

**AN ADDRESS AT THE
FUNERAL OF HON. ROGER
SHERMAN BALDWIN,
FEBRUARY 23, 1863**

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An Address at the Funeral of Hon. Roger Sherman Baldwin, February 23, 1863 by Samuel W. S. Dutton

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SAMUEL W. S. DUTTON

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ADDRESS

AT THE FUNERAL OF

Hon. Roger Sherman Baldwin,

FEBRUARY 23, 1863,

BY

SAMUEL W. S. DUTTON,

PASTOR OF THE NORTH CHURCH IN NEW HAVEN.

—♦♦—
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A D D R E S S.

THE shadow of a great bereavement is upon us. A strong pillar of our community and of our commonwealth is broken. One who has long been universally respected and admired for his eminent power, worth, and usefulness; who has borne the highest offices in the gift of our State, both within its own sphere and in its relations to the National Government, and borne them with excellent ability and integrity; one who has for many years been in the foremost rank of that high and honorable profession which is employed in ascertaining and administering justice; one who, in the sacred relations of domestic life, was regarded with tender and reverent affection by wife, and children, and children's children, and a wide circle of kindred—has passed away; and his lifeless body is now before us, ready for the last earthly resting place. And he has passed away *unexpectedly*, creating the general feeling of surprise and disappointment, as well as of grief. For, though he had reached his threescore years and ten, we did not realize it; and none would have thought it, who observed his erect form, his firm, quick step, his undimmed eye, his unabated natural force, and especially the fullness of his power in the services of his profession. His death seems like the fall of a star from its zenith. Considering his vigor, the longevity of his family, and his remarkable health (for he has not had a day of real sickness until this fatal one for more than forty years), we had expected to rely on him during many years yet of undiminished useful-

ness. And on his professional brethren, who are assembled here in sorrow, the blow follows quickly after one recently received by them in the death of another eminent member of the Bar in this city, near in age and very near in friendship to him whom we now mourn.* One of the last public acts of the friend whom we bury to-day, was to assist in bearing to burial the body of his friend and ours. United in life, in death they are scarcely divided. These twin lights of the law—alas, they shine no more among the living!

Before we convey to the grave the body of our friend, whom the places that have known him will know no more forever, it is right that we should soothe our sorrow, and gather lessons of wisdom, by a brief review of his life and estimate of his character.

ROGER SHERMAN BALDWIN was born in New Haven, January 4th, 1793, the second son of Simeon and Rebecca (Sherman) Baldwin. He was of the best New England stock on both the paternal and the maternal side. His father, who passed away from among us only twelve years since, in his ninetieth year, universally respected and beloved for his sound judgment, fairness, candor, integrity, benevolence, and piety, was Representative of the State in the Congress of the United States, and for many years was one of the Judges of the Superior Court and the Supreme Court of Errors; the third in the line of descent from John Baldwin, who was one of the Puritan emigrants, that accompanied their pastors, Rev. Messrs. Davenport, Prudden, and Whitfield, from the Counties of Bucks, Surrey, and Kent in England, and began the settlement of New Haven, Milford, and Guilford; himself afterward uniting with thirty-four other proprietors to settle the

* Hon. Dennis Kimberly.

town of Norwich. His mother was the daughter of Roger Sherman, of New Haven, justly renowned as one of the Committee which reported the Declaration of Independence, and one of the signers of that instrument, one of the ablest members of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States, a Representative and Senator in Congress, a profound and sagacious statesman, an upright man, and an exemplary Christian. This mother died when he was two years old; and her place was vacant till five years after, when it was admirably filled by her sister, Elizabeth, another daughter of Hon. Roger Sherman, whose care and love he was permitted to share, and to whom he was allowed to pay filial reverence and affection, till thirteen years since, in 1850, when she deceased at the age of eighty-five. Such were his privileges as to parentage and early training. His preparation for College in its first stages was with a teacher in New Canaan, and afterwards in the Hopkins Grammar School of this city, in which he has always taken a deep interest, and of which he was the oldest surviving trustee. He entered Yale College in the autumn of 1807, and graduated at the early age of eighteen, with honor, speaking at Commencement an Oration "On the Genius of a Free Government." Immediately after graduation he studied law in his father's office in this city, and in the earliest Law School of the country, that at Litchfield, under the able and brilliant tuition of Judge Reeve and Judge Gould. At the termination of his course of legal study, Judge Gould wrote to his father, Judge Baldwin, "I restore your son, somewhat improved, as I hope and believe. At any rate, *no* student from our office ever passed a better examination." He was admitted to the Bar in 1814, and devoted himself to the practice of the law with unremitting industry, with intense mental application, and with enthusiastic love, for fifty years, with the exception of the

periods when he was engaged in special political service; and these could hardly be considered an exception, for he was more or less occupied with law all the time, though never to the neglect of his official duties.

In 1826, Mr. Baldwin was a member of the New Haven Common Council, and in 1828 one of the Aldermen. In 1837 he was elected a member of the State Senate, and was re-elected in 1838, when he was chosen President *pro tempore* of that body. In 1840 he was elected a Representative from New Haven in the General Assembly, and was chosen again in the following year. In 1844 he was Governor of Connecticut, and was chosen again to the same office the next year, 1845. By the death of Hon. Jabez W. Huntington, Nov. 1st, 1847, there was a vacancy in the representation of Connecticut in the Senate of the United States. It was the duty of the Governor of the State to fill the vacancy by appointment until it could be filled by election at the meeting of the Legislature in the following May. Governor Bissell, it was said, had not a moment's hesitation as to whom he should select. He at once sent the appointment to Governor Baldwin; and he took his seat in the Senate of the United States, at the beginning of the session in December, 1847. At the session of the Legislature in the following May, he was elected to fill the unexpired term of Judge Huntington, which continued till 1851. Since that period he has devoted himself exclusively to his profession, holding no official position, except that he was one of the two Electors at large on the ticket for the election of President Lincoln, and, by appointment of Gov. Buckingham, was a member of the "Peace Congress," so called, which was invited by the Governor and Legislature of Virginia to meet in Washington, shortly before the inauguration of our present chief magistrate.

Having thus traced the outline of Governor Baldwin's life, let us now consider his services and characteristics as a lawyer and as a statesman.

We have seen that the chief part of more than fifty years has been devoted by him to close application to the study and practice of law. Let us then, first, consider him as a Lawyer.

Some of his moral qualities deserve here the earliest notice, since they underlay his services and character in the department of law, and indeed in the department of State as well.

Governor Baldwin was earnestly devoted to the right. He had an ardent love and conscientious regard for that of which law is designed to be the expression and application, *justice*. This he observed and sought through life with almost passionate zeal, and with pure and strict integrity. No temptation, no consideration of personal profit or reputation, or any other consideration, could make him swerve from it. Justice was enthroned in his heart, and in his intellect. He would indeed, as in fidelity bound, present the strongest view of his client's case, for he regarded himself not as a judge but as an advocate; yet never in violation of the truth. Indeed, he was confident that, on the whole, taking the weight of his own character into view, truthful pleading was the best pleading for his clients.

Naturally connected with this love of the right, was his peculiar regard for those whose rights are wrested from them, or infringed, or disregarded. This made him a strong friend of that race who have encountered an extraordinary share of earth's wrongs and miseries, especially of those among them who are deprived of liberty. This trait came to him by hereditary title on both sides of the house, and was strengthened by filial associations and memories. For he was the grandson on his mother's side of one who, as member of a Committee for this nation at its birth, reported for adoption, and signed with his own hand for publication to the world, the declaration