

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

VOL. XXXVII (No. 9)

SEPTEMBER, 1923

No. 803

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Frontispiece.</i> ABRAHAM LINCOLN.	
<i>The American Pulpit on the Death of Lincoln.</i> WILLIAM E. BARTON.....	513
<i>The Shipwreck of St. Paul.</i> WALLACE N. STEARNS.....	529
<i>The Emprize Supreme—Concerning Evolution and Religious Faith.</i> EDWARD LE ROY MOORE.....	538
<i>Debt.</i> SMITH W. CARPENTER.....	545
<i>Hoffmanstahl, Lyric Dramatist.</i> OLIVER S. ARATA.....	551
<i>Traditions and Basic Ideals.</i> HARDIN T. McCLELLAND.....	558
<i>Culture vs. Civilization.</i> WILLIAM NATHANSON.....	571

The Open Court Publishing Company

122 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago, Illinois

Per copy, 20 cents (1 shilling). Yearly, \$2.00 (in the U.P.U., 9s. 6d.)

Entered as Second-Class Matter March 26, 1887, at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under
Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright by The Open Court Publishing Company, 1923.

FOR TEACHER-TRAINING

World-Friendship Through the Church School

By John Leslie Lobingier

A goal clearly seen, to be attained as the result of progressive achievements in the years between childhood and maturity, is the subject of this book. It is the extension of the range of intelligent vision from the home center of the kindergarten child to an appreciation of the world and its needs through ever-broadening circles of interest and activity, and the assumption of responsibility for world interests and the claims of humanity through gradually acquired experience.

This book presents a practical program for the direction of the religious education best fitted to serve this end. In ten chapters it offers a series of lesson plans for a teacher-training course for the various grades in the Sunday School. The sources of information on which this program is based are given in reference lists which accompany each lesson.

\$1.25, postpaid \$1.35

Religious Dramatization

The Dramatization of Bible Stories

By ELIZABETH E. MILLER

The child's love for make-believe has proved a capable instrument for the effective inculcation of religious teachings. The author here shows her appreciation of this fact, and her presentation of embryonic plays makes for a wider use of this method. All the plays given were prepared by children under leadership, and all the old favorites such as Joseph, Daniel, Goliath, and Moses appear. *\$1.25, postpaid \$1.35*

Dramatization in the Church School

By ELIZABETH E. MILLER

A useful companion and precursor of the previous volume. It is the first teacher-training course to be published in this field, and gives many suggestions for the better leadership of children in their play-making. Method, blocking out, grouping, and costumes are a few of the subjects discussed. *\$1.25, postpaid \$1.35*

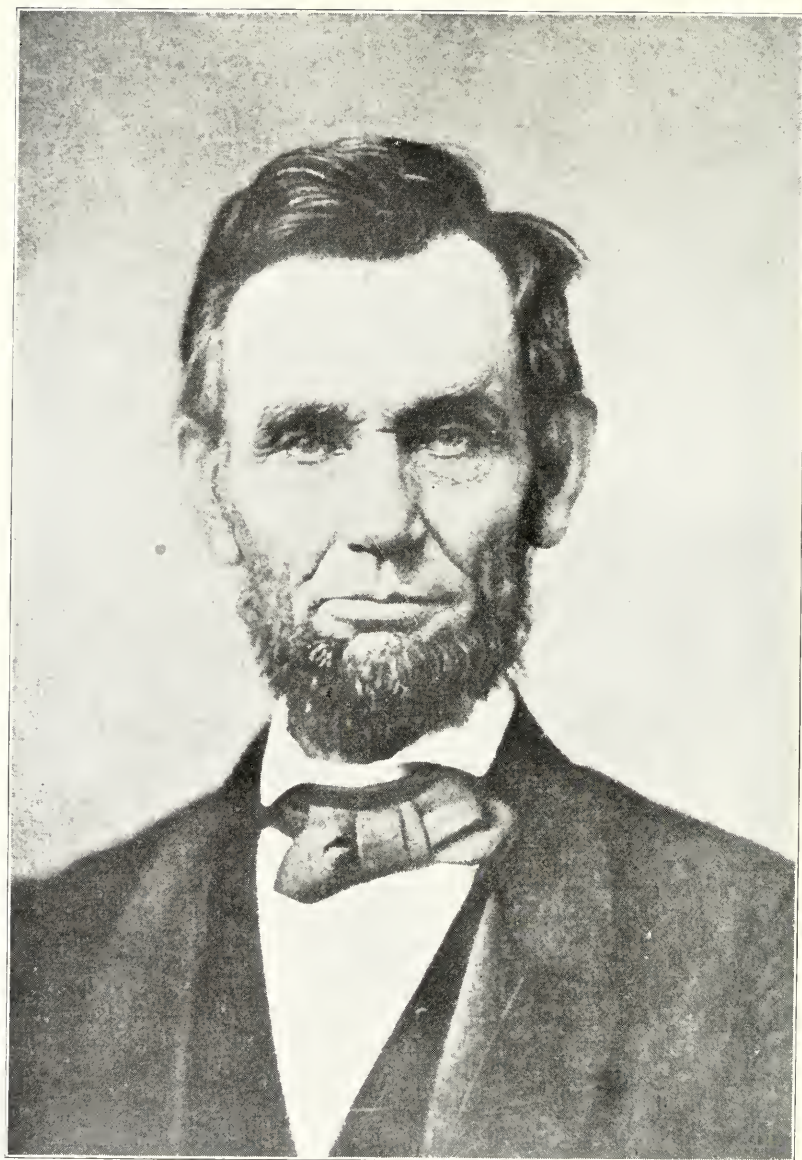
These two volumes are designed to help religious workers employ in the most effective way the dramatization method of religious teaching. The first volume has been successfully used for several years by children's teachers. The second book is now published to guide church directors in their teacher-training.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

5810 Ellis Avenue

Chicago, Illinois





ABRAHAM LINCOLN
From Rothschild's *Lincoln, Master of Men*.

Frontispiece to the Open Court.

THE OPEN COURT

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and
The Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

VOL. XXXVII (No. 9)

SEPTEMBER 1923

No. 808

Copyright by the Open Court Publishing Company, 1923

THE AMERICAN PULPIT ON THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

BY WILLIAM E. BARTON*

A MINISTER and his family sat down to breakfast on Saturday morning, April 15, 1865. The minister remarked:

"My Easter sermon is almost finished. I have been working on it all the week. I am confident that it is the very best Easter sermon which I have ever prepared. Never before was there opportunity for a sermon such as I hope to deliver tomorrow. Our country has risen from the dead. Last Sunday, Palm Sunday, General Lee surrendered. The war is over. Our country has come to its resurrection. We are one people, a free people, risen from the crucifixion of war. Our nation must now walk with Christ in newness of life. I have said all this in my sermon. I have just a few finishing touches to put upon it, and the sermon will be complete. I think we shall have a fine day and a large congregation, and I am hoping to have a message appropriate for the day."

Just then a knock was heard at the door, a heavy and excited knock. A neighbor entered, and said:

"President Lincoln was shot last night, and is believed to be dying! The Secretary of State, also, was attacked, and by this time is probably dead!"

The breakfast was left unfinished. Family prayers were said, briefly and with choking voice. Then the minister hastened to the village, and waited for the bulletins that came in swift succession over the wires. The President was still unconscious. The President was sinking. The end was near. The President was dying. Finally the message came, "President Lincoln died at 7:22." This news arrived shortly before 8 o'clock.

Strong men wept like women when that message was received.

*Author of "The Soul of Abraham Lincoln," "The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln," etc.

For a time there was a sense of bewilderment. No one knew what to do or say.

Then there was a conference of the leading men of the village as to whether a mass-meeting should be held that night, or whether to wait for the Sunday services. It was agreed that the Town Hall should be draped in mourning, and that residences and public places should display tokens of grief.

There was some excitement, also; for it was alleged that a "Copperhead" had been heard to say that he was glad Lincoln was dead. There was talk of lynching him.

The minister returned home late for his luncheon. He had eaten little for breakfast, and he had no appetite for his midday meal. He was weary and depressed. While he was eating he was interrupted by some men who called to consult him concerning some details of the memorial service.

When the half-eaten meal was finished, he said to his wife:

"That Easter sermon will not do. I must prepare another."

He went to his study, and thumbed his Bible, looking for a text. There seemed nothing in the Bible for a time like that. He leaned his aching head upon his hands, and tears dropped on the pages of the sacred book. Then he knelt and prayed, and found a text and began to write.

In what town did this occur?

It happened in a hundred, nay a thousand, perhaps ten thousand parsonages and in cities and villages, all over the United States. In **some such fashion as this**, the ministers of the whole country sat down on Saturday afternoon or night to prepare new sermons in place of those which they had already completed in preparation for an Easter of wholly different character. Some of these ministers participated in mass meetings on Saturday night, which used some of their material and shortened their time of preparation. On Sunday morning they stood, all of them, before congregations that completely filled their churches, and they spoke such words as God gave to them in that hour.

Even without this event, the churches would have been filled on that Sunday. Easter is a day for overflowing congregations, and that was to have been a memorable Easter. But the death of Lincoln brought out to church men who rarely attended a service of worship. Perhaps there never had been a Sunday when so many people attended church services in America as did on that day. When

the ministers entered their pulpits, after a night spent largely in their studies in meditation, prayer and rapid writing, they found the churches filled.

What did those ministers say? Have we any material for an answer?

We have, first, two volumes that were printed, one in New York and one in Boston, each containing twenty four sermons. The New York volume contains sermons delivered in Brooklyn and New York; the other volume has sermons delivered in Boston.

Then, we have nearly three hundred of those sermons in pamphlet form; the number includes sermons delivered within a few days after the death of Lincoln; but those of greatest interest are those preached on that first Sunday.

Then, we have the daily newspapers of Monday, April 17. These, if we had time to read any considerable number of them, would give us illuminating information. There is abundant material for a study of the manner in which the American pulpit met this crisis, and it is a rewarding study.

The first fact which impresses a student of these sermons is that the ministers chose good texts. However inadequate they felt themselves to be, they were able to go to their Bibles and discover strong, comforting words of Scripture. There is hardly a commonplace text to be found.

Some of these men selected passages which were a confession that the mystery of this calamity was utterly beyond their own attempt at explanation. They had such texts as "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm xLvi:10); "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." (Isaiah XLIV:15). Some of them heard the people's cry, "Watchman, what of the night?" and had to answer sorrowfully, "The morning cometh, and also the night." (Isaiah xxi:12). Some of them cried out with David in his lament over Saul and Jonathan, "Thy beauty, O Israel, is slain upon the high places! How are the mighty fallen!" (2 Samuel i:19). Others turned to his tribute to Abner, and asked, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" (2 Samuel iii:38). Some went to the New Testament and found comforting promises from the words of Jesus. Others found strong comfort in the promises concerning the stability of those who trust in God.

One goes through the list and finds occasion to appreciate the resourcefulness of these ministers and to commend the variety of their

texts, all strong and good. Of one or two of them we shall have occasion to speak more particularly.

These ministers did not, as a rule, profess to be able to understand all mysteries. There was almost complete absence of a feeling of the preachers' glib confidence in their ability to tell what God meant by permitting the murder to occur.

Although so hurriedly prepared, these sermons almost without exception, fall into very good homiletic form. The men who composed them had in general, good training. They were able to meet an emergency. The sermons followed well arranged plans. While no two are alike, a composite view of a considerable number of them shows this as a fairly typical plan:

Exordium—

The appalling tragedy: the swift change from joy to sorrow: the conviction that this is a time to be silent and listen to God rather than a time for any one man to assume to teach others. The Bible as a source of comfort. The text as befitting the occasion.

The Analysis—

- (1) An estimate of the character of Lincoln.
- (2) A plea for self-restraint, and for justice tempered with mercy.
- (3) The duty of loyalty
 - (a) To God.
 - (b) To good government.
 - (c) To the new President.

Conclusion—

God still reigns, and will make even man's wrath to praise Him. An exhortation to righteousness and the duties of peace, with confidence in the cause for which Lincoln gave his life.

A study of the Lincoln sermons of 1865 calls for an examination of certain others than those delivered on Easter Sunday. There are six groups of these Lincoln sermons.

1. *Fast Day, Thursday, April 13, 1865.*

Massachusetts had for many years observed an annual Fast Day, appointed by the Governor on a day in April. Originally designated as a day of fasting and prayer, it degenerated into a day of spring sport, until about 30 years ago, when it was abolished, and now in the State at large April 19 is celebrated in memory of the Battles of Lexington, and Concord, while Boston has as additional holiday, March 17, ostensibly in commemoration of the evacuation of Boston, but really in honor of St. Patrick.

In 1865 this Fast Day was proclaimed for Thursday, April 13. When the day arrived, Lee's army had surrendered. The services of the day took on the character of a day of thanksgiving. In several instances ministers frankly changed their sermons from Fast-Day sermons to Thanksgiving sermons. In several instances they took as their text, "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" (Matthew ix:15). They gave over all thought of fasting, and made it a day of rejoicing. In several instances the men who preached on Thursday from this text returned to it, and on the following Sunday preached from the other half of the verse, "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast." Of these were Rev. R. H. Neale and Rev. George H. Hepworth, both of Boston.

The day of fasting was turned into one of feasting and rejoicing; the day of gladness was turned to sorrow.

2. *Easter Sunday, April 16, 1865.*

This was the day immediately following that on which Lincoln died, and is that of whose sermons we are particularly to speak.

3. *Wednesday, April 19.*

This was the day of Lincoln's funeral in the White House. In many cities and towns funeral services were held at the same hour. The most notable of the sermons of this date is that of Lincoln's pastor, Rev. P. D. Gurley.

4. *Sunday, April 23.*

Some churches, notably some of the Episcopal churches, had already so arranged their Easter programs that they could not easily be changed. The services were elaborate, and included a communion service. There was little time for an address on Lincoln that day. In some churches other than the Episcopal the minister felt stunned and incapable of speaking in any adequate manner on so profound a mystery and with no time for preparation. But on the next Sunday, April 23, and in at least one instance, that of Dr. J. P. Thompson of Broadway Tabernacle, on April 30, some of these men delivered carefully prepared discourses. The two most notable of those of April 23 were by Theodore L. Cuyler and Henry Ward Beecher, both of whom were at Fort Sumter at the time of the assassination and did not return to their pulpits in time for Easter.

The most notable of the addresses of Sunday, April 30, was that delivered in Chicago by Hon. Schuyler Colfax, and was the city's religious and patriotic preparation for the reception of the body of

Lincoln, which on that night was to leave Indianapolis, arriving in Chicago at noon on Monday.

5. *Thursday, May 4.*

This was the day of Lincoln's burial. The funeral oration was by Bishop Simpson of the Methodist Church. A number of addresses, not all of them by ministers, were delivered in other cities on the same day.

6. *Thursday, June 1.*

President Lincoln, responding to a serenade on the evening of Tuesday, April 11, 1865, said:

"We meet this evening not in sorrow but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared and will be duly promulgated."

That proclamation was never issued. Instead, President Andrew Johnson proclaimed Thursday, May 25, as a day of humiliation and mourning. Later he changed the day to Thursday, June 1, Ascension Day. On that occasion meetings were held and addresses delivered.

Of these later addresses, with the exception of those of Dr. Gurley and Bishop Simpson, and with those still more notable exceptions, of Beecher and Cuyler, it must be confessed that they do not rise in interest above the level of the sermons of Easter.

A week's time gave opportunity for more capable preparation, for quotations from Lincoln's speeches and proclamations, perhaps for better literary finish, but the sermons were more labored, and on the whole not better than the messages that were wrung out of the broken hearts of the ministers as they toiled and prayed over their sermons on the night following Lincoln's death.

Among the notable sermons preached in Episcopal Churches on Easter was that by Rev. Dr. William F. Morgan, Rector of St. Thomas Church in New York City. This sermon, entitled "Joy Darkened," was followed by another, a week later, entitled "The Prolonged Lament." Between these two was an address delivered on the day of Lincoln's funeral. These three addresses were printed in a memorial pamphlet. The rector said of them:

"These sermons, written as some of you know, with the utmost haste, have little merit except as they embody and give expression to

the horror and bitter grief which the assassination of our noble President instantly awoke."

The same might have been said, perhaps, of all the sermons of this group. Yet this would not be the whole truth. The sermons of Dr. Morgan, and to a large degree of the others, did more than express the congregations' horror and grief. They also uttered profound expressions of loyalty, comfort and trust.

The sudden change of tone of all the newspapers that had been hostile to Lincoln is noted in more than one of the sermons preached. Not on Easter Sunday, but within a week following, Rev. William T. Wilson of Albany, in a service on April 19, the day of Lincoln's Washington funeral, said:

"How fully the moral virtues of the late President had commended themselves to the appreciation of his country, had its best witness in the unvarying tone of the popular press. I have looked in vain for any expression of detraction. The friends and the opponents of his administration have vied with each other in generous tributes to his memory."

The limitations of this essay do not permit a study of the formal funeral orations delivered in connection with the death of Lincoln. These included that of Hon. Schuyler Colfax, delivered at a mass-meeting in Bryan Hall, Chicago, on Sunday afternoon, April 30, the day before the arrival of the body of Lincoln; the eulogy by Hon. Henry Champion Deming before the Legislature of Connecticut; the address in Springfield, Mass., of Dr. J. G. Holland, one of the first to undertake a complete biography of Lincoln; and a number of other speeches by eminent men, including, and most notable of all, the oration by Hon. George Bancroft before the two houses of Congress. Brief mention should be made, however, of two sermons, which though partaking of the character of funeral orations, were still of a homiletic character. The first of these was the sermon delivered in the White House on April 19, by Lincoln's pastor, Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, D. D. It was a dignified and comforting address, prepared under great difficulties, and has a secure place among tributes to Lincoln. The other was by Bishop Matthew Simpson, and was delivered at Springfield, Illinois, on the day of Lincoln's burial. While this was more nearly an oration, it still was a tender, pastoral tribute, and was justly esteemed a tribute worthy of the occasion. This paper, however, confines its survey to the sermons that sprang out of the hearts of local pastors in the course of their regular parish ministrations.

The spirit in which the ministers approached their task on the Sunday morning following the assassination finds illustration in the frank introduction of the theme by several of them. The opening paragraph of the sermon of Rev. James P. Eells is an illustration. He announced as his text:

"I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."—Psalm cxxi. 1, 2.

His opening words were:

"It is impossible for me to preach the sermon I designed for this morning. My heart beats too closely in sympathy with your own to allow the consideration of any ordinary theme, while I feel wholly unfitted to speak to you on that which will give place to no other. Never within my recollection—perhaps, never since the formation of our government—have the masses of the people been more profoundly moved with consternation and grief than within the past twenty-four hours. I went through our great thoroughfares of business soon after the first awful tidings reached us yesterday morning, that I might learn something more definite, even though it should be the confirmation of my fears; and the faces of all classes of men presented the most sad, yet most eloquent, commentary on the great calamity that has befallen the nation. The laborers, gathered on the corners of the streets, were speaking in low and mournful tones of the President's death. The companies around the bulletin boards read the dispatch which sealed all hope with the manifest conviction of the public loss. The men of business greeted me only with exclamations which made known their deep concern in so solemn an emergency. Political distinctions were not regarded—there was a universal feeling of distress and astonishment that the two chief officers of the government should be the victims of an assassin. Such a day as yesterday has rarely been known in the history of nations. Such a Sabbath as this has come to us in no part of the terrible history of the past four years; and we should be thankful that its sacred calm, its blessed privileges, its hallowed inspirations of peace, and comfort, and trust, and hope come so soon to relieve and cheer a Christian People."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 219-220).

The feeling of inadequacy to meet so tragic a situation was spoken by Rev. Dr. A. P. Rogers. Referring to some deep sorrow that had come to him at the beginning of his New York pastorate, a sorrow with which members of his congregation were evidently familiar, he said:

“Never since that fearful blow which brought desolation to my own household in the first month of my ministry here have I come to this pulpit with such a lingering step, with such a burdened spirit. I have never feared for my country’s final triumph and safety. I will not fear for her now. But a dispensation so unexpected, so mysterious, so overwhelming in itself, its circumstances, and its possible results, may well make us tremble and bow ourselves before the mighty hand of God. I confess to you that I have shrunk from meeting you in this house of God to-day. I had anticipated and prepared for a very different occasion. I had hoped to welcome Easter Sunday under circumstances grateful alike to the Christian and the patriot, and with anthems of joy, and lessons of Holy Scripture, appropriate to this blessed Christian festival, to have greeted you in the sanctuary. But the providence of God has inaugurated a different method, and altered the key-note of the service of this hour. I know that there is but one thought uppermost in the minds of all who have assembled here. It is not the thought of Easter, not the thought of resurrection, life, gladness, and hope, which would express itself in a hallelujah of grateful praise. It is the thought of the awful event which has clothed a nation in mourning, and exchanged the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. From the capital of our land, where our Chief Magistrate lies in death, the victim of a foul and fiendish deed, comes a sad, stern message, which we cannot ignore. It has gone over the lightning’s track to every city and village from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It has hushed the accents of joy and triumph; it has oppressed the national heart with sorrow; and there is probably not a pulpit in the loyal States to-day which has not taken its key-note from this calamity. For myself, my thoughts, so far as I could rally them, have turned to that great truth, of the sovereignty of God in calamity, which is so forcibly illustrated in this direful hour. Atheism has no consolation to offer us now. Philosophy is cold and comfortless. Faith must find something firm and durable to rest on amid these dissolving shadows of earth and time. ‘Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?’ Above the wailing of a stricken nation, above the tide of disappointed hope, outraged sensibility, or vindictive passion, the awful voice of Jehovah is heard, saying: ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’”—*Our Martyred President*, pp. 242-243).

The first feeling of helpless bewilderment which came to the ministers on receipt of the news of the assassination was confessed by some of them, as by Rev. Samuel K. Lothrop, of Boston:

"Brethren, I feel almost incompetent to direct your thoughts this morning, as I have scarcely been able for the last twenty-four hours to collect and guide my own. Language seems impotent to give utterance to all that I think and feel. But, doubtless, your experience has been similar to my own. Yesterday, after the first outburst of my sorrow, and, I am not ashamed to add, of righteous indignation against the fiendish author of this terrific tragedy, the instincts of faith and the habit of my heart prevailed, and I heard, as it were, the Holy Spirit breathing in my ear the solemn and sublime injunction, "Be still, and know that I am God;" and there was borne in upon my mind, also, that declaration of the patriarch Jacob, uttered for the comfort of his children as they were about to be deprived of the counsels of his wisdom and the joy of his presence, "Behold I die, but God shall be with you." Our first duty, my friends, in this sad hour, now, as in all great emergencies, public and private, the only help, comfort, and strength of our souls is to turn unto God, and lean upon Him."—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 247).

Rev. Dr. Samuel T. Spear of New York began his sermon with this bit of autobiography:

"I meet you to-day, my friends and fellow-countrymen, under circumstances of the greatest public grief and sorrow. I had risen early Saturday morning to complete the first two sermons, having for my theme "Victory and its Duties," and expecting to have preached that sermon to you at this time. I waited for the morning paper, and when it came it brought to me, as it did to you, the intelligence of the most awful event in the history of this country. The carrier greeted me with a tearful and saddened countenance, exclaiming: "Sad news this morning! The President is shot!" I could scarcely believe it true; yet I opened the paper and read the dispatches, and saw that it was so. Ere this the news has spread through all the parts of the land, kindling emotions in the hearts of the nation which no words can describe. But yesterday we were joyous and hopeful, thanking God for his mercies, and congratulating each other upon the bright prospects of the future. Our recent victories gave promise of a speedy and lasting peace. We saw, as we supposed, the end of this terrible war. How suddenly and how awfully have our emotions been changed into those of the deepest sorrow! Who can refuse to weep?"—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 289).

Rev. Dr. William Adams made a sad confession of the changed character of the occasion and of the complete change in the character of his sermon:

"Few are the words which are needed to-day. God has spoken, and we are dumb. These funereal emblems—this sombre, melancholy black—these pale faces of anxious, sorrowful men; this leaden weight at our hearts, announce the terrible affliction which has befallen the nation in the sudden and violent death of its honored President.

I had expected to address you this morning, in a joyous strain, on the most joyous event in the history of our world. I had prepared a discourse on the resurrection of our Lord, and the rising of individuals and nations in him to a new life. But the circumstances in which we are assembled are so appalling that all ordinary topics are for the moment entirely superseded. When God speaks out of the whirlwind it would betray profane insensibility not to pause and consider. Never, I will not say in *our* history, but in the history of the world, was there such a conjunction of events as that which, in an instant, has thrown this nation from the heights of joy into profoundest mourning."—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 329).

Dr. Charles S. Robinson, who was not accustomed to admit his own insufficiency for a task, said this:

I said, we have got the flag back again on Sumter. So we have. But only at half-mast. It reached the staff just in time to droop. Men began to cheer—suddenly they turned to wailing. The triumph seems a mockery. Victory waits recognition unheeded, for the bells are tolling. He who made our success welcome is not here to share it. ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the honored and beloved head of the nation, is no more!

"My brethren, bear me record here to-day. This pulpit has never uttered one timid, troubled word in these four years. I have not lost heart for a moment in the essential righteousness of our cause, nor confidence in the final success that would come to it. You will misunderstand my language now, and mistake my temper, if you imagine I am cowed into any wavering, startled into any irresolution, or grieved into any distrust, by the terrible events of the hour. But I shall not attempt to conceal from you that I am shocked more than ever before, and under the cloud of God's providence as I never expected to be. I do not know the meaning of this awful transaction. I could almost wish it was the custom to wear sackcloth, and put ashes on mourners' heads. All the day would I fittingly sit silent under the shadow of a common grief with you. I speak truly when I say, I have met no greater sorrow in my manly life than this. 'I behave myself as though he had been my friend or brother; I bow

down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.' And all this sensibility I know you are sharing with me.

"The feeling which rests on each mind and heart today is not a simple feeling. To us all it is, in some measure, undefined. I cannot be of any real help to you, I fear, save in the way of giving you an analysis of your grief, and suggesting the form of its expression."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 86-87).

Rev. Dr. Cyrus A. Bartol of Boston gives this picture of the hours preceding his appearance in the pulpit:

"I am unable to give, and you perhaps indisposed to receive, any regular preaching to-day. If I can but tell you what was in the air; if I can voice your feeling and my own, still more that spirit of God which is ready to be voiced by human lips, the real end of our meeting will, however, informally, be reached. I lay aside therefore my written discourse. Though it be ecclesiastically a festival this morning, no Romish or other rubric has a right to prescribe our theme. I take no text save from the Bible of providence, the great book of events, God's finger is still writing in burning words every hour. I accept his subject, and defer my own.

"I need not even tell the youngest of you what has occurred. How all too suddenly it was known! How on the wires it flashed, how in the atmosphere that overhangs, and in every wind that sweeps across our borders, it brooded and was borne! The craped and drooping flag, the slow-sounding bell, the minute-gun told it; and had the ocean-telegraph, yet to succeed, only served, the brain and heart of the world would be trembling with one sympathy. California, from our farthest bounds, is with us in the same sensation to-day.

"I shrink from naming the deed by which we are so stirred. An actor in a theatre performs a part, in a scene of real life, which extinguishes all the interest of the mimic stage. What a contrast the last tragedy to our late jubilee! God seems to have chosen sacred days for his messages,—on two successive Sundays appointing celebrations of victory,—and now giving to Good Friday and Easter a new association indeed in Christian minds!

"But, on this dark day, my purpose with you is not a lament, but comfort. Let me try to mention some consolation."—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 51-52).

That Lincoln was shot in a theater was a shock to the ministers, hardly any of whom in that day believed in theaters. They were hard put to it to explain the matter. They bluntly said that a thea-

ter was not a good place for a man to die. Rev. Robert Lowry, prolific writer of hymns, faced the problem squarely:

"And now I come to meet a question which will disturb every Christian mind. The President was shot in the theatre. We would have had otherwise. Pulpits will speak of it. The press will comment on it. The people in the streets will talk about it. Let us look at it with a calm judgment.

"It cannot be said that the President went to the theatre because he loved to be there. He was not, in the common acceptation of the term, a theatre-goer. It is known that he went with great reluctance. He was in no state of mind to enjoy a scene like that. But the newspapers had announced that the President and General Grant would be there on that evening. The people thronged the house to do honor to the great men who had saved the country. General Grant, who had no time to waste in amusements, left Washington on the evening train, to superintend the removal of his family to Philadelphia. The President knew that the people would be disappointed if they saw neither of the faces that they delighted to honor. Weary as he was, he decided to go. He went, not to see a comedy, but *to gratify the people*. If he had a weakness, it was that he might contribute to the joy of the people. For the people he had spent four toilsome years in lofty self-abnegation. For the people he gave up his life on the night of that fatal Friday.

"There is another consideration. In all the countries of Christendom, the rulers are expected to visit the theatre as an *act of state*. We may deplore the custom, but it is, nevertheless universal. It is an observance that stretches back through long generations. There is a supposed necessity for it. It is only there that the Executive can receive the formal acclaims of all classes of citizens. There they feel free to give him the tribute of popular plaudits. They cannot so recognize him at church, nor in public receptions, nor in casual appearances abroad. The President's box, like the reception room, is an arrangement of state policy. It is an established point of contact between the chief magistrate and the people. From a religious stand-point, we cannot approve of it. But we must not confound the act of the President, prompted by high considerations of state, with the visit of a private citizen, moved thereunto by the low desire of a mere selfish gratification."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 310-311).

Not many of the ministers entered into theological discussions, or attempted to discriminate between what God causes and what God

permits, but Rev. James Reed of the New Church in Boston, ventured thus far into Theology:

"The Lord, I say, has permitted this shocking deed. But let us remember that He has not caused it. He is the cause of no evil whatsoever. But all evil has its origin in man himself, and is occasioned by the abuse or perversion of his divinely given freedom. No belief could be more false, than that the Lord put it into the heart of the murderer to do this thing. On the contrary, His infinite love was extended over him, as it is over all of us, to lead him to put away the fiendish lust and thought which impelled him to the fiendish act. But he would not yield to any divine or heavenly influence, working within and upon him. He listened to the voice of hell in preference to that of heaven. And the Lord, knowing what was best for all concerned, interposed with none of those events, which we call accidents, but permitted him to carry out his bloody purpose."—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 299).

Several of these ministers had personally met Lincoln. Among them were Henry Ward Beecher and Theodore L. Cuyler. Rev. R. H. Neale, who had served in the Christian Commission, related this incident:

"I remember the interview which he had with the Christian Commission at our first meeting in Washington. He received us cordially, and spoke warmly of the enterprise. 'Nothing,' he said, 'is better for the soldiers than to be followed with Christian influences,' and seemed grateful for the privilege of giving to the cause his official sanction. 'Whatever the government could do to give to our agents free access to camp and hospital should be done.'"—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 166).

Rev. Dr. Elbert S. Porter of New York related this incident:

"In the summer of 1862, I passed an hour with the President in his summer retreat at the Old Soldiers' Home. There were but three others present, and the conversation was free and unrestrained. He spoke of slavery as a thing which had grown up with the nation and grown into it—said that one section was no more responsible than another for its original existence here, and that the whole nation having suffered from it, ought to share in efforts for its gradual removal. His mind at the time was impressed with the necessity of adopting a scheme of gradual and compensated emancipation. That scheme, however, found no favor among the insurgents, and was violently condemned by certain organs of opinion at the North.

When, however, foreign intervention became imminent, the President issued as a war measure the proclamation of freedom to the slaves. It was a measure concerning which men have differed—but that it was believed by the President to be necessary for the preservation of the Union, I have no manner of doubt.”—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 237).

Rev. Dr. Samuel Lothrop of Boston said :

I remember, in the only interview I ever had with him, in the autumn of 1861, at Washington, in company with twenty or thirty other persons, each of whom had his special purpose in the visit, and went up in his turn to present it, that I was at first amused, not to say offended, at what seemed an undignified levity, and a marvellous facility in conveying or enforcing his answers to the various requests presented, by telling some story, the logic of whose application to the case in point was unmistakably clear. During this part of the interview I was led to wonder where was the power? how had this man so impressed himself upon the people of the country, as to be elevated to the position he occupied? That wonder ceased, that inquiry was answered, before I left the presence. A lady made application for the release of her brother, who had been arrested for disloyalty by the major-general commanding in the vicinity of Frederick, Maryland. The President declined to interfere, on the ground that he knew nothing of the circumstances but what she had told him, and that the arrest and detention were, necessarily within the discretionary power of the major-general commanding in the district. Considerable conversation ensued, and some tears were shed; and, at length, the President consented to indorse upon her petition, which was to be forwarded to the major-general, that he had no objection to the release, provided the general thought it compatible with the public safety. As he gave her back the petition, with this endorsement, he said, and I think I remember very nearly his exact words: “Madam, I desire to say that there is no man who feels a deeper or more tender sympathy than I do, with all cases of individual sorrow, anxiety, and grief like yours, which these unhappy troubles occasion; but I see not how I can prevent or relieve them. I am here to administer this Government, to uphold the Constitution, to maintain the Union of the United States. That is my oath; before God and man, I must, I mean to the best of my ability, to keep that oath; and, however much my personal feelings may sympathize with individual sorrows and anxieties, I must not yield to them. They must all give way before the great public exigencies of the country!” I shall never forget the

simple majesty, the grandeur and force with which these few sentences were uttered, or their effect. In a moment the room was still as death. The little audience that had, just before, been laughing at his stories, were awed and impressed, thrilled through and through by these few solemn and earnest words. They were a revelation of the man. They made me feel that there was a power in him that gave him a right to be where he was. That right he has vindicated more and more every hour since his first inauguration. That he has made no mistakes, that he was at all times superior to the weaknesses of our nature, or the faults of humanity, it would be neither wise nor truthful to maintain. I look for light and explanation to be thrown upon some acts and incidents of his administration; but I have confidence that that light will reveal reasons which will show them to have been wise and right, and establish a patriotic integrity of purpose that will do him honor."—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 257-259).

(*To be continued.*)