to take time by the forelock, expressed a doubt whether the old fellow had any hair left to take hold of.