

Rev A M Thomwell

XII

FUNERAL ADDRESS

OVER THE REMAINS OF THE LATE

IRA C. TUNISON,

MEMBER OF COMPANY H, PALMETTO REGIMENT,

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, COLUMBIA, S. C.

OCTOBER 27, 1848.

BY REV. B. M. PALMER.

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COLUMBIA, S. C.  
PRINTED BY I. C. MORGAN.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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COLUMBIA, So. Ca., Oct. 27th, 1848.

*Dear Sir* :—Having been appointed by Palmetto Lodge, No. 5, a Committee to carry out the object of the annexed Resolution, we most respectfully submit it for your consideration, with an urgent appeal on our part, that if not incompatible with your feelings, you will comply with the request therein contained.

Yours, very respectfully,

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| P. B. SIMONS,     | } Committee. |
| J. H. BOATWRIGHT, |              |
| J. S. SCOTT,      |              |

To Rev. B. M. PALMER.

*Resolved*, That a Committee of three be appointed to solicit from Rev. B. M. Palmer, for publication, a copy of the Eulogy delivered by him upon Br. I. C. Tunison; and that a copy be transmitted to the parents of our deceased Brother.

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COLUMBIA, So. Ca., Oct. 28th, 1848.

*Dear Sir* :—The pleasing duty devolves on me, of transmitting to you, the following Resolution, passed by Palmetto Lodge No. 5, Friday evening, the 27th instant.

Yours, respectfully,

P. B. SIMONS,  
Sec'y. Palmetto Lodge, No. 5.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Lodge be tendered to the Rev. B. M. Palmer, for the very appropriate Address, delivered by him this day, over the remains of our late brother, Ira C. Tunison.

COLUMBIA, S. C., Nov. 1, 1848.

To MR. P. B. SIMONS,

Ch'n. of Com. Palmetto Lodge, I. O. O. F.

*My dear Sir* :—The Address delivered by me on Friday last, at the funeral of Mr. I. C. Tunison, was unwritten ; this will explain my delay, in putting the manuscript into your hands. Under ordinary circumstances, I might be unwilling to put to press a production so little elaborate. Yet, my desire to do honour to one who deserves the gratitude of his country, and especially my wish to express a proper sympathy for those aged parents, who are most bereaved by his early death, are sufficient to overbear this natural reluctance.

Be pleased to convey my thanks to the Palmetto Lodge, for the handsome terms in which they acknowledge my slender service.

Respectfully yours,

B. M. PALMER.

## ADDRESS.

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We are assembled this day, Fellow-Citizens, upon an occasion of profound and melancholy interest. It is always an instructive and impressive scene, when the living gather around the dead: each beholding, in the pale corpse before him, his own certain destiny, and the thoughts of each seeking to penetrate the veil, which separates from his view the dreaded mysteries of Eternity. But this is no ordinary burial scene. He who sleeps before us was not pressed into that repose by the hand of slow and wasting sickness. No weeping friends gathered around his couch of pain, to close the eye as it glazed in death. Neither father nor mother, nor brother, nor sister, is here in sable weeds, by their passionate grief to touch the chords of sympathy in our breasts. Yet are we all mourners here to-day. We are met to bear one to his grave, who is brother to us all; who has been baptized into tender kindred with us by a baptism of blood. Some of you are clothed in the garb of the soldier, with the weapons of war in your hands, befitting guardians of a soldier's corpse—others of you, with the emblems and symbols of a mysterious Order, are grasping each others' hands in love and friendship, over the lifeless body of a brother—a still larger number of you, as citizens, pay due honours to the remains of the Citizen Soldier, who stood forth to guard the repose, which you so quietly enjoyed during the period of his peril. And even Christianity herself, in this temple of God, lifts up her holy hands to utter her peaceful benediction over the grave of the Patriot. Truly, there are none but mourners here.

A little more than three years ago, a stranger came amongst us. Born of worthy and pious parents, with a character formed upon the precepts of religion, with no patrimony but his virtue, he came in the exercise of a reputable calling, to push his fortunes in our midst. Upright, decorous and gen-



erous, he made those his friends who otherwise had been only associates. Ever careful of the proprieties of life, he gained easy access to our families and firesides, no longer a stranger, but a welcome guest. But suddenly the clarion of war sounded from the high places of authority, calling forth our sons to do battle for their country. The startling intelligence swept with electric haste, from Texas to the borders of the Canadas, that our gallant little army, on the banks of the Rio Grande, was hemmed in by a superior force. How nobly it extricated itself, unaided and alone, from these dangerous toils, and shattered by one decisive victory the moral strength of eight millions of people, is known to us and to history. It was at this juncture, feeling himself less closely bound than others to home and to the arts of peace, this youthful stranger gave himself to the service of a soldier in a distant land. From the moment in which, among the foremost of our sons, he took his stand under the folds of the Palmetto banner, the name of IRA C. TUNISON was written upon the roll of citizens. The State, as she gave the sword, gave also her grateful blessing to the brave martyrs who bared their bosoms for the defence of her honour.

With what painful anxiety we watched this gallant little band, as it braved its way over the plains and marshes, and mountains of Mexico, is now a part of our memories. With what sadness we heard of our slain, as the cannon of battle after battle boomed across the distance to our ears, the melancholy homes and hearth-stones around us do testify. Yet with hope surmounting all fear, with martial enthusiasm extinguishing all private griefs, we cheered on our brave but diminished army, towards the proud Capital of that ancient and once glorious Empire. One rude shock remained to be encountered: and when, amid the storm of battle, you saw this gallant youth upon the altar heights of Chapultepec, pouring out his life a cheerful sacrifice for his Country's cause, say, did you not feel that his adoption was complete? With his own blood, and with the point of his own bayonet, he wrote his name, upon the tablets of your hearts, *not citizen, but son*. And when the long conflict over, peace again resuming her gentle reign, you began to think of your dead, and receiving them from foreign lands to give them burial in your own quiet grave-yards, could you fail, Fellow-Citizens, to adopt the bones of him, who with his own fresh, warm heart's blood, adopted you and your banner? Generous youth! You came to us a stranger; you went forth from us a son; and this day the

State, like the Spartan mother, receives you back upon your shield. That tattered and blood-soiled banner, under which you fought, shall be your funeral pall; and the hands of your comrades in battle shall place the sod upon your breast. By a Patriot's burial we this day naturalize you to our own dear soil; and from henceforth, till the hour when all lands shall yield up their dead, Carolina shall proclaim that you are her own son. Yes, Fellow-Citizens, it is as it should be. We will dig his grave between those by whose side he fought.—With TREZEVANT upon his right and KENNERLY upon his left, let him sleep till the trump of the Arch-Angel shall sound the note of the universal resurrection. Beneath the ground, let them stretch their arms in secret and fraternal embrace. In their deaths not divided, let them slumber in undisturbed repose.

But who in this assembly shall represent those venerable forms, bending not more with the weight of years, than of their double bereavement—who, at this hour in their distant home, weep over the twin death of their two sons? Ye Fathers and Mothers, who perform melancholy pilgrimages in the grey of evening, to the too early graves of your own lost sons, stand forth now as sponsors to this son of our adoption! Shed upon this bier those scalding tears of bitter grief which are wept by aged eyes in Plainfield, Jersey! Though you may only be able to sob the utterance from your hearts, say to these whose grey hairs are bowed with sorrow to the ground, that a gift to one's country is next to a gift unto God.

But I forbear this strain. The cold words of human sympathy will not avail to staunch these bleeding wounds which this two-edged sword has given to the hearts of those aged parents—and our eulogies serve but to mock the dull ear of the dead before us. My office, too, is not done until I give this scene a voice to urge some moral lesson upon your conscience. Let us turn to other thoughts.

This war, of which this assembly is a sad memorial, has certainly reflected glory upon the nation. It has shown to the world the value of a citizen-soldiery; that under these habits of quiet industry beat lion hearts equal to any crisis—that a people may be self-governed, and still be obedient to law: for while this war was not in the heart of the nation, from the moment it was proclaimed, all private opinions yielded to its vigorous prosecution. It has shown, what perhaps needed to be known, that a republic can be prompt to execute as well as careful to deliberate; that on the rise of an emergency all parties and

factions are consolidated again into the nation. It has presented the sublime example of a magnanimous people releasing from their grasp a prostrate and powerless foe, and turning back with a free will to their old boundaries and to the arts of peace. In regard to military prowess, it was a campaign not disgraced by a single defeat, nor dimmed by a single disaster. In all this there is glory. But here is the price we have paid; our brave and noble sons! This is the cost. Surely standing here to-day, between the dead man and his grave, passion is subdued enough that we may dwell with mournful regrets upon the horrors of war. View it in the abstract. What sight more awful than of thousands arrayed against thousands engaged in mutual butchery, in the open light of day and before the very face of heaven! Were savage beasts thus engaged in wholesale slaughter, we might stand aghast at such unmitigated ferocity; yet it would be according to the instinct of their nature. But that men, endowed with the high prerogative of reason, should be the actors in these dismal tragedies—this appals us. Of what value is reason, if it cannot place the rein upon human passions, nor adjust those disputes which the clashing interests of society engender? How idly do we boast of the dignity of man as a creature of reason, if our brute instincts drive us furiously to the work of butchery and murder? But view it in the concrete. Consider the frequent conscriptions to furnish the victims of war! The heavy taxations which the wasted resources and interrupted industry of the country can so ill supply! View the dismantled homes of those whose bones bleach upon the plains of a foreign foe, leaving gaunt wretches to give stint protection to their orphans! Weigh the groans and agonies of the wounded and dying! And see the pestilence doing its ghastly office in the camp, more ruthless than cannon or steel upon the field of carnage! Above all, view the profaneness and vice which sweep through this open floodgate, desolating the morals of the land! That surely should be a large advantage, which shall weigh against the total of these cruelties.

Yet, under this monster evil the world has groaned, almost from the transgression of Adam. The history of man is written with his blood. All the great Empires of the earth have become fat by gorging themselves with the feebler states they have devoured; and all have died of their repletion. When dissolved again, their “disjecta membra” have but developed new schemes of ambition, and become the objects of new coalitions. This creation and this destruction of Kingdoms, by

the process of war, has been the staple of history. Shall this evermore continue? Shall the earth never cease to be red with man's blood, shed by his brother's hand? We may well ask this question, with the most earnest tone, in the middle of this century, heaving, as it now does, with the agitations which threaten to put the whole race of man to works of blood. Is there no influence which can stay these mighty, and these chafing billows? Is there no regenerating element which can convert this vast charnal house into the abode of universal charity and peace? There is an influence which comes from the King of Peace; and to achieve this sublime result is, in part, the mission of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Christianity looks upon this as a fallen world. It professes, indeed, as its grand end, to restore man to the favor of God, but subordinately to mitigate the evils which sin has introduced. Under its benign influence war will ultimately be banished from the earth: for, however sceptics may ridicule it as the dream of fanaticism, the promise is recorded that men "shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." In every instance of war there must be an aggressive, and, of course, a blame-worthy party. But the Bible clearly recognizes the right of self-defence, and imposes upon government, duties and responsibilities, which, in this world of injury and sin, can only be discharged at the point of the sword. Contrary to the ravings of those who are fanatical for peace, and who advocate the impossible dogma of "passive resistance," there is clearly such a thing as lawful War: though Christianity, meanwhile, shall never release from blame and punishment the wrong-doer who provokes the dreadful alternative. Precisely as it gives control of the hearts of men, and its influence sweeps with a wider compass, must it turn mankind to observe the great law of love, and thus remove all occasion of war. All influences, less than religion, can only be accessory to this result. The progress of civilization, the improvements in science and art, the increasing facilities for international intercourse, the interlacing of commercial interests, and the laws of Free Trade—all these exert an occasional influence to check the ferocity and to diminish the chances of war. Yet even these influences are but secondary in their nature, being remotely the off-shoots of religion itself. But the Gospel exerts its power equally, wherever it is diffused; and kills the root of evil by subduing the tiger passions of the human heart.



While too, the world goes through this meliorating process, Christianity qualifies even for the duties of the camp. The requisite elements of the soldier are *bravery*, that he may face the most appalling dangers; *self-possession*, that he may discreetly meet all the emergencies which crowd confusedly into a single hour; *fortitude*, that he may not sink beneath the accumulated hardships of tent and field; and *gentleness*, that he may succour a dying comrade, or spare a fallen foe. But who can with better reason be brave than he whose peace is made with God, and whom death only introduces to glories his soul most pants to enjoy? Who should attain to greater self-control than he whose faith looks with a clear eye upon God, in whose hands are the issues of life, and whose Providence allows no surprise? Who should endure with cheerfulness equal to his who looks upon all pain as a fatherly chastisement for sin? And who can be gentler than he whose first law is love to God, and whose second is love to man? Say you this is mere cant? Let the Ironsides of Cromwell, the brave Huguenots of France, the Puritans who first subdued this Continent, and the sturdy bravery of our own religious ancestors, reduce the theory to fact.

The sum of all, then, is this. Mourning around one of its hapless victims, we deplore the existence of war; and we ask, what influence will abolish it? Christianity rises forth from this Bible, and pledges herself to the mighty achievement. Fellow-Citizens, then Christianity has a claim upon your patriotism. Yield to this claim. If you love her not for herself, respect her influence over you and the world. Rebuke the scoffer, who trifles with her mysteries: and check the recklessness which would profanely trample upon her precepts. Cherish her as the bulwark of your land, the sacred guardian of order, liberty and law. If "the Christian be the highest style of man," remember, the noblest patriot is he who serves his country in the fear of God; that to live well for our country is better patriotism than even to die bravely for her. Give Christianity free scope; lay no stumbling block in her path—let her sweep on and over the globe, until she brings all nations into one universal brotherhood of peace and good will.

But the closing hours of day, and the solemn rite of burial calls us around the grave. Let me whisper a parting word to those who are special mourners here, the shattered remnant of Company H. What melancholy associations must, in your memories, be woven together! The officers who led forth, two years ago, as proud a Company as ever learned the sol-

dier's step, shall now lead the mournful procession to the grave! The standard-bearer, who waved the banner over the fight, just now laid it upon this bier, a fitting funeral pall! Let me remind you of that guardian Providence which shielded you, not from wounds, but from death. To one of you I recall that dreary night when wounded and lying side by side with this very body, you stretched forth your hand in the darkness, and found it was indeed cold death that had so suddenly hushed his moans. Is not this scripture fulfilled? "Two men shall be lying in one bed: the one shall be taken and the other left."

May you all have grace to feel, that God has measured out your lot! With grateful hearts may you serve Him, who shielded your heads in the day of battle! And may He be your shield in the day of judgment.