

**THE DIVINELY PREPARED RULER, AND, THE FIT
END OF TREASON: DISCOURSES DELIVERED AT
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, BY INVITATION OF THE
SESSION, ON THE SABBATH FOLLOWING THE
BURIAL OF PRESIDENT LINKOLN, MAY 7, 1865**

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The Divinely Prepared Ruler, And, The Fit End of Treason: Discourses Delivered at the First presbyterian church, Springfield, Illinois, by invitation of the session, on the sabbath following the burial of president Linkoln, may 7, 1865 by Henry A. Nelson

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HENRY A. NELSON

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THE FIT END OF TREASON,

TWO DISCOURSES DELIVERED AT

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, MAY 7, 1865,

ON THE

SABBATH FOLLOWING THE BURIAL OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN,

BY REV. HENRY A. NELSON,

PASTOR FIRST PRESB'N. CHURCH, ST. LOUIS.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLS., May 7th, 1865.

REV. H. A. NELSON, D.D.,

St. Louis, Mo.

DEAR SIR: Having had the pleasure of listening to your sermons delivered yesterday in the First Presbyterian Church of this city, and being deeply impressed with the pertinency and truthfulness of the views therein contained; believing, also, that the dissemination of those views at this time cannot fail to be useful, we respectfully request a copy of each for publication.

Yours, truly,

R. OFFICER,
JOHN WILLIAMS,
JACOB BUNN,
S. H. MELVIN,
J. W. LANE,
B. F. FOX,
G. JAYNE,
FRANK W. TRACY,
W. H. HAYDEN,
H. B. BUCK.

ST. LOUIS, May 9, 1865.

GENTLEMEN:

I deemed it a precious privilege, on the Sabbath after we laid the body of our murdered President in the tomb, to preach to a large concourse of his former neighbors, in the church in which he used to worship. I felt the responsibility to be very great, and am much comforted by your assurance that it was discharged acceptably.

The views which I expressed, and of which you speak approvingly, are

essentially the same which are uttered from thousands of pulpits, and platforms, and presses all over our land, and all round the world. I can, however, imagine that discourses privileged to be delivered, *at that place and time*, may have an interest which they owe to that circumstance, quite independent of their own merit. Just as the pictures of Mr. LINCOLN's modest home in your city, and of the horse that drew his family carriage, or even a sprig or leaf plucked near his tomb must now be precious to all who can possess them, so I can imagine that many may like to read discourses occasioned by his death, and delivered so near his tomb, so soon after it received his remains. If this should give them a currency which they would not otherwise have; if thus they can (as you suggest) be the means of disseminating truthful and pertinent views on the subjects of which they treat, I ought not to withhold them from circulation.

Gentlemen: You and the people of Springfield, whom you represent, have a most enviable privilege. You are the favored guardians of a tomb which will be visited by tens of thousands of your countrymen, and by the lovers of virtue and liberty from all other lands. You are entrusted by your country with the keeping, for her and for mankind, of the most revered form that has walked the earth in this century. I thank you, gentlemen, for the honor you do me, in giving my humble advocacy of LINCOLN's principles this grateful association with LINCOLN's tomb.

HENRY A. NELSON.

To R. Officer, John Williams, Jacob Bunn, and others.

THE DIVINELY PREPARED RULER.

Ps. 78: 70—72—"He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds; from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."

This text brings prominently before us that remarkable divine election and providence whereby David was brought from the humble circumstances and occupations of a peasant, to the high position and responsibilities of a monarch. It also suggests a connection between the pursuits of his early life and the noble character exemplified in his eventful and glorious reign.

The appropriateness of these topics to this occasion is manifest. We mourn for one whom God chose to rule a great people during a most wonderful, most critical, most glorious period of their history, and whom He trained for that great work in an early life, not unlike that which formed and developed the mind and body of king David.

When David is first introduced, in the scripture history, (1 Sam. xvi,) we behold him a bright and handsome boy, "ruddy and of a beautiful countenance," according to the simple and graphic Bible phrase. He comes in from the pastures, where he has been keeping the flock of his father,

into the presence of the "man of God," who has been sent to Bethlehem, to anoint one from among the sons of Jesse, to be the reprobate Saul's successor to the throne of Israel. Samuel's prophetic insight recognizes, in the ruddy strippling, the elect of God to that high office, and signifies that divine designation by anointing him with oil. God accompanies the external symbol, which He has ordered, with such bestowment of His own Spirit as is needful to rouse, to quicken, and thenceforth to direct the before latent royalty of young David's soul. From that time, as we follow his steps in the thrilling record, along the adventurous and eventful track of his life, we are continually sensible of the presence of truest nobility. All that can be expressed by the epithets *heroic, princely, royal*, is habitually exemplified. The few instances of unworthy, unmanly, even criminal behavior, (which are by no means to be disguised or extenuated,) are felt to be exceptional, in strange and violent contrast with the prevailing character, which still, notwithstanding those dreadful exceptions, stands forth one of the noblest in human history.

His administration of the government, after he came to the throne, was so wise, so able, so faithful, so conscientiously conformed to the divinely-given constitution of government, and withal so full of evidence of his honest and affectionate regard for the welfare of his people, that inspiration has called him "a man after God's own heart," and has regarded it as not dishonorable even to Messiah, to make "Son of David" one of His most prominent designations.

The evident excellencies of David's administration could hardly be more expressively set forth in so brief a summa-

ry, than they are in the text: "So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."

The pregnant significance of the word "fed" arises from its allusion to the humble labor of his early life, the care of sheep, so graphically described in the preceding verses, in which the writer does not fail to call our attention, by the most signal and touching instance of it, to that considerate and tender carefulness which so gracefully adorns the rugged strength of the manliest character, and which is so needful alike in the humble guardian of a flock and the supreme ruler of a people; the influence of which descends so sweetly and so benignly from the lofty summit of power into the low vales of society; floats over the land in all its breezes; tempers (without abating) the valor of its men; and covers with beneficent protection its women, its children, and its homes.

The Psalmist emphasizes, in his description of David's reign, the "integrity of his heart" and the "skillfulness of his hands"—not undervaluing (you see) that tact, that fertility of resources, that executive ability, that political wisdom, for which a ruler has so much occasion; yet exalting to its due pre-eminence "integrity of heart," upright, uncorrupt, honest purpose.

If President Lincoln had lived to fulfill his second term of administration as worthily as he did the first; if then retiring from that high seat and from all public employment, he had lived to a good old age among you, his neighbors and friends, and had here peacefully died, there is no need of doubting, no propriety in seeming to doubt, that those pages of history on which his name would have been