

Justice and Mercy: A Sermon Preached at an United Service Held in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of Davenport, Iowa, on the National Fast Day, June 1st, 1865 (Classic Reprint)

William Windsor



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The frequent calls for a national recognition of God as our Providential Ruler and Preserver, which have of late emanated from the Chair of our Chief Magistrate, are peculiarly gratifying to those who revere the name of God. While we admit no authority to command it, as Christian men and women we gladly unite in such public acknowledgments of the Almighty. Therefore, are we here to-day.

It is to be presumed that most of us are satisfied that, no such sorrow can find expression to-day in connection with this service, either here or elsewhere, as deluged the land seven short weeks since, when the startling cry rang forth from the Capitol, "Lincoln is murdered!" The grief of that day was too intolerable to be kept secret. One long, loud wail swept over the continent. It outran the sun. The throbbing wires scattered the anguish faster than the beams of the morning fly westward. Few were they who did not mourn. And the long protracted obsequies of that stateliest funeral which crept like a moving pall of death over the breadth of the loyal domain; the land everywhere sombre with the emblems of the grave; tens of thousands in mute tearfulness gazing on the face of him they loved as scarce any other ruler was ever loved, who held in his hand the affectionate trust of millions, twice given, as the honest guardian of the nation's integrity and safety: - all their, the tense, the passionate, the wide-spread sorrow of a bereft and outraged people, cannot be repeated to-day.

We lament calmly at this hour. Not that we have so soon forgotten our loss, and the diabolical deed of hireling treason. Nay! Let it never be forgotten to the latest history of the American nation! Let its memory be perpetual: that the abominations of secession, and all the foul and hellish spirit of the slave system condensed into one act, may be forever seen, and be the herald at once, of its own unequalled shame, and its most merited and accursed doom. But the tumultuous grief that carried every man along on its sweeping tide, has settled, (has it not?) into mightier purposes of duty.

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