

In this event we have great and impressive lessons of the vanity of all earthly greatness, and the need of living in a state of preparation for death. It is a familiar truth that life is short and uncertain, and yet the reiteration of it was a charge of God to prophets and holy men of old, the voice said cry—What?—All flesh is grass. When a nation is called to go to the house of mourning, yea when the whole civilized world bends its step in the same direction, is not the heart impressed? Amid much havoc of no ordinary character, and the fall of brave men as the thickly scattered leaves of autumn, this event from its very nature stands out with awe inspiring and commanding power, arresting attention to the verity of death. It is sublimely a word on the wheels; the wheel of Providence has brought round a truth right before the face of living men, that they may lay it to heart, the present is ours, to-morrow we know not what may be. How soon changed! Where the power? He that but yesterday directed movements of the highest character affecting the homes, hearts, and the future of a continent, is cold, silent, dead! The great leveller death in marching his rounds takes away the ruler from his seat of power, as well as the beggar from the dunghill. Without question this event says—Are you ready to die?

The great question of slavery is again necessarily brought forward. Of the political position of parties we express no opinion. The late President was however prominently an actor in these scenes of world-wide interest which have passed in rapid succession of late years, in the United States. His public course is ended, a nation mourns his loss, he has gone to give in his account at the bar of a higher than man. If to act well our part is to secure honour, then for Abraham Lincoln remains a crown of endless fame and the blessing of humanity for ever. Called to a place of great responsibility in a time of signal danger, he brought to the discharge of his work an unimpeachable integrity, and displayed indubitable proofs of great statesmanship, united with the promptings of a mighty heart. The name of Lincoln is indelibly associated with the removal of the bonds of slavery from four millions. That blot of slavery we regard as the deepest on the escutcheon of America; now however it is in the process of being rubbed out. Freedom, glorious freedom, has an onward march in these latter days; her triumphs have been seen in the emancipation of the eight hundred thousand slaves of the British colonies, of forty millions of serfs in the Russian empire; the present hour beholds the struggles into birth of the four millions of America. The South had the misfortune to be educated in a false belief on this question. A true and enlightened opinion in spite of resistance however is prevailing in the North. The chosen man by Providence and the people to lead on the consummation, was the honoured, mighty dead.

“If,” said he, “we should suppose American slavery one of those offences which in the Providence of God must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as was due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discover that there is any departure from those Divine attributes which believers in the living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that the mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if it be God’s will that it continue until the wealth piled by bondsmen, by 250 years 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 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said, that ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’”