

THE
A M E R I C A N
NATIONAL PREACHER.

A
REPOSITORY OF ORIGINAL SERMONS,

FROM
LIVING MINISTERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

EDITED BY REV. F. C. WOODWORTH.

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THE
NATIONAL PREACHER.

I.

GOD'S MORAL SYSTEM, SUPERIOR TO THE MATERIAL.

BY REV. R. S. STORRS, JR.,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fall.”—LUKE xvi. 17.

THE conception of the Material System is naturally accompanied in the mind by the impression of its permanence. Even the child perceives the solidity and hardness of the objects that surround him; and their power at once so absolutely to uphold and to restrict him, may well seem the evidence of their necessary duration. And as he comes to understand more fully the extent, and structure, and the history of the system, this first impression is naturally confirmed. As he learns how vast the Earth is,—not bounded by the horizon as he supposed, but bearing upon its mighty bosom islands, and realms, and empires, and continents even, with fathomless oceans poured round them as their drapery; as he examines the physical structure of the earth, and drives his drill into the granite bars that lock and interlock beneath its surface, or traces the ridges of rock and iron that stretch across it as its ribs of strength; as he follows backward the many generations that in succession have lived and labored upon its globe, and feels how changeless it has been through all their changes,—how absolutely it is now the same as when the Roman eagles traversed its surface, as when the temple of the Sun was standing in Palmyra, as when the hundred-gated Thebes stretched its stupendous front along the Nile; nay, as passing backward from even this computation he learns through what vast cycles and periods, and into what remote, impenetrable abysses, the researches of the naturalist seem to carry its duration:—and most of all, as rising from this view of the Earth, he learns to comprehend in some degree the magnitude of the System in which it is but part,

XVIII.

GOD'S VOICE TO THE NATION.*

BY REV. A. B. VAN ZANDT,

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"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"—
ISAIAH ii. 22.

THE world has nothing to fear from any degree of influence which the ministry may attain, and the cry of priestcraft will become obsolete, or at least unmeaning, so long as the Pulpit is confined to its legitimate themes. The sacred office was for ever dissevered from the strifes of politics and of parties, by that declaration of the Master at the bar of Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." Fully asserting his regal character, he yet exalted his mission, and the mission of his ambassadors, far above the petty conflicts of a secular ambition. Preferring himself the crown of thorns to the imperial diadem, and the robes of sepulture to the robes of state, he has also taught us, from the stand-point of his cross, to look down upon all the factitious distinctions of life, and to regard all mankind alike, as sinners to be saved or lost. The end of his coming into the world, and the end of our office, have respect to man as a spiritual being. We are called to study the diversities of his temporal condition, only as they bear upon his present character and his eternal prospects. And though not blind to the essential differences among men, yet unswayed by these, our faith must equally discern beneath the tinsel of rank, the insignia of power, and the rags of beggary, a guilty immortal spirit. The high argument of that spirit's loss and recovery carries us far beyond and above the range of topics suited to the Senate and the Forum; and instead of aiming to concentrate and sway popular opinion upon the agitating questions of human interest and policy, it is the office of the Pulpit to withdraw the minds of men to the transcendent interests of eternity, to the thoughts of God, and to the sublime economy of Redemption.

Our own country is a happy illustration of the truth, that governments have least to fear from clerical interference or priestly usurpation, when the Pulpit is left to the free and untrammelled

* A sermon occasioned by the death of Zachary Taylor, President of the United States.

exercise of its functions. It is where the Church has been drawn into an unholy alliance with the State; where it has been degraded into a mere appendage to temporal power; or has ingloriously consented to be subsidized by and dependent upon governmental patronage, that with the loss of its spiritual and heaven-born dignity, it has sought to cover itself with the robes of secular power, and the tinsel of earthly aggrandizement. Yet, even then, the degradation which would hide itself beneath the unseemly habiliments of external grandeur, has been induced in the first instance by the encroachments of the civil upon the ecclesiastical power, and not by any inherent tendencies in the latter. With all due allowance for that personal ambition, from which even the purest minds are not exempt, and the influence of which has always been felt upon the ministry, as well as upon all other classes of men, yet the desire "to be greatest" never would have drawn the sacred office as a party into the arena of political strife, but for the seductive influences of the State itself, alternately bribing and coercing the Church to a participation in her conflicts. The mitre had never been joined with the sceptre, but that the regal first laid its hand upon the sacerdotal office, and sought to add another jewel to its crown, by arrogating the prerogative of Christ—the headship of the Church.

It is a history which deserves to be studied by those who would cloak their carnal enmity to the gospel under the witless and worn-out cry of "priestcraft,"—the record of the origin and progress of that hated and hateful union of Church and State. Side by side with that record let them study the relation of these two, which have so long been unjustly regarded as antagonist powers, as that relation exists in our own country. The ministry have here no civil power. Their profession is in many States a disqualification for office. They are nowhere pensioners upon the public purse. Precluded from the hopes of preferment, they have no temptation to a fulsome adulation of the great. Exempt from all civil and secular interference with their office, they need not connive at wickedness in high places, or withhold the sternest sanctions of the truth from any who may come under its rebukes. And yet in no country in the world has the sacred office a more extended and legitimate influence over the people than in this; whilst, at the same time, we may appeal to facts when we assert, that in no country in the world is it so entirely free from the charge of mingling and meddling in questions foreign to the great end of its institution! Individual exceptions there may be, of those who have mistaken their calling, and have carried into the pulpit the language and spirit of the hustings. But we aver, without fear of contradiction, that in the discharge of its peculiar duties, and the utterance of the simple truths of the Bible, the ministry of this land has thrown around its rulers the surest guarantee of public respect for their persons and offices; has given to law its strongest hold

upon the citizen; and among conservative influences has been second only to the Gospel which it proclaims.

If we thus magnify our office, it is to dispel the prejudices of those whose unwarranted and injurious suspicions are a barrier to the entrance of the truth. But whilst on the one hand thus fully conceding its limitations, on the other hand the occasion requires us to assert for the Pulpit a wider range of discussion than some are willing to allow. Its utterances are not to be confined to a few familiar and fundamental truths. Neither the teachings of the Master, the example of the Apostles, nor the spirit and design of our office, require us to be silent upon the moral and religious aspects of the great questions and events which may agitate communities and nations. Religion claims, and was designed to extend, a healthful influence over man in every stage of his history, and in all the relations of life. She greets with her blessing his entrance into the world, and clusters around the cradle of his infancy the associations and the hopes of an immortal life. She is charged with the culture and discipline of his youthful powers. She meets him at the opening of the world's active scenes with her monitory voice, and pointing to the highway of sin and folly, strewn with the wrecks of blighted hopes; the while with inspiriting words, she seeks to waken in his soul the noble purpose to tread the path of virtuous endeavor. When man would smooth that rugged path and sweeten its sorrows by the endearments of domestic life, Religion lends her sanction to the union of willing hearts, and leaves her benediction on their joys. In the chamber of sickness her presence is the harbinger of hope. She has her consolation for the hour of trial, and beside the bed of death she whispers the name of Jesus and the resurrection. But preparing him thus for his duties and his destiny, Religion has also her lessons for man as a citizen. Hers is the true philosophy which unfolds the origin and the nature of the social compact. From the fountain of unerring truth, she declares the just authority of governments, and the relations of the governed. Enforcing upon rulers a due sense of solemn responsibility, she enforces equally upon the ruled the maxims of a loyal obedience to the laws, and upon all, a constant recognition of Him, who rules among the nations, and whose Providence none can withstand.

An occasional recurrence to topics like these, with a view to impress upon the public mind a sense of Divine government, and the mutual obligations of men to each other, based upon their higher obligations to God, is not only within the province, but imperatively incumbent upon the ministry. Nor is this exhibition of ministerial prerogative and duty at all foreign to the present occasion, or to the scope of the text. In proportion as Religion and its teachings on any subject are neglected, the wisdom of the world is substituted for the truth of God; an undue reliance is placed upon an arm of flesh; and men become so far practical

atheists in the world. The first step in the progress of error, is a neglect of the truth; then come in the maxims of a false philosophy, when the doctrines of the Word are forgotten: and the defection is complete, when unbelief has thus gathered strength and courage to deny what none have been zealous to maintain. The most pestiferous notions in morals and in politics, have thus gained to themselves form and currency in the world. Your modern philosopher, whether in science, or ethics, or government, takes his place at first beside the Bible, not to oppose, but to supplement its teachings. His nostrils find a ready market, under the received impression that there is no balm in Gilead: and when the poison has well diffused itself, and worked its way down through the varied ranks of society, if it is at length discovered that God *has* spoken, and his Word conflicts with the deductions of a shallow but specious logic, behold! too often error triumphs over truth, and the conjectures of man outweigh the sure Word of inspiration. The Bible indeed is not a detailed system of philosophy, and it was not designed to be a treatise on political economy. But it is a grand system of *truth*, in which are revealed all the principles which are necessary to regulate all the diversified relations and duties of mankind. Our times especially demand that those principles should be brought out. And in a day when novel theories of government are rife; when the flowing and refluxing wave of revolution is mingling thrones and dynasties and republics in promiscuous ruin; and when amid the din of factions and conflicts of arms the hoarse voice of anarchy is heard clamoring for the overthrow, with the pretext of reconstructing society; it is befitting that the voice of God should also be heard,—his Word interpreting his Providence, and, in the failure of human schemes, in the disasters and judgments attendant upon human presumption and folly, saying, “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.” It is time we were made to understand, that verily there is a God who ruleth in the earth;” and that people and rulers alike were found humbly inquiring at his holy oracles.

It cannot be disguised that at this present juncture, the text has a peculiar and solemn significance to us, as a nation. Since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, there has not occurred in the history of this Republic, a period so fraught with peril, as the crisis through which we are now passing. That we have successfully encountered other dangers, has served to inspire public confidence in the stability of our institutions; and in the very thickest of the gloom, which has so darkly veiled our prospects of late, we have yet been cheered by the glimmering star of hope. Nevertheless we are persuaded that even now, if we consider well the elements of conflict, and the issues at stake, it is rather the proof of folly than of foresight, to be unconcerned at the aspect of the times. Were the struggle with a foreign power, we might be confident, either in the justice of our cause, or in the brave hearts and strong

arms of a united people. Were the question one of party policy, we might commit it to the decision of the ballot-box, and rest secure in the verdict of majorities. But the causes for present alarm are different, and more dangerous than these. There has been a severing of fraternal ties; a rupture of social affinities; a reckless disregard of national associations and sympathies; a narrowing down of patriotic impulses to the aspirations after a sectional triumph; a mutual jealousy and distrust, and a mutual acerbity of feeling and of language, which if continued must soon be fatal to the existence of a confederated government.

It is ordinarily true, that in a representative State, the rulers reflect the feelings and sentiments of the people. We could hope, that at this present juncture our own country is in some degree an exception to the rule. But if the spirit which seems to prevail at the capital of this nation, is to be taken as the exponent of national sentiment, no forms of law, no constitutional provisions, no lingering remains of patriotism can long hold in union interests so discordant, antipathies so inveterate. It is not our purpose to trace to their causes the present distractions of the country, or to sit in judgment upon those who may be supposed to have produced them. We refer to facts as the omens of danger. And the flippancy and unconcern with which men in high places and in low places, have come to speak of that terrible alternative—"disunion," we regard as not the least among the causes of alarm. To predict with certainty the results of such an event, would baffle even the political sagacity of a Burke. But it needs no prophetic gift, to anticipate from it results of great and lasting evil. And though it should be considered as beside our province, yet we will not stifle the impulse or suppress the sentiment, that we do most heartily deprecate such an event, as fraught with disaster to the latest generation! We claim no superior forecast, yet we think that mind must be blinded by passion or prejudice, which can look beyond this consummation which we dread, and not have the field of its vision filled with a record, like the mystic roll of the prophet, "written within and without with mourning, lamentation, and woe!"

Now in a crisis like this, and with dangers so appalling, we may garnish the sepulchres of our patriot fathers, and bid the storied marble rise; we may appeal to their kindred blood, mingled on many a battle-field; we may recall their sentiments, their self-devotion, and their sacrifices. And it is well! Let these memorials at least rebuke, if they cannot exalt, the degenerate spirits of their descendants. Here and there perhaps a kindred soul will catch the generous glow of their lofty virtue, and, mindful only of their country and of their country's future, will dare to breast the swelling tide of faction, and, true to the sacred compact of the Constitution, to be nobly great, though it be only in the estimation of the good. Such men we trust there are, and, as the occasion of

this discourse reminds us,—such men there have been! We look with hope to those who yet remain. But our hope can only rise to confidence, when we look away from them to God! For even they who are gone, though dead, yet speak, and from their honored graves they echo back the admonition of the prophet, “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.”

There is a widely prevalent disposition, often rebuked in the Scriptures, to “trust in an arm of flesh, and make a man our hope.” This is especially manifest in great public emergencies. As these emergencies often serve to call out the latent energies of some master mind, which seems to ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm; so when the storm of danger threatens, we are prone to look about us, and fix our thoughts on this one, or on that, as the controlling genius, whose presence and whose power is the harbinger of safety. Thereupon, we demi-deify the man, and exalt him into the very Jupiter Stator of our hopes. Or if no such divinity can be found, we still sigh for the illustrious dead, and fondly invoke the heroes of a former age, to receive our hero-worship. How fervent and how frequent have been the aspirations of the past year, for a *Washington*, with his wise counsels and his steady hand, to guide our fortunes through the turmoil and the strife of threatened revolution. Such aspirations are no disparagement to any executive incumbent. The name of the Father of his Country knows comparison with none. Pure as he was wise, and good as he was great, “we ne’er shall look upon his like again.” But it is time for us as a nation to learn that there is a Power more potent than any arm of flesh. And though the hand of a *Washington* were always upon the helm of State, yet there may be dangers which baffle the pilot’s art; there may be storms which no human skill can withstand. And God may permit those dangers to threaten, and may bid those storms to rise, thereby to punish this fond idolatry of man, and vindicate the denunciations of his Word.

Perhaps there are no people more prone than we to worship the idol of an hour. When once the popular enthusiasm is aroused in favor of any man, he is, for the time, the embodiment of all excellence, and concentrates upon himself the admiration and the hopes of the nation. Short, indeed, may be his reign, and trivial in itself the circumstance which hurls him from his lofty pedestal. Divided too may be the homage, for each party has its shrine. But to one divinity or another all conspire to yield the praise, the trust, the honors, which belong only to God.

“Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s,” is a maxim which justifies all due respect to talent, virtue, or office. But render “unto God the things which are God’s,” equally forbids the forgetfulness of his sovereign authority and government; the exaltation of a creature to the place of the Creator; or any confidence in man, which is not subordinate to a conscious and constant dependence upon God. There is in this modern apotheosis of

individuals an atheistical contempt for Jehovah, which may be well supposed to provoke his displeasure. It implies an absence of his fear, and it begets a violation of his law, which cannot fail to bring upon us the severity of his judgments. They are not words without meaning which his Spirit has indited, and the anathema is peculiarly applicable to nations: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." And though it should be a sentence slow in its fulfilment, yet pronounced by the same authority, it will infallibly be executed: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish! yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." But the lesson of the text is not only taught in those judgments upon a people which are the results of its neglect, but in those events of Divine Providence which reveal the weakness and the frailty of man. Was it only to startle his fears by the constant allusions to his end, that the Bible is filled with such graphic and affecting statements of human frailty? His "breath is in his nostrils"; his "life is a vapor," or the fleeting shadow of a summer cloud. The transient flower, that unfolds its leaves to display in its gorgeous beauty the careful finish and profuse abundance of Jehovah's works, whilst yet we gaze upon its exquisite form and hue, withers and dies, to teach the gazer's frailty! The prophet of old was commissioned, in accents solemn and sublime, to make a divine communication to the world. And what is this announcement from the throne? Some new principle in philosophy; some panacea for the ills of life; some unexpected transitions of empire? No! In all the awful grandeur of Jehovah's Word, it is still the story of human frailty:—"The voice said, Cry! And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass! and the goodness thereof is as a flower of the field!" In accents more impressive still, God's voice repeats, from time to time, this truth we are so slow to learn. Death is the teacher now! and echoes the prophet's words from confined dust, from open graves, from consecrated urns! He invades the sanctuary of sweet domestic bliss; we mark his ravages in the wide circle of our kindred; "our companions and acquaintances are turned into darkness;" and before his relentless hand, fall the illustrious victims who have been exalted to the very pinnacle of honor, as if to render more conspicuous their fall.

Recent events are well calculated to leave upon the hearts of this people the deep impression of the truth which we have endeavored to enforce. Amid the agitations of the public mind and the long and anxious struggle still pending at the capital, a star of the first magnitude suddenly fell; a giant intellect was stricken down, in the very arena of debate. The funeral pageant was scarcely over, when another honored son of the same State, and the successor to her greatest, fell, where he had fallen. "God speaketh once, yea, twice, but man regardeth it not." Still raged the war of angry words; still gleamed the lightnings of indignant eloquence, and

muttered the thunders of the coming storm. But now arrives another messenger from a distant court,—he comes charged with an embassy of startling interest,—his mission must be executed with haste; and, regardless alike of courtly etiquette and diplomatic formalities, he rushes at once and unbidden into the presence of our venerated Chief. His tone is imperious, his credentials are indubitable, and his is the Sovereign, whose mandates alone cannot be defied. All the arts of the most skilful diplomacy fail to swerve him from his purpose. In his presence the lips of eloquent Senators are sealed; and the wisdom of profoundest statesmen, and the courage of bravest warriors, can find expression only in silence and in tears: for who can reply to the summons of Death? Ah! 'tis the hand of God! and the brave old warrior, unharmed from many a battle fray, and now exalted to the very pinnacle of honor, yields to the resistless fiat,—as falls at last the brave old oak, upon the mountain's brow, whose brawny arms have wrestled with many a storm! We are not here to rehearse his battles and his victories: the muse of history will do them justice. We are not here to pronounce his eulogium: the task is more appropriate to other hands. But without trenching upon the sacredness of this place, or the spirit of the text, we may yet pause to bestow the tribute of a tear to the memory of a Patriot! For the good which he has done, and for the good which he intended; for his stern integrity, and his undoubted patriotism; for the honor which he has won, and for the office which he held; let his virtues be embalmed, and his name go down to posterity, among those whom his countrymen have delighted to honor! But we stand here to-day, to contemplate the providence of that omnipotent Being, by whom "princes reign, and rulers decree justice." And from the grave of our President, we gather again the lesson of our frailty; we hear again the voice of God, saying, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

It will be well for us, as a people, if we so far heed the high and solemn lessons of this event, as that we shall be led devoutly to recognize the providence of that God whom our fathers worshipped; as that we shall cease to build our hopes, exclusively, upon the elevation of certain men to office, or upon the success of certain parties and policies. A strong and well-founded preference for particular men and measures is lawful, as it is unavoidable. But, my hearers, we must learn, and God by his judgments, it would seem, intends to make us know, that the elevation or overthrow of men, the success or failure of measures, and our country's general weal or woe, are entirely in his hands. It is time, then, that we learn in all our ways to acknowledge God; that we are restrained by his fear from the public and shameless violation of his laws; and that our conscious dependence should prompt the humble and hearty prayer for his guidance and blessing, upon our rulers and upon ourselves. And may we not hope that this event will leave its salutary impression upon the Representatives of the people in

Congress assembled ; that it will effectually rebuke, and rebuking assuage the bitterness of party and sectional dissensions ; that unholy ambition will stand abashed in the presence of Infinite Majesty ; and that the ceaseless strife of tongues will at length give place to the strife of mutual endeavors after the public good ?

How the highest objects of earthly desire dwindle at the approach of Death ; how fade away the glittering appendages of rank and office ; how unattractive becomes the utmost goal of a fond ambition ! But if the yet unopened grave thus echoes the Preacher's voice, and approaching Death writes "vanity of vanities" upon human hopes ; how worthless and how vain must appear all the factitious distinctions of life, when contemplated from eternity. In what light, to the illustrious chief, do his world-renowned victories now appear ? What value does he now attach to the hero's laurel, or to the statesman's civic crown ? It was not the glory of a Mexican campaign, or the dignity of the highest executive office, but his conscious rectitude of purpose, to which his mind alone reverted in the final struggle. Crowned with the first honor of the first of nations, with the renown of deeds unsurpassed in ancient story, and with a spotless fame ; yet of more value than them all, in the dying hour, was the conviction of an honest heart : "I have always done my duty." We would fondly hope that his conceptions of duty were not limited to the faithful discharge of official trusts. Yet even though they were,—Hear it, ye nations' rulers ! too often struggling hardest for your private ends, and your personal aggrandizement,—no successes of ambition ; no plaudits of a section or a party ; no staff of office, though the highest, will impart one ray of comfort to the dying strife ! Could we reach your ear, and were ours the power of graphic words, we would paint the coming scene, "the one event," when yourselves should feel the touch of death, and grapple with the fell destroyer : and there beside your dying pillow, should stand the phantom of your fond pursuits ; and there the empty robes of rank ; and there, if false to your trust, the wages of your iniquity ; and there the spectre of your wounded, weeping country ; with Conscience thundering in your ears, "I have *not* done my duty."

But a mightier hand has already drawn that scene, in the reality of an event over which the nation mourns. And may we not hope, that many of those to whom its lessons are more especially addressed, have in thought transferred themselves to the sufferer's dying bed ; and in the presence chamber of Death solemnly resolved to trample on every unhallowed aspiration, and, sustained by an approving conscience, nobly to sacrifice upon the altar of a pure patriotism, everything but honor ? If so, in his death, perhaps more than in his life, the hero and the statesman has subserved his country's good. We honor the spirit which dictated, and we heartily accord with the sentiment so eloquently expressed by a distinguished Senator : "If on the altar of our common country, we can sacrifice

the bitterness of party and of sectional feeling—if at this moment, when the heart of a great nation is palpitating with anxiety, we can come to the discharge of the high and solemn duties which devolve upon us, with hearts purified by affliction, in the singleness and sincerity of purpose and in the humility of spirit which become us; this melancholy dispensation of Providence will indeed have been productive of results most salutary to the great interests of the American people.” Akin to this is the language of another, who was himself a competitor with the departed for the suffrages of the nation: “It is a solemn appeal, and should be solemnly heard and heeded. His death, whose loss we mourn, will not be in vain, if it tends to subdue the feelings that have been excited, and to prepare the various sections of our country for a mutual spirit of forbearance, which shall insure the safety of all, by the zealous co-operation of all. We could offer no more appropriate nor durable tribute to departed worth, than such a sacrifice of conflicting views upon the altar of our common country.” Heaven forbid that these sentiments should evaporate in words! For the political results of this event, we look mainly to its effects in softening and subduing the tone of public feeling and legislative action. If it fails in this, and instead of arresting the angry current which has been sweeping over us, it should serve but as the occasion for intrigue to develop its plans, and faction to fan the fires of internal strife; then, woe! woe! to our country! the glory has departed! the motto upon our national escutcheon must be changed; and “*Ilium fuit*” must be the mournful record of our greatness!

But it were unseemly in this place to contemplate only those lessons of this event, which it addresses to us as citizens. In one point of view indeed, Death has a different aspect, when the victim is distinguished by influence and station, from that which he ordinarily bears. For, besides the sundering of those domestic ties, the rupture of which brings as keen a pang to the most exalted as to the most abject, there is in the one case also the breaking up of political organizations, the transfer of power, and the deep sense of public bereavement, increased by the possible contingencies of the event. But in another point of view, and considered in itself, Death is “the one event,” that levels all distinctions, and is the same to all. The mightiest and the meanest, he whose exit is unnoticed as the fall of an autumn leaf, and he around whose bier a nation mourns, alike must meet the destroyer upon the same common terms. Death is, equally to both, the end of their earthly career; the introduction of their immortal spirits into the immediate presence of their Judge, to receive the sentence of irrevocable doom. Be it then a monarch or a beggar, considered in its relation to eternal consequences, it is an event which has no parallel in the revolutions of time,—an event, in either case, the issues of which no tongue can tell, no finite mind conceive. Ah!

it is not the position to which we may attain, the height from which we fall, or the circumstances of our descent to the tomb, which invest Death with its importance. It is because life is linked to immortality; because being once begun can never end; and because continued being implies an immortality of suffering or enjoyment, that Death, to whomsoever it may come, is the event unparalleled in its issues.

In this aspect let us view it. Let those eternal issues enter into our estimate of Death, and let them control our choice, in the governing objects and pursuits of life. Let us "cease from man," alike as our dependence, and as the source of our enjoyments; and, contemplating the wreck of human greatness, and the end of human ambition, in the death of him who had reached an eminence, beyond which there was no higher to be hoped for or desired, let us ponder anew the emphatic interrogatory of Christ, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?"