

1709

ADDRESS OF GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH, AMBASSADOR OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO MEXICO AT THE MEMORIAL
SERVICE FOR THE LATE PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT IN THE UNION
CHURCH IN MEXICO CITY AT 6:30 P.M., SUNDAY, APRIL 15.

"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away" was the lament of Job. Today the American people in thoughtful prayer are saying in their hearts: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The Lord has been generous in His blessing to our country from the earliest days of the discovery and settlement of the virgin soil now teeming with life and energy. He has given to our country men and women who have met the hour of need in times of crisis and of difficulty. But of all the great men who in years of destiny have guided our policy, internal and external, no one has met the problems so successfully and no one had a greater and broader responsibility than Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He will go down in the history of our country as its greatest President and as a man who did more to shape the life and destiny of our country than any other.

No great man in history, whether it be that of our own country or of the world, has given of himself so fully and so freely, so smilingly and with such courage and unselfishness as the late President. Born to privilege and special position, he spurned them, not as things which are not worth while, but as things which he did not wish to use in the forging of his career

and in the opening of the opportunities for usefulness to his fellow citizens. His great heart embraced every element of our population, every aspiration of our people. He loved struggle because he knew it was only through struggle and conviction that ideas can be implanted in the board consciousness of a people and therefore survive. Always patient and understanding of criticism, and always subject to harsh criticism, he responded to it with his serene smile and spirit and power of persuasion.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a warrior, a Christian warrior. He was one of those men imbued with a sincere love of humanity and a keen sense of justice and equity. He never faltered during the long course of his public life in the way which he had thoughtfully laid out for himself. Even under the necessity of political strife, where compromise with principle at times seems a necessary temporary expedient in order to gain a position in which power for good may be exercised, he never made that compromise.

It was indeed destiny and the continued guidance of Providence which gave to the American people during the recent years most crucial in their history a man of such clear wisdom and understanding. At a time in history when inevitable circumstances were bringing to our country new responsibilities beyond our shores which small-minded individuals thought we could ignore, the late President knew that these situations had to be frankly faced and that we would have to undertake our responsi-

bilities, unwelcome and burdensome as they might be, for the future security and peace of our people were dependent thereon. In a world torn with distorted ideas and ideals and with a menace of force and oppression before us in the most realistic manner, he courageously took the only attitude which could provide for our security, even though it involved our using arms and our great force to that end. No American has been more idealistic than President Roosevelt; and no great American has at the same time been more realistic in the understanding and facing of the problems which a great people in hours of destiny must confront.

And in that torn world freedom-loving peoples everywhere of every condition, color and race and creed began to recognize the wisdom of this man. He became the symbol of the aspirations of peace and security and personal liberty of freedom-loving peoples in all parts of the world.

And that is why today in every part of the world the hearts of men are saddened because they know that a great paladin and a great man has passed from this earthly scene. In their mourning they rejoice for they know that the life of this gallant soldier for the rights of man and for decency and security has not been in vain. They know that the principles for which he stood will live. They know that every day his personal courage and example will be with them both to guide and to give them strength. As he never faltered in the struggle and gave up his life in the midst of it, so the hearts of free men every-

where today are rededicating themselves with new vigor to the furtherance of the principles of peace built upon equity and justice and opportunity to all men.

Last Thursday in the peaceful Georgia hills in his refuge at Warm Springs President Roosevelt passed away while taking a much-needed rest from his arduous labors. While the great burdens under which he had labored had wrought their ravages on the human frame which had shown such powers of resistance, he and those most intimately associated with him had no thought of any immediate danger. In those quiet hills and in that peaceful refuge which will always be a monument among the American people as one of the examples of his broad humanitarian spirit, President Roosevelt surrendered his soul to its Maker, and his spirit is now the heritage of humanity.

Yesterday in the East Room of the White House the funeral services of the greatest President of the United States were held. This afternoon his mortal remains have been interred in the peaceful little park of that other refuge at Hyde Park which he so much loved. Yes, difficult as it is for those of us who knew him so well and loved and admired him so much to realize it, the voice of that brave warrior is now silent, and his smiling face and his great courage which inspired us is no longer there as a living person.

But we know that the spirit of great men lives after them, and we have learned somewhat to heed the lessons of history, if

not enough. Thus we know that the work so solidly built by great men lives after them and may even be more virile and vigorous in its effects after they have passed from this earthly scene. And so it will be in the case of this great man.

We are passing through some of the darkest and most difficult hours of our own history, and so is the rest of the world. The victory over the forces of unrighteousness is on the horizon. The struggle is not over, and we know that many sacrifices will have to be made still. The victory is certain.

The victory, however, will only assure us of a temporary truce unless we know how to use the fruits of victory. In this the principles for which our country has stood and which President Roosevelt so strongly exemplified and did so much to implant are of the most vital importance. All the clouds on the horizon will not have disappeared with the victory. Human nature and human frailty are factors we have to reckon with -- but they are not immutable. Whether there will be peace and security and freedom in the world which we shall have to build after the victory will depend upon whether as individuals, as groups, as nations we will be able to work together in that opportunity of accommodation and collaboration and real understanding which can only be the sure bases of peace and happiness of peoples.

I am one of those who without in any way minimizing the problems of the future look forward to it with optimism and with hope. And I do so because one of the greatest architects

of peace, although his mortal remains today are resting under the shadow of the trees in Hyde Park, still speaks to us; and his spirit will give us the guidance and the courage to go forward.