

Funeral Service
for
GENERAL OF THE ARMY
and
34th President
of the United States of America
DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER

Abilene, Kansas

Wednesday, April 2, 1969

10:30 A.M.



Parts of the service conducted by:

Rev. Robert A. MacAskill, D.D.
Pastor, The Presbyterian Church
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Call to Worship:

"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ who said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Prayer:

Eternal God, our Heavenly Father, who lovest us with an everlasting love, and can turn the shadow of death into the morning: Help us now to wait upon Thee with reverent and believing hearts. In the silence of this hour speak to us of eternal things, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope, and be lifted above our darkness and distress into the light and peace of Thy presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord . . . who taught us when we pray to say:

"Our Father, who art in Heaven; Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done; On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts; As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Scripture Reading:

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

The Text:

"For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Timothy 4:6-8

The Meditation:

In thinking about a text and an outline for my remarks on this occasion, there comes to my mind the words of scripture which I have just read. For they seem appropriate and applicable as we consider the life and service of General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"I have fought a good fight"

By training and temperament General Eisenhower prepared himself for awesome responsibilities as a soldier and statesman. He was aware of the destruction and futility of war and tyranny and this gave him an even greater

determination for peace and freedom. In a sense his military training and leadership prepared him for the role of President. Always guided by a sense of reasonableness, he did much to keep a balance between military and peaceful pursuits.

In his farewell address as President to the American people, January 17, 1961, he said: "In the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the large industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together."

His preparation for life and service contained a strategy whether it be a military offensive or a peaceful proposal. He believed in having the facts at hand, receiving good counsel, and proceeding in a resolute and determined course of action.

One of the significant decisions and proposals of his administration was the Atoms for Peace program, offered the United Nations American uranium for peaceful uses by "havenot" countries.

In his concluding remarks of the First Inaugural Address he said: "We are not the helpless prisoners of history; we had to be willing to accept whatever sacrifices might be required - for the people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both. "The peace we seek is more than the stilling of guns, easing the sorrow of war. More than escape from death, it is a way of life. More than a haven for the weary, it is a hope for the brave."

All of this required a strategy, a struggle and a sacrifice in fighting a good fight!

"I have finished my course"

In General Eisenhower's long and useful life he labored unceasingly for the things that make for peace with justice - a familiar phrase of his. No matter what he set out to do, whether in a game of golf, or a military strategy or proposed legislation, he always had a definite goal and objective in view. This gave him a tenacity of purpose, a singleness of mind, and a determination to follow through.

The course which started in Abilene some 78 years ago was destined to unfold from the grassroots of this American heartland to the far reaches of the world. In traveling this path, General Eisenhower had a firm reliance on divine guidance, deeply imbedded in the heritage of God fearing parents who imparted this wisdom and love unto their children. In making his way through life, he followed a course that was anchored in the eternal purposes of God as expressed in the words of a favorite Psalm - 121 "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore." With this assurance and confidence he finished the course!

"I have kept the faith"

This was an expression of his life that impressed those who knew him. He had a vibrant faith in God, his fellowmen and his country. He said, "We had to proclaim our faith. It was our faith in the deathless dignity of man. And the faith we hold belongs, not to us alone but to the free of the world - the grower of rice in Burma and the planter of wheat in Iowa, the shepherd in southern Italy and the mountaineer in the Andes. It confers a common dignity upon the French soldier who dies in Indochina, the British soldier killed in Malaya, the American life given in Korea."

He spoke of a faith in the beneficence of the Almighty. To him "faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

In a recent article he expressed his faith in the young people of our land when he said: "The world will soon be yours to do with as you can. I would urge you to approach your task with boldness and the hope and the joy of challenge in your hearts - and with dedication to freedom and human dignity. For this is the only route to peace with justice. Good luck, then, and may the Lord go with you. I, for one, believe in you!"

Here then, was the simple, straight-forward, uncomplicated faith of a world leader. He not so much articulated a faith as he acted upon it. His faith in God, gave him a humility and a high regard for human life. It caused him to be dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of such a way of life.

Because of this faith he was liberated from provincialism and little things and given a world vision and concern for all men. He believed in the words of a favorite hymn: "Faith of our Fathers living still, in spite of fire, dungeon and sword."

As has been said of Lincoln, can now be said of Dwight Eisenhower, "He belongs to the ages." For his spirit and influence are an expression of the American ideal of "liberty and justice for all." President Nixon stated it well in his message on Sunday: "He was known not so much for what he did as for what he was - it was the character of the man." His example of character, integrity, humility and dedication is indeed a rich legacy and will give us inspiration to resist the forces of tyranny and help us to usher in a new day of brotherhood and good will to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind.

In this confidence we commit him to the care and keeping of a merciful and loving God, sustained in the power and hope of Him who said: "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

The Prayer:

We give thanks to Thee O God for this, Thy servant, Dwight David Eisenhower, recalling all in Him that made others love him. We bless Thee for the good and gracious influence in his home and training, for all that

ministered to his best life. We thank Thee for the goodness and truth that have passed from his life into the lives of others, and have made the world richer for his presence.

Grant us, we beseech Thee, the comfort of Thy presence, and the ministry of Thy Holy Spirit. Renew within us the gifts of faith, patience, and enduring love. Help us to walk amid the things of this world with eyes ever open to the beauty and glory of the eternal, that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of this life, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Benediction:

The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight; and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you, and with those you love, in this time of bereavement and forever more. Amen.