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REV. W. B. REED

“Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation”

AN ADDRESS BY

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Pastor of

FIRST :: BAPTIST :: CHURCH

MADISON :: NEW :: JERSEY

IN ASSEMBLY HALL

MADISON

JANUARY FIRST, NINETEEN SEVEN

WILLIAM O. STODDARD, the well-known author and secretary to Abraham Lincoln, while President of the United States, was also a speaker at this meeting. He related many interesting personal reminiscences of the War President.

“Mr. Reed is a close student of Southern affairs and does not hesitate to speak and write the plain truth regarding the treatment of the colored man in the South.” *The Madison, (N. J.) Eagle.*

“Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation”

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—Fourty-four years ago the great soul of Lincoln was inspired by Him, whose dwelling is not with flesh, that the sound of blasting cannon had reached the meridian of warfare, and the time for him to proclaim it was near at hand. In obedience to the inspiration, the President, in the summer of 1862, made known to his Cabinet, his intended proclamation. In the fall he made it known to the world. And on January 1, 1863, the decree went forth, signed by Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States; William H. Seward, secretary of State and with the United States seal upon its face, declaring the freedom of a helpless race—an oppressed and outraged people, four million strong. The Grecians may talk of their great philosophers, the Romans their historians, the Germans their scholars, the Frenchmen their generals, the Englishmen their statesman; and while the American born citizens reverence the name of the faithful “Fathers,” Lincoln stands an unrivaled idol. And let me say on the part of my race, that while King Sol rules the day, the moon and stars the night, while the American people endure and our government stands, Abraham Lincoln will be the chorus of our sweetest songs, in the scales of America’s National airs. And if we are taken captives to a foreign land, we will swing our harps upon the willows and weep, on the days which commemorate our benefactor’s great name and deeds. And as the old year is closed with the rehearsal of the song that was sung by the angels over Bethlehem’s hills, no greater document could have been handed down by Lincoln to unborn generations for rehearsal, in opening the new year, than this proclamation which bursted the foundation of a wicked cause throughout secession plains.

Forty-four years mark but an instant of time in the long struggles of human history, but in the history of a man’s life, it counts for ages. And we, who did not see the horrors of Civil War, can see a greater brilliancy

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in our imaginary view of its rising smoke, than those who saw the clouds, felt the quaking earth, and heard the groans of the wounded and dying.

We have now few eye witnesses of those great times, and very soon there will not be an eye witness left in the world. The greater becomes the distance, between the Civil war and us, the greater becomes the immortal name of our great Emancipator.

It will be well in the first place for us to note the cause of Lincoln's stand against human slavery. There is never an effect without a cause, so said; and the cause of Mr. Lincoln's stand against human slavery may be stated in a few words. He hated it; and if a man hates a thing, it is natural for him to oppose it. He believed it a moral wrong; he believed our rights came from God and so declared in the Declaration of Independence. And he believed every man should enjoy the fruits of his own labor. Upon these principles he took his great stand; upon these principles he fought and triumphed—for his cause was a righteous one. The world did not, and could not, in the fifties, see him, as we can and now do. The fruits of his great mind was left a most glorious legacy for the nation. His labors, energies and life were laid upon the sacrificial altar for the welfare of his country, and a blessing for stricken humanity. Let us hold up the faces of circular history and see if we can find another like him. No, he stands alone. He is easily distinguished from the great galaxy of noble men of ablation fame. He had a genius peculiar to himself. He had the courage of his great convictions and manhood to stand, if he had to stand alone. When he spoke, he spoke for the good of mankind, and in the spirit of obeying the Federal Constitution. He proved beyond the shadow of a doubt in his great speech at Cooper Union, that the "Fathers" expressed their hope and belief of this government being free from slavery, when they wrote in the immortal instrument that all men were born free and equal. In speaking on that point at Springfield, Ill., in 1857, Mr. Lincoln said, "I think the authors of that notable instrument intended to include all men; but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all men were equal in color, size, intellect, moral development or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal—equal with 'certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' This they said and this they meant."

And again at Cooper Union he says: "Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed. There is a

In the next place let us view the race as Republicans. We are Negroes and Republicans by birth. It is almost as hard to change our political faith as it is to change the color of our skin. And this is the cause of disfranchisement and racial oppression in the South. When the South could count our votes to their advantage, and brutalize our women to their full satisfaction, this racial antipathy was unknown. It is said that forty thousand colored men have been murdered, trying to vote the Republican ticket. After all that, we are with them the Republicans, to stay, for they were our friends and benefactors in troublous times.

Now friends a few words on free speech and morality. Nothing shows more plainly the inconsistency of Southern white people than these points. Southern Press criticized the race for opposing free speech, because the colored people objected to Tillman speaking in Chicago. The criticism is too ridiculous for serious consideration. They seem more daring than forgetful.

The Legislature of Georgia, one time voted \$5,000 reward for the head of William Lloyd Garrison, delivered with or without the body, to the authorities of the State. Then think of Negro presses burned, editors sent into exile, ministers driven from pulpits and leaders silenced because they dare to speak for right and justice, and against monstrous wrongs. Suppose the colored people of the South made public utterances against and pronounced the wrongs of the South, as the whites do against the black? The whole South would be one murderous hell of demons. And for morality, very little is heard. They never speak of our virtues, but our immoral brutes are the chorus of Southern papers and platform orators, from Louisiana cane-brakes to the National Capital. I ask who taught us immorality? Who are the greater abettors of immorality, Southern whites or Southern blacks? I shall let the words of him whose deeds and name we commemorate tonight answer this all important question. At Springfield, Ill., in 1857, Lincoln has this to say about the sins of the so-called Southern gentlemen. "In 1850, there were in the Free States, 56,649 mulattoes; but for the most part they were not born there---they came from the Slave States ready made up. In the same year the Slave States had 348,874 mulattoes, all of home production. It is worthy of note too, that among the Free States, those who make the colored man the nearest equal to the white, have proportionately the fewest mulattoes, the least of amalgamation. In New Hampshire, the State which goes farthest toward equality between the race there are just 184 mulattoes, while there are in

Virginia, how many do you think? 79,775, being 23,126 more than in all the Free States together." And today there are two million mulattoes in this country, the outcome of sins of Southern white men who are going about the country preaching about Negro brutes. In an open letter to President Roosevelt not many days ago, he was told that to every white woman outraged by a Negro, five hundred colored women and girls were outraged by Southern white men.

In his timid reference to lynching in his message to Congress, the President gave credit to the report that the crime of assaulting women was peculiar to us. To say that the President did us a great injustice is indeed putting it mild. I do not uphold such wrongs, matters not who commits them. And if the President condemns us for a hundred crimes, he would show his impartialty by condemning Southern whites of five hundred.

Furthermore there ought to be one law alike for every man, whatever his color. This is not true in the South. The South tries to put our Northern friends against us by telling one side of the story.

The last point I wish to touch is the discharge of the colored soldiers, and racial crime hiding. While the whole world knows, that the whole affair is the outcome of prejudice, I shall not so argue. The New York Tribune of December 6, published a letter from Senator Culberson, of Texas, to Secretary Taft, requesting him not to burden them with the presence of Negro soldiers. Also a letter from Secretary Taft, speaking very highly of the soldiers. The Senator's letter shows that prejudice was the root of all the evil. I shall remind you of one or two facts. Mr. Roosevelt acted on belief and what seemed reasonable for him to believe. The men were punished without trial, judge or jury. And the President who is supposed to protect the Constitution, ought, it seems, to be the last man to violate it. You will agree that nothing is done until it is done right.

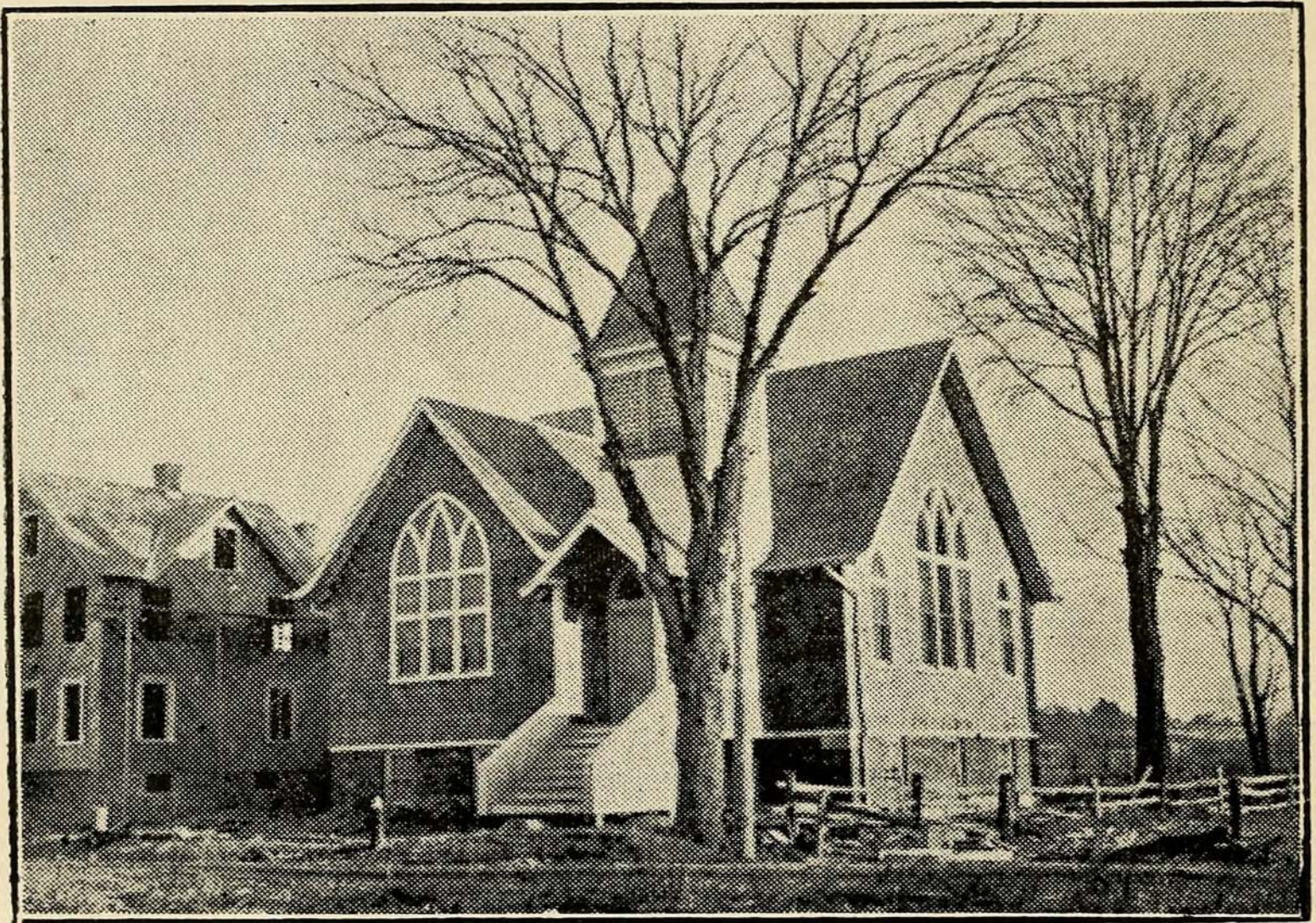
Now as to racial crime hiding, that is enough to shame the devil and disgrace the throne of God.

We read any day of a mob three thousand strong; men of high standing, marching to jails in open defiance. Bursting doors marching men through the streets lynching, burning and shooting them to pieces. Then of the jurors declaring the men came to their death by unknown parties. In receiving news of lynchings remember that the operator is a member of the mob, the reporters are members, and the committee who dictates the statements for the criminal belongs to the mob. They tell us to run down

our own criminals, but object to us being policemen honorably. Even object to us voting for officers, yet we must make officers of ourselves when it comes to Negro criminals. Mr. Roosevelt spoke of what he had done for us, as if he did it as a favor. May I say that we do not ask for special favors; but justice and a square deal. We are going to our graves asking for justice; if we fail to get it, we fail like men, for prejudice is not beyond the grave---the gates of Heaven will not be closed against us.

Let us close with the closing words of Lincoln to a crooked and perverse generation. "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword," let it be, for "The Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

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