

THE AMERICAN PULPIT ON THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

BY WILLIAM E. BARTON

Reference has been made to the fact that for many generations, and until recent years, Massachusetts observed an Annual Fast Day, proclaimed by the Governor, and observed more or less generally in the churches. This day occurred in 1865 on Thursday, April 13. Rev. Dr. George H. Hepworth selected for his sermon on the death of Lincoln the remaining portion of a text, the first part of which he had used on the previous Thursday. He read his text:

“Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.” (Matthew ix:15).

He then said:

“Brethren, last Thursday morning I read to you the first part of the verse which I have chosen for my text. It was a day appointed for fasting, humiliation, and prayer; but so signal had been the victories of the few preceding days, that this people, with one accord, united their voices in a great chorus of thanksgiving. Little dreamed we then, that so soon the latter clause of my text would call this mourning nation to the saddest duty of its life.

“Who can measure the great grief of this people? The blow came so unexpectedly, that we hardly yet know how to express our feelings in fitting words. Each man weeps for a friend in the loss of this our Foremost American Citizen. When the dreadful tidings first flashed upon our hearts, it seemed too appalling to be credible. We struggled against it. The wires have played us false, we said, and we almost grew indignant with the tamed lightning which but a few hours before had thrown the whole North into such a bewilderment

of joy as it told us the story of the fall of Richmond, and which now changed our joy into the very bewilderment of woe as it wrote upon the bulletin, "The President is dead!" We did not know how much we loved that good man, nor how much confidence we had reposed in him, until the fearful certainty of our loss assured us. Was ever public officer so sincerely mourned before? Every home of the North will drop its tear of genuine sorrow upon his grave, for mothers sent their boys to do the dreadful work of war all the more willingly because our commander-in-chief was so prudent, careful, and thoughtful; every hamlet will learn the lesson of the hour from its draped pulpit when the preacher shall tell how fell the unsullied patriot from the affections of the whole people into the bosom of immortal life; every city, from where the Atlantic wave moans its sorrow to the rising sun to where the Pacific sighs out its grief to the sinking orb, testifies its respect and love for the great man, by those emblems which sadly decorate every public building, if not every private residence, and which always tell us that the people's heart is heavy."—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 109-110).

Rev. Wheelock Craig, speaking at New Bedford, Mass., on Fast Day, April 13, had protested against any attempt to limit the joy of that day:

"It should be a day of Thanksgiving. The things essential to a thanksgiving are that one be joyful, and that he acknowledge God as the author of his joy. We have abundant occasion at this time for the fulfillment of both of these conditions. We cannot expect ever to have so much public occasion for it again. It is a time when devout joy should fill the heart of every man and woman and child in the land. There are some who appear to feel that they and their chosen associates have a monopoly of the joy, and are entitled to turn it into a secular and partisan channel; and when they meet persons not of their own clique, there is a look in their eye, or an utterance from their lips, which says, What! are you glad too? what right have you to participate in this gladness? Such feelings evince very great narrowness and illiberality of feeling, and ignorance of human nature. Some of the most joyful hearts today are those whom the Pharisees of loyalty and patriotism would shut out of their synagogue; it is the very fervor of their yearning for such a day of peace as this, which has given them hesitancy in approving of some of the measures which, under the good providence of God, have ripened into this auspicious consummation; and he is a cur of the kennel, and a foul fly in the ointment, who mars the jubilant har-

mony of the hour by obtruding such objections. Let the men of every shade of opinion, in oblivion of the past, come freely forward upon the broad national platform, and join us in making the welkin ring with exultant shouts. Who can have it in his heart to think of private feuds? All who occupy that platform hold out to everyone accepting it the hand of welcome.”—(*Two Sermons*, I, pp. 6-7).

But on Sunday, April 23, he said:

“It was indeed true, as we agreed a week ago, that we were in a dream. We were smitten down and stunned by the terrible blow. And all our utterances, in those first hours of our dismay, partook of incoherency of somnambulism. On Wednesday, the day of the funeral solemnities, our slumbers, instead of being dispelled, had grown deeper and more bewildering than ever. Our minds were taken up with strange, superficial aspects of our condition, and we but dimly discerned them after all. The hurried confusion of those swift, wild days, the midnight alarm, the nocturnal vigils, the constant thrill of the nerves, and the weight upon the brain, the draped buildings, and the silent, grotesque, melancholy streets—these absorbed our thoughts, and precluded reflection upon profounder elements of the distressing theme. I am not sure that we have attained a thorough spiritual calm even yet; but, to a certain extent, the heaven has had opportunity to fulfill its work in our spirits; and we are therefore better prepared than we then were to do what we did not then attempt—that is, investigate the full nature of our calamity, and form an estimate of our loss.”—(*Two Sermons*, II, p. 3-4).

He declared that he was not a politician, but he called for loyalty to God and the Government.

“There are not a few of us who can never be politicians, in the technical sense. We join no organizations. We acknowledge no partisan designations. We march under no other than the national banner. We incur, without a murmur, the obloquy and the misrepresentation to which this course subjects us; for such a course is the tribute exacted of us by our vocation, by our training, by our habits of life. It is not in us to be politicians; and the attempt to be such would detract from our Christian effectiveness in our chosen lines of service. But we are patriots. We are loyal men. Our hearts and our voices are with the government in every hour of its extremity. And as, in the days of the taking of Fort Sumter, we said to President Lincoln, and to those enlisted with him in supporting the government, so now we say to President Johnson and to his adherents, We are with you; count us in on your side; our help is not

of much account, but such as it is, you shall have it. Keep the ship of state headed as President Lincoln had headed her, when his patriotic grasp fell from the helm, and all that we can do, we will do, to assist you in sailing her. And let no man of such a spirit give way to despair. God will help us, and all shall yet be well. When President Taylor died, men's hearts failed them for fear. On that occasion Henry Clay happened to be visiting Newport. A friend, calling on him, uttered the observation, the nation cannot stand up under this blow. You are wrong, rejoined Mr. Clay; President Taylor was a great man, and his death inflicts a great loss; but no man's life is indispensable to the prosperity of this government. Let us partake of that trustful spirit evinced by Henry Clay. Let us feel that underneath us are the everlasting arms."—(II, pp. 11-12).

The contrast between Thursday's jubilant fast and Sunday's tragic Easter was mentioned by many of the preachers in New England. Rev. W. R. Nicholson said:

"I know how hard it is, at times, for the stricken heart, under the shock of terrible and scathing bereavement, to school itself (I will not say into submission, or resignation, for these are, comparatively, tame words) into joyous, hopeful, filial trust.

"I know what extraordinary and mighty reasons there are to tempt us, in spite of all the signs of wise design and overruling Providence in the past, to treat this event as being too *ill-timed* to furnish occasion for the exercise of these Christian graces, or to be regarded as anything else than a bad chance-stroke, full of disastrous portent to the fortunes of our country.

I know how prone are the shocked sensibilities of some to arouse the fear of strange evils that throw their shadows before, (as a patriotic woman and mother expressed it yesterday), of a Reign of Terror like that which racked revolutionary France in the days of Robespierre.

"I know how a dreadful depression of spirit is likely to be produced by the contrast between the tone of the last public service in this sanctuary and the tone of the present; between the glowing scene of Thursday, when a Fast was turned into a Festival by that last triumph of our arms, which seemed like a new proclamation from the Supreme Governor of the world, and the more than funereal gloom that overcasts our lurid sky at this hour, and turns the greatest Festival of Christendom into a Fast, to the sickened heart of Christian patriotism. I know this, and I feel the oppressiveness of the

murky air laden with rumors of coming trouble.”—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 133-134).

In the Episcopal churches it appears to have been more difficult to change the order of service to fit the calamity. At St. Paul's Church in Boston the regular service proceeded. The rector, Rev. W. R. Nicholson, told his congregation that on another day, it would have been otherwise; but as it was Easter, he asked pardon for “one moment's digression from our usual course.”

The Rev. Dr. Nicholson spoke as follows:

“My Brethren, in the extraordinary circumstances in which we meet together this morning, I feel unwilling to begin our joyous Easter services without a brief word of introduction. I am sure you will pardon me for this one moment's digression from our usual course.

“Easter is the synonym of joy and triumph, and Easter-day has come. How sweetly its blessed light has dawned upon us this morning. And yet it has brought with it the saddest tidings—yes, in an important sense, the saddest tidings—which have ever concerned us since we were a people. To-day, our whole land is filled with sorrow and mourning; not only so, but with the keenest sense of national shame and mortification. It is a dreadful public calamity—in every point of view a dreadful public calamity; and certainly it is God's call to us for a yet deeper self-humiliation. The instinct of my heart would be to observe this, the first Sunday after so grievous an affliction, with such outward expressions of sorrow in our public worship as might befit a worshipping congregation. Were it *another* Sunday, the irrepressible grief of our hearts would require us to do so. But it is Easter—the Queen Festival amongst all the glories of Gospel Truth. Oh, we cannot shove aside the grandeurs, the heavenly grandeurs, of our Savior's resurrection! It is the culmination of all saving truth; the only light for our darkness, the only joy for grief, the only solace in our deepest troubles. Were it the festival of an earthly joy, instinctively we should keep silence; but our Easter joys are the only medicine, as well for our national wounds, as for the individual heart.

“If properly looked at then; if these services are not construed as an æsthetic show, a mere parade; if we bear in mind that it is God's own truth which here concerns us; surely nothing could be more appropriate, even for so direful a calamity, than are these Easter services. Let our hearts be chastened; let us sink in self-humiliation deep and sincere; let us lift our eyes to Jesus in faith strong and

simple—then, all the more because of our present national grievance, oh, all the more, strike the very highest notes of Easter joy and triumph!

And may the benediction of our God descend and brood over us, in these our precious services!"—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 125-126).

James Freeman Clark would appear to have used a considerable portion of his Easter sermon. His text was, "Who hath abolished death" (2 Timothy 1:10), and his opening paragraphs were apparently those of his sermon as originally planned. The decorations of the church, also, were those of Easter, save for the addition of a national flag, draped in mourning. But after the opening paragraphs, the theme changed. He then said:

"When the awful news came yesterday morning of the assassination of our President and of Mr. Seward, and the other murders which accompanied those acts, it seemed impossible to dress this church with flowers, impossible to keep Easter Sunday with joy to-day. As on Thursday we changed a Fast into a Thanksgiving, so it seemed to be necessary to-day to change this feast of joy into a day of fasting and sorrow. Yet, after all, the feelings and convictions appropriate to Easter are what we need to-day. When we say "Christ is arisen," we are lifted into that higher faith which is our only support and comfort in calamities like these.

"Perhaps the crime committed last Friday night, in Washington, is the worst ever committed on any Good Friday since the crucifixion of Christ. It was not only assassination—for despots and tyrants have been assassinated—but it was parricide; for Abraham Lincoln was as a father to the whole nation. The nation felt orphaned yesterday morning, when the black tidings came; for during these four years we had come to depend on the cautious wisdom, the faithful conscience, the shrewdness, the firmness, the patriotism of our good President. We have all quarrelled with him at times; we wished he would go faster; we wished he had more imagination, more enthusiasm: but we forget all our complaints to-day, in the sense of a great and irreparable calamity. Had he been a tyrant and despot, there would have been the excuse for the act which we make for Brutus and Cassius; but the chief fault of Abraham Lincoln was that he was too forgiving to his enemies, too much disposed to yield to those from whom he differed, and to follow public opinion instead of controlling it. He could not bear to punish those who deserved it; and the man who will suffer the most from his death is his murderer, for had Lincoln lived, he would have forgiven him. Simple in his

manners, unostentatious, and without pretence; saying his plain word in the most direct way, and then leaving off; he yet commanded respect by the omnipresence of an honest purpose, and the evident absence of all personal vanity and all private ends. Since Henry IV. fell by the dagger of Ravallac, no such woe has been wrought on a nation by the hand of an assassin. Good Friday was well chosen as the day—a day dedicated to the murder of benefactors and Saviours. We shall miss him often in the years to come, for when shall we find among politicians one so guileless; among strong men one with so little wilfulness; among wise men one with so much heart; among conservative men one so progressive; among reformers one so prudent? Hated by the South from that instinct which makes bad men hate the goodness which stands between them and their purpose, he never hated back; reviled by the most shameless abuse, he never reviled again. Constant amid defeat and disaster, he was without exultation in success. After the surrender of Lee, he caused to be written on the Capitol the words, '*Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory.*'

And so we find him mourned equally by the conservative and the progressive wing of the loyal people, because he was in reality a thoroughly conservative and a thoroughly progressive man. Both could depend on him as truly their own leader. For his moderation was not the negative moderation of a compromise which balances between two extremes, but the positive moderation of the large sincerity which accepts the truth on both sides. The Conservatives knew that he was sincerely cautious, and were sure he would never act rashly. The Progressives knew that he was sincerely ready to reform evils; and though he might move slowly, certain to move forward.

"Fortunate man! who thus exhausted the experience of life, beginning as a splitter of rails and ending in a chair higher than a monarch's throne; studying his grammar by the fire-light of a log cabin when a boy; when a man, addressing the senate and people from the capitol of a great nation; tried by hardship, hardened by labor, toughened by poverty, developed by opportunity, trained by well-fulfilled duties, chosen by God to be the emancipator of a race, and the saviour of a nation's life; and then, having finished his work and seen the end near, crowned with the martyr's halo, to be made immortal through all history and all time as the chief actor in the greatest drama of modern days. Happy in life; happy also in the opportunity of death." (*Boston Sermons*, pp. 96-98).

Without a single exception, so far as I have noted, the ministers

praised Lincoln; but they were too near him to praise him as he deserved. They qualified their praise, but on the whole were just. Dr. Henry B. Smith, later eminent as a theologian, said:

“Abraham Lincoln was not a model man, but he was a representative man. Called to what was at that juncture the very highest and most important post in the world’s affairs, he so discharged the sacred trust and bore the heavy burden laid upon him, that now all men see that he was a faithful, wise and sagacious ruler, misled by no extremes, blinded by no false lights, wedded to no impracticable theory, waiting for events long enough to study them, yet speaking and acting decisively when the opportunity came; thus being the man we needed to represent us in the perilous times when he was called to play so high a part. Many were oft asking for sharper words and more abrupt action; others were ever fearful that rashness would rule the hour and hurry us on to anarchy. But there was a wise man at the helm, and his hand, and his alone, has firmly held it during these four eventful years; and through all danger the ship of state has made its course, avoiding the shoals and the breakers, until it is now sailing on again, the storm behind it, upon the broad and open sea. It is verily God that hath wrought this; and he wrought it through the mingled caution and firmness of our late President.

“Mr. Lincoln, we say, was a representative man in his epoch—a fair representative of the best average character of the loyal people of the United States in our great crisis. Though he had not the breeding and mien of the courtier, he had the breeding and bearing of a strong and genuine manhood. God does not always choose those persons to execute his purposes, whom short-sighted men might think best fitted for the task. Hard work requires strong muscles. When great principles are to be maintained, we need manly sense, unblemished integrity, and practical sagacity, rather than fine-spun theories, courtly grace, or the arts of the skillful demagogue. In a great crisis, the demand is for a man in whom we can have entire confidence. He may make mistakes, for he is human; but he will rectify them, for he is intent on the public welfare. We like a strong man, of whom it can be truly said, that he means well, and is about right. This is better than genius, or eloquence, or external polish; it is better than either conservatism or radicalism, for it is the mean between the two. Such a man the people found in Abraham Lincoln; and they gave him their confidence in spite of the mere politicians and wire-pullers. He was emphatically our representative man. He was this in his homely sense, his practical shrewdness, his love of a

good story and an apt illustration, his logical use of the queerest anecdotes, his constant appeals to a roundabout common-sense; as also in his kindness of heart, his sympathy with the details of private griefs, and his magnanimity towards his enemies."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 372-373).

Rev. Dr. S. D. Burchard was fortunate in having at hand a lecture which he had preached while Lincoln was living, and was able to quote paragraphs from that address. Apparently not every one had agreed with it when he first delivered it, but, he said:

"In a lecture delivered in this place a year ago, I characterized him as 'the type man of the age.' Now that death has ensphered and immortalized him, and disarmed envious and malignant criticism, I may venture to quote what I then said, without fear of giving offence to any one."

"Having thus presented Jefferson Davis as the type and exponent of Southern civilization, we come now briefly to consider our type man, or the exponent of Northern civilization.

"The two forms of civilization are distinctly before you, the bases on which they respectively rest, the principles which they embody, and the spirit with which they are animated. And of all the men now before the public eye, whether in the cabinet or in the field, Abraham Lincoln, the censured and the praised, is our ideal, the impersonation of republican principles, the thinker, and the type man of the age! I am aware that this avowal is in advance of the popular sentiment, but posterity will do him justice and give him his appropriate niches in the temple of fame. He is not perfect; he needs refinement and taste. Just as our civilization is not perfect; it is in its boyhood state; it needs development, especially in its æsthetic forms. It is not graceful; nor wrought out into perfect symmetry and beauty. Neither is Lincoln handsome; but he is frank, generous, and true. He has muscle and sinew. He has wrought in the log cabin; on the flatboats of the Mississippi; he has wrestled with poverty and the tall forest trees of the West. He is, in the strictest sense, a man of the working classes. He was born to the inheritance of hard work as truly as the poorest laborer's son that digs in the field; and yet, by the strength of his intellect and by his untiring devotion to truth and right, he has come up, through an ascending series, from the walks of the lowly, and from the toils of a day-laborer, to stand at the head of one of the most powerful nations on the earth! Is he not great? Is he not entitled to our confidence and esteem?"—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 263-264)

Dr. Burchard was confident that all his hearers would now agree with what he had said of Lincoln a year before. He went further and declared that he believed that even the men and the newspapers that had abused Lincoln were never quite honest in it:

"But where are his accusers now? The *Daily News* and the *World*, that never had a kind word to offer—that indulged in unmeasured vituperation and abuse while he was living, are among the first to do him honor now that he is dead. Have they been converted? Has death changed their views? No, my brethren; in their deep heart they knew that Abraham Lincoln was honest and true to his country's weal. But they were under the ban of party, and could not speak peaceably of him. His acts survive him; his deeds live, and by these, though dead, he yet speaketh. Posterity will do justice to his memory, and he will be known in history as the great Emancipator—the savior of his country. The almost universal feeling even now is, that in his death liberty has lost her greatest champion, humanity her truest friend, and America her purest patriot."—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 267).

Edward Everett Hale said:

"I dare not trust myself to speak a word regarding this simple, godly, good, great man, who, in a moment, has been called from the rule over a few cities to be master over many things, in that higher service where he enters into the joy of his Lord. To speak of him I must seek some other hour. Our lesson for to-day is, that the kingdom of God comes, and is eternal. The republic, if in simple faith it strive to make itself a part of that kingdom, lives forever. When we built this church, four years ago, we painted here upon the wall before you the beginning of the angels' song, in the words:

'Glory to God in the highest.'

"It was in the very outset of war; our own boys were coming home to us bleeding from the field, or were lying dead after the battle. And we stayed our hands at those words. We did not add the other words of the promise. But when last Sunday came, with its glad tidings, when it seemed as if we had endured to the very end, we ventured, in the fulfilment of the glad prophecy, to complete our imperfect inscription, and to add here the rest of the blessed legend:

'And on earth peace, good will toward men.'

—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 274).

There are singularly few direct references to Booth. Here is one by Rev. Henry J. Fox:

"With regard to the *assassin*, there is no ingenuity by which he

can escape his doom. He may be hidden for a while; he may wander like a wild beast through the tangled briars of impassable swamps, but go where he may, the wide world will be to him a vast prison-house. Untamed brutes, hungry though they may be for blood, will slink away abashed at his approach. Men will hunt him as they would a tiger that had robbed them of their sons. He will be branded by rulers and people everywhere as a second Cain, and as the enemy of his race. Even the cannibal king of Dahomey would surrender him to the merited vengeance which he has invoked. If he could even evade, for a time, the avenging hands of his fellow-men, he cannot escape from himself."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 343-344).

Dr. William Ives Budington of Brooklyn was one of the preachers who found occasion for severe words of denunciation, and an opportunity for a fling at the loose theology of the time:

"People are talking of justice now, not forgiveness. There is for the moment wild talk of vengeance; for one extreme is apt to generate another; and vengeance is an extreme, but no more so than indiscriminate pardon. Before this war broke out, a lax theology prevailed amongst us, which had succeeded, to a considerable extent, in banishing from our pulpits, and from the minds of our people, the old and vital doctrines of the Gospel, the intrinsic evil of sin, and the absolute necessity of penalties to vindicate the law of God, and, by consequence, the need of an infinite atonement to open the way for pardon. Men ceased to fear God, or reverence his law; the guilt of sin was denied, it was only a mistake at worst; hell was derided as a superstition; and many were lapsing into infidelity and atheism. At the same time, and by legitimate consequence, low views were entertained of government, as God's ordinance, capital punishments were abolished, penitentiaries were no longer penal, criminals were sympathized with, and pitied rather than blamed, and the greatest criminals were the most shielded; treason had shrunk to the dimensions of a political theory, and was no longer a crime, much less the greatest crime known to the statute-book and possible to the citizen, while murder had lost its revolting character, by no longer putting the murderer's life in peril. From all this the war, we thought, had redeemed us; it had certainly taught us fundamental lessons of right and wrong, and made a chasm between them, in the blood of our sons, which nothing ever seemed able to fill up. But with the success of the national arms, and the comparative subsidence of the rebellion, there was fast returning upon us our old and loose way of thinking

and talking. Bloody treason began to be whitewashed; and the chief traitors found apologists, and men pleaded for the lives of traitors, who would have been the first to fall by assassination had the treason triumphed. How far this reaction would have gone, but for the last great crime of the rebellion, none can tell. The dying viper might, and probably would have been nursed into life again by the warm confidence of a country into whose bosom it had struck its venomous fangs. The genius and the virtues of the military leaders of the South were praised, as if the brilliant qualities of criminals, instead of enhancing, diminished the crime. A base-born hero-worship was already preparing to sacrifice the sacred interests of right to the pretensions of a proud aristocracy. But blessed be God! we have been spared this shame; in the hour of our triumph we have not been permitted to fall down, and beg pardon of our conquered foes for the heroism of our slaughtered sons. God's providence has saved us this! The wrath of man has been allowed one more expression, that we may not mistake, and that all the world may know, the malice, strong in death, of this man-hating and God-defying rebellion! It has stood for its picture once more, lest through the smoke of battle the features of the demon should be obscured; now upon the dark back-ground of the war, like a retiring tempest, a miscreant leaps upon the stage, brandishing the assassin's dagger, exulting in the murder of our good President! Blessed be God! the wrath of man shall praise Him!"—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 123-5).

That Lincoln had been too lenient, and the generous terms accorded Lee in his surrender to General Grant were dangerously kind, was felt by some ministers, including Dr. E. B. Webb of Boston:

I do not criticise the parole which was granted, though, for the life of me, I cannot see one shadow of reason for expecting it will be kept by men who have broken their most solemn and deliberate oath to the same government. It was not kept by the rebels who took it at Vicksburg. Nor will I criticise, for I cannot understand, the policy which allows General Lee to commend his captured army for "devotion to country," and "duty faithfully performed." But I considered the manner in which the parole was indorsed and interpreted as practically insuring a pardon; and to pardon them is a violation of my instincts, as it is of the laws of the land, and of the laws of God. I believe in the exercise of magnanimity; but mercy to those leaders is eternal cruelty to this nation; is an unmitigated, unmeasured curse to unborn generations! It is a wrong against which every fallen

soldier in his grave, from Pennsylvania to Texas, utters an indignant and unsilenced rebuke. Because of this mawkish leniency, four years ago, treason stalked in the streets, and boasted defiance in the halls of the Capitol; secession organized unmolested, and captured our neglected forts and starving garrisons. Because of a drivelling, morbid, perverted sense of justice, the enemy of the government has been permitted to go at large, under the shadow of the Capitol, all through this war. God only knows how much we have suffered for the lack of justice. And now to restore these leaders seems like moral insanity. Better than this, give us back the stern, inflexible indignation of the old Puritan, and the *lex talionis* of the Hebrew Lawgiver. Our consciences are debauched, our instincts confounded, our laws set aside, by this indorsement of a blind, passionate philanthropy.

“Theodore Parker has a passage in his work on religion, in which he gathers into heaven the debauchee, the swarthy Indian, the imbruted Calmuck, and the grim-faced savage, with his hands still red and reeking with the blood of his slaughtered human victims. And the idea, to me, of placing the leaders of this diabolical rebellion in a position where they might come again red-handed into the councils of the nation, is equally revolting and sacrilegious. It makes me shudder. And yet I think there was an *indecent* leniency beginning to manifest itself towards them, which would have allowed to these men, by and by, votes and honors and lionizing. The soldiers did not relish this prospect. They are not to be deceived by the misapplication of the term magnanimity to an act that turns loose into the bosom of society the men who systematically murdered our prisoners by starvation, and again and again shot prisoners of war after they had surrendered.”—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 155-156).

There were those who felt that Lincoln died in a favorable time. Had he lived, he would have been mightily burdened with the cares of reconstruction; perhaps it was better that he died at the very zenith of his glory. Of those who struck this note, Dr. John E. Todd was one:

“For President Lincoln *himself*, perhaps there was no better time to pass away. He fell in the very height of glory. Just re-established in the Presidential chair by the overwhelming choice of his countrymen, risen into the profound respect of the civilized world, permitted to see his long watchings and toils crowned with success, to rejoice in the stupendous military achievements, in the prospect of speedy peace, and in the assured approach of universal freedom, to

fall honored by all men, wept by a nation, in the bosom of his family, with his cabinet around him, with a nation waiting in tears, in the hope of the gospel, was a death becoming a Christian patriot,—a glorious death to die. It may be that he could not, in a hundred years, have found a moment in which to fall so lamented, or leave behind him such a memory. Henceforth a humble tomb in the capital of Illinois will divide with Mount Vernon the homage and pilgrimages of our countrymen. Perhaps if these mighty dead, the leaders in the two wars for freedom, are permitted to revisit their resting-places, the murdered President will experience the greater joy, in finding not only his head-stone worn with the kisses of his own race, but the sods of his grave sprinkled with the tears of eyes that used to weep in the house of bondage.

“God bless the memory of Abraham Lincoln!

“God bless the President!

“God in his mercy bless and save these United States of America!”—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 87).

Dr. Chandler Robbins was one of those who believed that Lincoln had died at a time advantageous for his own fame, but whether it was a good time for the country, he was not sure:

“Moreover, we cannot but feel that he has died in a good time for himself; in a moment of joy, in an hour of hope and triumph, in the midst of peaceful and generous thoughts, while offering grateful aspirations to God, and devising acts of forgiveness and magnanimity towards man. Though the manner of his death is shocking to *us*, yet we should not forget that to *him* it was without a pang. Though *we* contemplate the vileness of the instrument with indignation and abhorrence, yet he himself had no suspicion of the malignity of which he was the victim, and no feeling of revenge towards the murderer who hurried him to rest.

“Whether he has died also in a good time for his country and for us, remains yet to be revealed. That Providence designs this event for the ultimate good of the nation we will not, we cannot doubt. But of what nature that good may be, and in what ways it may be accomplished, only the future will disclose.”—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 219-220).

Rev. Warren H. Cudworth of Boston felt that Lincoln’s assassination had saved him much anxiety and sorrow:

“Had President Lincoln lived on through the entire term of his office, being in our midst, and not always the representative of our ideas, no doubt he would often have failed of appreciation, had he

not provoked opposition, and some of his measures or recommendations would have been sharply criticised, if not severely censured.

"But now, as it were, he has bequeathed to us the principles of his administration as an inheritance bought and sealed with his blood, all the more sacred and binding upon us because he no longer lives to expound and enforce them himself. The more they are examined, applied and tested, the more they must be valued; the more thoroughly and faithfully they are adhered to, the more highly will they be esteemed."—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 208).

Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler was one of the men who believed that Lincoln's work was finished, and his life-work complete:

"Did Lincoln die too soon? For us and the world he did; but not for himself. It is all sadly right. God's will be done! The time had come when, like Samson, our beloved leader could slay more by his death than in his life. He has slain the accursed *spirit of slavery* yet lurking in the North. He has slain the last vestige of sympathy with the discomfited rebellion in every candid foreign mind. That pistol's flash has revealed the slave-drivers' conspiracy to the world—
'Not only doomed, but damned.'

"Our father died at the right time; for his mighty work was done. He lived to see the rebellion in its last agonies; he lived to enter Richmond amid the acclamations of the liberated slave, and to sit down in the arch-traitor's deserted seat; he lived until Sumter's flag rose again like a star of Bethlehem in the southern sky, and then, with the martyr's crown upon his brow, and with four million broken fetters in his hand, he went up to meet his God."—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 171).

The Philadelphia sermons appear to have been delivered mainly on Sunday, the 23rd, when Lincoln's body, then on its way to New York and Springfield, was lying in state in Philadelphia. Several of the sermons were printed. Phillip Brooks was at that time rector in Philadelphia, and his sermon is most eagerly sought of those delivered in that city. He said:

"While I speak to you today, the body of the President who ruled this people is lying honored and loved, in our city. It is impossible with that sacred presence in our midst for me to stand and speak of him today; and I therefore undertake to do what I had intended to do at some future time, to invite you to study with me the character of Abraham Lincoln, the impulses of his life, and the causes of his death. I know how hard it is to do rightly, how impossible it is to do it worthily. But I shall speak with confidence because I speak to

those who love him, and whose ready love will fill out the deficiencies in a picture which my words will weakly try to draw. I can only promise you to speak calmly, conscientiously, affectionately, and with what understanding of him I can command." (pp. 3-4).

He spoke with emotion and deep reverence for the character of Lincoln and stern hatred of slavery, the cause of his death. His closing paragraph has a beautiful reference to Lincoln at Gettysburg.

"He stood once on the battlefield of our own state, and said of the brave men who saved it words as noble as any countryman of ours ever spoke. Let us stand in the country he had saved, and which is to be his grave and monument, and say of Abraham Lincoln what he said of the soldiers who died at Gettysburg. He stood there with their graves before him, and these are the words he said: 'We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that Government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth.' May God make us worthy of the memory of ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

In St. Louis there were outspoken sermons of admiration for Lincoln and loyalty to the country which he served. One that was delivered by Rev. Samuel J. Nichols, in the Second Presbyterian Church had as its text "There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt." (Judges xvix:30).

Rarest of the St. Louis sermons is one delivered by Rev. Hugo Krebs, in the Church of the Holy Ghost. It was delivered in German, and translated into English by "a lady hearer." His text was, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" (Luke xxiv:5, 26). His sermon as printed is full of emphatic utterances in bold face type, and appears to have stirred his congregation powerfully.

Another sermon, delivered in German, attracted so much atten-

tion as to require its translation. It was preached at Skippackville, Pennsylvania, by Rev. Abraham Grater. It was printed in German in several German newspapers, and then printed in English in pamphlet form. Its text was, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and the whole nation perish not." (John xx:50).

Rev. Frederick Starr, Jr., who was just leaving the First Presbyterian Church at Penn Yan, New York, preached on the death of Lincoln in that pulpit on Easter morning, and on his arrival at the North Presbyterian Church of St. Louis, repeated the sermon, which that congregation caused to be printed. His sermon was a vigorous indictment of slavery and its defenders, and it exalted Abraham Lincoln to a place beside John Brown.

Of the sermons delivered in Cincinnati on the morning of Easter, at least one, that by Rev. A. D. Mayo, is preserved in pamphlet form. It is a strong, brave sermon.

Cincinnati had spent Friday, the day of the assassination, in hilarious glee, as the day when the flag was raised again over Sumter. Several men who were alleged to be disloyal were roughly treated. On Saturday, the news of the death of Lincoln was a signal for a grief mingled with fierce indignation. At Pike's Opera House, Junius Brutus Booth, brother of John Wilkes Booth, was closing a two week's engagement. It need not be said that he did not play on Saturday night. The handbills were taken down from the boards, and the opera house was closed, and Booth's brother quietly left town. When the opera house reopened, it was for a service very different than had been planned.

A number of Cincinnati ministers preached on the death of Lincoln at their services on Sunday morning, but Rev. M. P. Gaddis of the Methodist Church on Sixth Street announced his purpose to deliver his sermon on Lincoln that evening. The newspapers of the next day state that scenes of great excitement attended this discourse. The crowd was many times as large as the church would hold, and it was announced that the service would be held in Mozart Hall. The janitor, however, declined to open the house without the permission from the owners, who could not be found. It was then announced that Mr. Gaddis would deliver the sermon to as many as could get into the church, but the crowd would not hear to this. Pike's Opera House was engaged and opened, and although the hour was late, the house was packed. Hundreds were turned away after the last inch of standing room was taken. Mr. Gaddis appeared on the platform

at an hour when the service should have been dismissed rather than begun, and delivered a stirring sermon from the text, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" Again and again, as the newspapers assure us, the audience applauded Mr. Gaddis' address, and it was printed in pamphlet form.

The people of Chicago could not wait until Sunday morning for an expression of their sorrow. On Saturday night they packed Bryan Hall, every inch of seating room being taken, and it is stated in the daily papers that those who gained admittance were few in comparison to the multitude who were turned away. At this meeting impromptu addresses were delivered by Senator Lyman Trumbull, and a number of laymen and ministers. Among the latter were Rev. Brook McVicar, Robert Collyer and O. H. Tiffany. Resolutions were adopted expressive of the grief of the city over the death of the President.

On Easter practically every Chicago minister seems to have devoted his sermon to the event, but so far as is known none of these sermons were printed in pamphlet form. The Saturday night meeting and the plans for the meetings on the following Wednesday may have taken something from the edge of interest in particular sermons. The newspapers quoted from addresses on Sunday morning, by Rev. O. H. Tiffany, Rev. Dr. Humphrey and Bishop Duggan. One of the most outspoken of those addresses was by Bishop Duggan in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, paying high tribute to the greatness of Lincoln, and especially to his attribute of mercy.

On the Wednesday following there were services in nearly all the churches. The Methodists combined in a large meeting in the First Methodist Church, which was addressed by several ministers. Rev. Dr. Charles H. Fowler, who later became Bishop, delivered an address on that day which was afterward expanded into an oration which became one of the best known of all eulogies on the life of Abraham Lincoln and is published in his volume of Memorial Addresses.

Oak Park, in suburban Chicago, was a tiny village in 1865 and had one single church, the Congregational, whose pastor was a young man, Rev. Cornelius E. Dickinson, who had been ordained less than two years. Dr. Dickinson is still living and remembers well the experiences of the day. He cast aside the sermon which he had ready for Easter and on Saturday evening and Sunday morning wrote a new sermon, from the text:

"And Moses said unto the people, fear ye not, stand still, and see

the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever." (Exodus xiv:13).

He says that the sermon itself has long since disappeared, but that he remembers that it was complimented by members of the congregation and appeared to be in accord with their feelings. Concerning the sermon itself he says:

"I only remember that I treated this as a mysterious providence but said that we must consider that God was over all and we must have faith that it would result in good."

The little white church was draped in mourning and Dr. Dickinson remembers that the crepe hung there for several weeks, probably until after the burial service in Springfield.

Interesting as are the sermons delivered in the cities, those delivered in the towns and villages are yet more so. Among the rare items, "Not in Fish," that is, so rare that they were not known to be in any collection at the time Judge Fish made his Bibliography of Lincolniana, is one by Rev. Isaac Smith, at Foxboro, Mass. This interests me greatly, for I spend my summers at Foxboro. Unknown to Fish, also, is one by Rev. Samuel Gorman, at Canton, Ohio. Another unlisted item is the sermon of Rev. David Belden, delivered in Nevada. Less rare, but desirable, are the sermons by Rev. Robert F. Sample, at Bedford, Pennsylvania; Rev. Henry Clark of Poultney, Vermont; Rev. C. Burgess of Panama, New York, and Rev. Henry E. Butler, of Panama, New York. At Edgartown, Massachusetts, a village on Martha's Vineyard, Rev. S. Reed preached a sermon which was printed.

These village sermons lose nothing by comparison with those delivered in the cities. Apparently the country ministers met the situation with as great resourcefulness as the ministers in the cities.

(To be continued.)