

THE AMERICAN PULPIT ON THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

BY WILLIAM E. BARTON

Of the discourses delivered in small towns, that of Rev. Henry E. Butler of Keeseville, New York is worthy of mention. His text was "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not." He pointed out the blindness of America to the evils of slavery, and the long, hard road by which it had been led to freedom. He pleaded for stern justice to be meted out to the leaders of the rebellion, but for a spirit of mercy and forgiveness to the rank and file. Mr. Butler delivered this sermon on the second Sunday, and it shows the marks of careful preparation.

Well prepared, also, are the sermons of Rev. W. R. Gordon, of Schraalenberg, New Jersey, and Rev. Peter Russell, of Eckley, Pennsylvania.

New York and Boston had preachers of greater ability than Anamosa, Iowa, and Jacksonville, Illinois, but the sermons of William G. Hammond at Anamosa, and L. M. Glover of Jacksonville are not greatly outclassed by those in the larger cities.

In Springfield, Lincoln's home town, the *State Journal* for Monday morning, April 17, said:

"Yesterday was a sad day in this city. Our citizens, as though fleeing from some great sorrow, flocked to the churches, which were unusually well attended, several of them being filled to overflowing. In some of the churches the pulpits were draped in mourning, and the services were most solemn, impressive and appropriate to the occasion."

On subsequent Sundays, down to and including the date of the public funeral, the Springfield churches, as reported in the local papers, recognized in solemn and fitting terms the death of President Lincoln.

At Bloomington, on the morning of the President's death, more than a thousand listeners gathered around a wagon from which platform Mr. W. S. Dodd read from the *Chicago Tribune* the details which the noon train brought in, there being no possibility of supplying daily papers for the crowd. The next morning the *Pantagraph* told the story of the day, including that of the editor's trip from Chicago that morning, and the signs of sorrow seen in every town. One man who was alleged to have expressed pleasure was very nearly lynched; and one minister, who was believed to be a Copperhead, and whose utterance of grief was believed to be inadequate, was forced to resign his pulpit. The other ministers, as reported in the *Pantagraph*, spoke nobly:

"The churches were all draped in mourning. Probably there was never a day before when so many persons attended divine service. Many of the ladies appeared in mourning. In some of the churches the weeping and sobbing almost disturbed the services."

At a mass meeting, resolutions were adopted, and nearly all the pastors were called to speak to the resolutions:

"In the name of five thousand people" said the *Pantagraph* "we desire to thank our ministry for the noble and sensible and practical stand which they took on this occasion. They have endeared themselves to our people as they never did before."

In many of the cities of the South there were services of mourning. In Lexington, Kentucky, the City Council attended in a body the church of Rev. Dr. C. B. Parsons, and the *National Unionist* stated that at least one third of the congregation had to stand outside. Emblems of mourning were abundant, and those houses that did not display signs of sorrow were criticised in the press. The *Lexington Observer and Reporter* was pro-Union but Anti-Lincoln, and was suspended during a portion of the war. This paper had dealt flippantly with Lincoln's second Inaugural, saying that:

"He commits himself to nothing—covers his footsteps as fast as he makes them—utters old similes—deals in meaningless generalities, and finally leaves the reader in a perfectly stupified state of bewilderment as to what his views really are."

After his death, however, its tone was most appreciative, and its comment on the local church services was sympathetic, though not detailed.

The Funeral Sermon delivered by Rev. P. D. Gulley in the White House on the Wednesday following the assassination is well known. But there were several other sermons in Washington, some of them

preached on the day following his death. One of these was by Rev. Charles H. Hall, in the Church of the Epiphany. Washington observed, also, the day of the President's proclamation, and one of the printed sermons is by Rev. T. R. Howlett of Calvary Baptist Church.

There were sermons delivered in hospitals and sermons delivered in prisons. A Baltimore lady, imprisoned in the Carrol Prison in Washington tells of this among the other indignities that she suffered, that of being compelled to listen to a sermon on the death of Lincoln.

A number of sermons on Lincoln were delivered in the South. Most of those that were printed are by Northern chaplains to their soldiers, or by northern ministers to northern congregations in southern cities. But not all were of this character. Some sermons by southern preachers mourned for Lincoln as the best friend of the south, and expressed the hope that the nation would not judge the whole south by the rash act of one man.

Among the sermons delivered in the south are those by Rev. Charles Lowe of Massachusetts, in the Unitarian Church at Charleston, South Carolina; those of Rev. David S. Coddington before officers and soldiers of the same city; Rev. T. E. Bliss, in the Union Church at Memphis, Tennessee; and Rev. Edward C. Slater, at Paducah, Kentucky. At Island Number Ten, in the Mississippi, Rolfe S. Saunders delivered an oration, but not until April 25.

In Gettysburg, Pa., Rev. D. T. Carnahan, of the Presbyterian Church, preached a sermon on Lincoln, not on the Sunday immediately following his death, but on the day of Presidential appointment, June 1. It was a good sermon, well prepared and well received. It quotes from Lincoln's address to his old neighbors at Springfield, from his words to a company of ministers, as reported by Dr. Gurley, and from both of Lincoln's inaugural addresses. But it does not quote from the Gettysburg address, nor convey any suggestion that the people of Gettysburg had any knowledge of or pride in it. We may not over-emphasize the argument from silence, but if a prophet is without honor in his own country, so may be the address of a prophet in the country where it is delivered.

Among those who quoted the Gettysburg address, or referred to it as proof of Lincoln's power, were Drs. A. N. Littlejohn and James Eells of New York, and Henry Wilder Foote, Warren H. Cudworth, W. S. Studley, James Reed and R. H. Neale of Boston. They did not refer to it in the familiar way to which we are accustomed. They said such words as these by Dr. Neale:

"Let me, in conclusion, refer to one of the most interesting inci-

dents in the history of our departed President. At the consecration of the Soldiers' Cemetery at Gettysburg, after the eloquent address of Mr. Everett (alas! that he, too, is gone), Mr. Lincoln made a few most impressive remarks. He said that the best way to honor the heroes that had fallen on that bloody field was to consecrate ourselves more fully to the cause for which they bled. There was another thought within, he afterwards remarked, in a private conversation; and it was, that he should himself consecrate his own heart to God. He hoped, he said, that through divine assistance he had done this; and thus had arisen in his bosom the sweet, precious, sublime emotions of a new and spiritual life. It is well, friends, that we should manifest our grief under this great and oppressive bereavement: we cannot and ought not to restrain our tears. It is right that tokens of mourning should be hung out from every dwelling. The whole nation and foreign lands will unite in doing honor to the distinguished dead. But no higher honor can be paid to the memory of Abraham Lincoln than to imitate his example in giving ourselves more fully to the cause in which he fell a martyr, and individually in prayer, and on bended knee, to consecrate our own heart to God."—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 174-175).

Rev. Dr. John McClintock declared Lincoln not only morally good, but intellectually great—an affirmation not frequently made in these sermons. It is interesting to note that he cited as a proof of the President's power, "his little speech" at Gettysburg, which he thought possibly his hearers might remember:

"I do not sympathize with much that has been said in disparagement of his intellect, although mere mental gifts, of the highest order, might well have been eclipsed, in the popular estimation, by the sublimity of that moral power which overshadowed all his other qualities. But it is stupid to talk of him as a man of mean intellect. He had a giant's work to do, and he has done it nobly. Called upon to steer the ship of state through the mightiest and most rapid tide of events that ever swept over a nation, he guided her safely, and was within sight of the harbor, when he was struck down at the helm. Even in his speeches and writings, where defects of form reveal the want of early culture and give room for the carping of petty critics who can see no farther than the form, I do not fear to say that the calm criticism of history will find marks of the highest power of mind. Do you remember his little speech over the graves of our martyrs at Gettysburg? I remember the thrill with which I read it, across the sea. It is Greek-like in its simple majesty of thought,

and even in the exquisite felicity of some of its phrases. Nor could that have been a mean intellect which enabled this simple son of the people, standing among men who piqued themselves upon their refinement and culture, among men of large acquirements and polished speech, to hold on his own way among them, to take or reject their advice, to hear all plans and all arguments, and after all to be the real ruler of the nation and of the times. With such gifts as God gave him, he was enabled to pierce to the very core of a matter, while others, with their fine rhetoric, could only talk around it.”—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 133-134).

How many ministers quoted, in whole or in part, Lincoln's favorite poem, as a reminder that even such an exalted position as his was not beyond the reach of death? Rev. Henry J. Fox, of New York, quoted four lines of it (*The Martyr's Monument*, p. 351) crediting it to Frank J. Carpenter's book. It is quoted in full by Rev. J. D. Fulton (*Boston Sermons*, pp 337-338). I think there were one or two other instances, but I do not recall them with certainty.

These sermons contain many illusions to the death of William the Silent as offering a parallel for that of Lincoln. Indeed, it was difficult for them not to overdo this part of their discourse. Drs. Robinson, Cuyler, Thompson and Rogers of New York City and Drs. Webb and Manning of Boston are only a few to whom this historic parallel occurred. Dr. Manning's quotation is in point:

“Let me quote from history, ‘On Tuesday, the 10th of July, 1584, at about half-past twelve, the Prince, with his wife on his arm, and followed by the ladies and gentlemen of his family, was going to the dining-room. William the Silent was dressed upon that day, according to his usual custom, in very plain fashion. He wore a wide-leaved, loosely-shaped hat of dark felt, with a silken cord round the crown,—such as was worn by the Beggars in the early days of the revolt. A high ruff encircled his neck, from which also depended one of the Beggar's medals, while a loose surcoat of grey frieze cloth, over a tawny leather doublet, with wide, slashed underclothes, completed his costume. Gérard (the murderer) presented himself at the doorway and demanded a passport. The Princess, struck with the pale and agitated countenance of the man, anxiously questioned her husband concerning the stranger. The Prince carelessly observed that it was merely a person who came for a passport; ordering, at the same time, a secretary to prepare one. The Princess, still not relieved, observed in an under-tone that she had never seen so villan-

ous a countenance. Orange, however, not at all impressed with the appearance of Gérard, conducted himself at table with his usual cheerfulness, conversing much with the burgomaster of Leewarden, the only guest present at the family dinner, concerning the political and religious aspect of Friesland. At two o'clock the company rose from the table. The Prince led the way, intending to pass to his private apartments above. The dining-room which was on the ground-floor, opened into a little square vestibule, which communicated, through an arched passage-way, with the main entrance into the court-yard. This vestibule was also directly at the foot of the wooden staircase leading to the next floor, and was scarcely six feet in width. Upon its left side, as one approached the stairway, was an obscure arch, sunk deep in the wall, and completely in the shadow of the door. Behind this arch a portal opened to the narrow lane at the side of the house. The stairs themselves were completely lighted by a large window, half-way up the flight. The Prince came from the dining-room, and began leisurely to ascend. He had only reached the second stair, when a man emerged from the sunken arch, and, standing within a foot or two of him discharged a pistol full at his heart. Three balls entered his body, one of which, passing quite through him, struck with violence against the wall beyond. The Prince exclaimed in French, as he felt the wound, "O my God, have mercy upon my soul! O my God, have mercy upon this poor people!"

"Such was the death, and such the last exclamation of the great and good father of modern liberty, the son and sire of illustrious princes, the wise subverter of despotisms, the champion of popular rights, to whom, more than to any other man perhaps, the world is indebted for free institutions and free ideas. Who can doubt, if strength had been left our good President when the fatal bullet struck him, that he also would have exclaimed, "O my God, have mercy upon my soul! O my God, have mercy upon this poor people?"—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 61-62).

It is interesting to note how many of the preachers either chose for their texts the verses in Deuteronomy that tell of the death of Moses, or in the course of their sermons made allusion to the parallel. Lincoln, like Moses, had led his people through the wilderness, and died in the sight of the Promised Land, which he himself did not enter. In New York Beecher, Bellow and Tyng made allusion to the parallel. In Boston, Murray, Lothrop, Fulton and Webb employed it. Among those who used it in other cities were Rev. Dr. Humphrey, of Chicago. He said:

“There can be no parallel between the death of our beloved Saviour and that of our President, except that both were victims to the hands of enmity and violence—both perished in a righteous cause, but Good Friday of 1865 will ever be remembered by America as affording to the nation and to the cause of humanity doubly an occasion for tears. There was greater similitude between Moses and our President, but he was a leader only, not a Saviour. Four millions of bondsmen will talk of him today as the Moses who has brought them out of Egypt, their feet already in the bed of Jordan, while he lies on the Pisgah from which he has at least been permitted to look into the promised land of deliverance.”—(*Chicago Journal*, April 17, 1865).

As in most of these sermons, Lincoln was called a Moses, so in not a few of them and very naturally, Andrew Johnson was recognized as a Joshua. In Boston, Rev. John E. Todd and Rev. J. M. Manning, made the allusion, though guardedly, and without naming him. But Rev. A. A. Miner, Pastor of the Second Universalist Church, the old church of Hosea Ballou, did not think of Lincoln as a Moses, though he held Lincoln in high esteem, but looked upon Joshua as the coming Moses:

“And shall we not find a satisfactory leader in our new, let me say, God-given President. It is true he is as yet untried. But four years ago Abraham Lincoln was untried; and the trial has endeared him to all hearts—has called forth a nation’s gratitude in his re-election to the highest office in our gift, and made his death the occasion of a deeper and more general sorrow than we had ever before known. Who can say that his mantle has not fallen on one altogether worthy of it? President Johnson, though untried in that office, is not unknown to the country. Through a long public career, his fidelity has been unquestioned. Born and reared in the midst of slavery, he knows its baneful influence and its crushing power. Cherishing in purest affection the Union and Liberty, he has felt the iron of secession enter his soul. Acquainted minutely and in detail with the spirit and purpose of the rebel leaders, he may be better prepared than Mr. Lincoln himself to estimate their deep demerit, and mete to them the meed of justice as traitors before the law.

“It is narrated of Mr. Johnson that, in October last, on an occasion of addressing some thousands of colored people in the city of Nashville, if I remember correctly, he exhorted them to patience, and assured them that God could raise up for them a Moses to lead them out of the wilderness. His auditors shouted, ‘You shall be our Moses!’

Mr. Johnson modestly replied that he was not equal to so important a labor. But they repeated their claim, 'You shall be our Moses; we want no other than you.' 'Well, then,' said Mr. Johnson, 'I will be your Moses.' Was this incident prophetic?

"I have rejoiced that our merchants and men of business, both in Boston and New York, have made haste to give him assurances of confidence and support. He will be surrounded, I trust, by the same experienced advisers who have stayed up the hands of his predecessor, and can command the same resources, and the support of the same constituency, as have borne us through the storm of the last four years. Shall we not all welcome him, then, to our hearts, and pray the blessing of God to be with him?"—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 288-289).

Rev. W. S. Studley of Boston hailed Andrew Johnson as the instrument of swift retributive justice:

"Ay, woe to Slavery!—woe to its perjured, bloody-handed champion, Jefferson Davis!—woe to its adherents and defenders, its advocates and apologists, whether in Carolina or Massachusetts! Behold, the hour of its destruction is at hand! Nay, this very Easter Sunday is the day of its resurrection!—its resurrection to everlasting shame and contempt!—its resurrection to complete and eternal damnation! Its doom is sealed!

"To-day, for one, I would rather be the murdered President, or the wounded Secretary, than to be the man, who, in this hour of the nation's sorrow, has no prayer to offer for the final and utter extermination of that system which has lifted itself so long against our peace.

"When slavery did this last and most brutal of all its deeds, it doubtless thought to intimidate the future rulers of this land from meting out to the traitors the punishment which their crimes deserve. But it made a fearful mistake. In dealing with traitors, Andrew Johnson's little finger will be thicker than Abraham Lincoln's loins. If the old president chastised them with whips, the new president will chastise them with scorpions. Here is what he said only last week in a public address on the occasion of the fall of Richmond:

"Treason is the highest crime known in the catalogue of crimes; and for him guilty of it,—for him that is willing to lift his impious hand against the authority of the nation,—I would say death is too easy a punishment. My notion is that treason must be made odious; that traitors must be punished and impoverished: their social power broken.

“You, my friends, have traitors in your very midst, and treason needs rebuke and punishment here as well as elsewhere. It is not the men in the field who are the greatest traitors. It is the men who have encouraged them to imperil their lives, while they themselves have remained at home, expending their means, and exerting all their power, to overthrow the government. Hence, I say this: ‘the halter to intelligent, influential traitors!’ But to the honest boy, to the deluded man, who have been deceived into the rebel ranks, I would extend leniency. I would say return to your allegiance, renew your support to the government, and become good citizens; but the leaders I would hang.’

“Nor is this a new-born sentiment in the heart of Andrew Johnson; for as long ago as the second of March, 1861, in a thrilling speech, which created an unparalleled outbreak of enthusiasm in the galleries of the Senate Chamber, he said:

“Show me the man who makes war on the government, and fires on its vessels, and I will show you a traitor. *And, if I were President of the United States, I would have all such arrested, and when tried and convicted, by the eternal God, I would have them hung!*’

“There is hope, therefore, in the bright beams of this Easter sun! Our ruler knows how to deal with traitors!”—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 229-231).

Rev. J. H. Neale of Boston expressed his faith in Andrew Johnson:

“I have confidence in his successor. President Johnson’s opinions and policy are known, and will be approved by the loyal people. There is now a roused but I believe a healthful public sentiment, which will not be satisfied until rebellion is exterminated and consumed, root and branch, and its blossoms go up as the dust.”—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 172).

The report that Andrew Johnson was intoxicated on the day of his inauguration appears everywhere to have been current and generally believed. The ministers offered no apology for speaking of it, though they apologized for him. He was ill and took an overdose; he did wrong but it was not his custom; he did it but was sorry for it; these were their excuses. Rev. Dr. E. N. Kirk of Boston said:

“Another sentiment is now called into action.

“5. *Fear*. A new pilot takes the helm. Mysteriously, he did not command our respect on the solemn day in which the nation put the crown upon his brow, and he took the solemn oath of office. He

has repented: this is all we ask of him. Everything else in his history inspires hope, respect, and gratitude. But still, it is not the hand that held the rudder-wheel on those tempestuous nights in which we were running through those narrow channels where ruin lay on either side. Fear naturally arises in such circumstances. It would come up if you were in a steamship at sea, among icebergs, with a captain who had sailed only river-craft until now."—(*Boston Sermons*, p. 41).

A calm and discriminating appreciation of Lincoln, and a call for the support of Andrew Johnson in his new responsibilities was spoken by Rev. Elbert S. Porter:

"Abraham Lincoln was the representative of popular rights, manhood, and liberty. The people weep because they loved him in character as a President, and as a man. The assassin who struck him, assailed every loyal citizen through him—and dealt a murderous blow upon the nation, in murdering its head. We have our duties. We must stand by the successor of Mr. Lincoln. Andrew Johnson is worthy of our support. He is now our Chief Magistrate—and as he wears the mantle of his immediate predecessor, so let us give him the support of our prayers and our loyal devotion to the cause he serves. Henceforth the name, fame, and virtues of each are in the keeping of so much of the world as delight to honor rare ability, unimpeachable integrity, and fervent devotion to the rights of all mankind. Washington was indeed the father of his country, and some future Bancroft shall record on the page of history that Abraham Lincoln was the political saviour of what Washington and his compatriots had founded. We weep, but we shall dry our tears in the sunlight of Hope. The President is no more—but the Republic lives. Let it be perpetual."—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 240).

Dr. William Ives Budington concluded his sermon with a paragraph expressive of his confidence in Andrew Johnson, which was all the more marked because of its implication that his congregation knew and probably believed the report that Johnson had been drunk on the day of his inauguration. Dr. Budington was not always so charitable as in this instance, in which he almost made that intoxication a virtue:

"I cannot cease speaking without commending to your prayers and confidence him who is called so suddenly to the Chief Magistracy of the land. I feel compelled to do this, because of the unfortunate impression made upon the country by Mr. Johnson at the late inaugu-

ration. With a haste as unreasonable as it is uncharitable, he has been condemned, as if an act proved a habit. There is not a man in this assembly who would not feel that the deepest injustice had been done him by such treatment. Admitting the worst that has been said, or that *can* be said, of Mr. Johnson's condition on that day, it is as susceptible of a favorable interpretation as of an unfavorable. It *may* have been, nay, we are bound to believe it *was* an accident, pure and simple—proof only of an enfeebled body, and of an anxiety, in spite of sickness, to discharge a public duty. We have the amplest assurances that this was the case. The Vice-President, now President of the United States, is entitled to the respectful confidence of the American people. The strong and generous testimony of General Burnside, yesterday, in New York, is sufficient, and will be cordially regarded as such by all loyal and patriotic citizens. Let us give him our confidence, and pray for him, as we did for his lamented predecessor.”—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 126-127).

Some of the ministers distrusted Andrew Johnson, but some of them were most hearty in their support of him, believing that the nation just then needed his stern and vindictive disposition. Rev. Edwin B. Webb of Shawmut Church, Boston, said :

“Andrew Johnson, who now becomes the chief magistrate, by the mysterious providence of God, is unquestionably an able man. He has been much in public life, and never failed—except in his speech on inauguration day—to meet the exigencies of his position. Besides, he has had a schooling in Tennessee which may have prepared him to lead at this very time. When I was in Washington, four years ago, I heard much in his praise. He told the secessionists, who were just then leaving their seats in the Senate to inaugurate the rebellion,—told them to their faces, for substance,—“were I President of the United States, I would arrest you as traitors, and try you as traitors, and convict you as traitors, and hang you as traitors.” And judging from the speech which he made at Washington after the news of the fall of Richmond, he has not changed his mind.

“We want no revenge: we will wait the forms and processes of law. We want justice tempered with mercy. We want the leaders punished, but the masses pardoned. Let us confide in him as our President. And do you make crime odious; disfranchise every man who has held office in the rebel government, and every commissioned officer in the rebel army; make the halter certain to the intelligent and influential, who are guilty of perjury and treason, and so make yourself a terror to him that doeth evil, and a praise to him that

doeth good,—and we will stand by you, Andrew Johnson.”—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 158-159).

Among the ministers who hailed Andrew Johnson, there was now and then one who believed him almost a Messiah because of his experience with secession and his stern hatred of all that belonged with the spirit of the rebellion. On Martha's Vineyard, the Methodist minister, Rev. S. Reed of Edgartown said:

“But hark! While the nation is uttering its wail of sorrow there comes another voice. We turn and look. No sooner does our President expire than we see advance to take his place one of determined mien and quick of step. In his voice there is a certain sound, and a flashing light in his eye.

“Who is this that cometh from Tennessee, with dyed garments from the fields of blood? We hear him answer, ‘I am Johnson, and I now speak with authority.’ But wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy appearance like him that treadeth in the winefat? He answers, ‘Because I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me; I come from the scenes of secession and murder; I have witnessed the deep, damning guilt of treason; therefore will I tread down our enemies in my fury, and I will sprinkle their blood upon my garments, for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of the redeemed is come.’

“In the very presence of the lifeless form of our beloved Lincoln, Mr. Johnson says, ‘I pity the deluded masses of the Southern people, but upon the leaders, the responsible men of this Rebellion, I would execute the penalty of the law.’

“To that declaration there comes from the hearts of all loyal Americans a hearty Amen; Amen comes from the desolated homes and hearts through our land; Amen comes from the graves where sleep our noble soldiers.

“In the name of our outraged, weeping nation, we say, Welcome, Johnson! In the name of Heaven's injured innocence, in the name of Liberty so long in chains, now rising in her beauty, we say to President Johnson, Welcome to the chair of National Government, and may the law of eternal justice ever encircle that chair!”

Rev. Dr. J. E. Rockwell felt that the death of Lincoln was an evidence of the moral slump which the war had brought to the nation. These words sound strangely modern:

“Infidelity makes open and unblushing assaults upon all that is sacred in his word and character. The institutions of religion have become subjects of conventional debates and angry discussion. The

press teems with the most direct assaults upon the laws and authority of God, as made known in his word, and the minds of multitudes are tainted with the dreadful poison. Look at many who are high in office and political influence, and how little evidence they give of any respect for the word of God as laying any claim to public and national obedience. Look at our broken and dishonored Sabbaths. How many turn their feet away from the sanctuary; how crowded are all our great avenues with old and young, intent only on pleasure, even amid the very sound of the Sabbath bells. And what evidence do we here find of a growing disregard for Divine law and authority. Such evidence is found, too, in the increasing sin of profanity, in the prevalence of intemperance, and the open and gross violation of all healthful laws for its suppression. Such is the horrible increase of infidel and licentious literature, showing a most depraved state of public morals that could either demand or sanction such infamous and demoralizing sources of vice and profligacy. Such is the open and growing disregard for sound and wholesome laws, and a want of submission to constituted authority, culminating at last in treason and rebellion, and aided and encouraged by men who have thus sought to gratify their party prejudices or personal ambition. These and a thousand similar evils have been terrible indications that our nation has been drifting away from its allegiance to God and casting aside his authority and law.”—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 278-279).

Dr. John McClintock called on his hearers to exercise undying hatred of slavery, but a forgiving spirit toward the people of the South:

“One more lesson, and not the least. If anything I have said, or anything that you read or hear in these sad days, breeds within you a single revengeful feeling, even towards the leaders of this rebellion, then think of Abraham Lincoln, and pray God to make you merciful. Think of the prayer of Christ, which the President said, after his Saviour, ‘Father forgive them, they know not what they do.’ Let there be no place for revenge in our souls; justice we may and must demand, but revenge, never. ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.’ I counsel you also to discountenance all disorder, all attempts by private persons to avenge the public wrong, or even to punish sympathizers with treason. I have been sorry to hear from the lips of generous young men, under the pangs of the President’s assassination, sentiments of bitterness and indignation, amounting almost to fierceness. It is natural, no doubt, but what is natural is

not always right. Indulge this spirit, and you may hear next that this man's house or that man's house should be mobbed. Mobs are alien to our northern soil; they belong to another atmosphere than that of free schools and free men. The region of slavery was their natural home; let us have none of them. And soon, when the last shackles shall have fallen, and throughout our land, from sea to sea, there shall be no master and no slave, the blessed Peace shall come, for which we have looked, and prayed, and fought so long, when the Republic shall be established upon the eternal foundations of Freedom and Justice, to stand, we trust, by the blessing of God, down to the last syllable of recorded Time."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 143-144).

Dr. Charles S. Robinson, so well and favorably known as a hymnologist, was a good hater in his way. His were words of marked severity:

"If there ever was a time in which to obey the command, 'Be ye angry, and sin not,' that time has come now. 'There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day; consider it, take advice, and speak your minds.'

"Let a vast public sentiment be aroused and organized, that shall exhibit this vile wickedness in its true light. Let us invoke Christendom to make it an eternal hissing. With a recoil of feeling so violent that it wearies my will, and shocks my very being, with uttermost loathing for an offence so abominable; seeing in it that keen, fine relish of depravity that marks it not only as devilish, but one of the master-works of the prince of devils, I stand simply appalled—wondering, with unspeakable wonder, how it can be accepted by any creature wearing the form of civilized humanity! It is an outrage on the community, whose tolerance it defies. It is an insult to decency, a rebuke to forbearance, an offence unto God. It is without the power of language to reach the condemnation it merits. The words of denunciation die on my lips in their own feebleness. It is with an affecting sense of gratitude to God that I discover the positive poverty of my mother-tongue in epithets of vileness befitting its description. As much as in you is, live peaceably with all men; but there ought to be a voice of opinion so stern, so outspoken, that no man of credited decency should stand tamely by and hear a crime, so unparalleled in its baseness, even extenuated."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 96-97).

Rev. Rufus Ellis of Boston called for a tempered and merciful justice, which apparently did not please all who heard it; for he

added a foot-note which said that he did not desire that the leaders of the rebellion be pardoned, and he added that he thought better of Andrew Johnson than he had previously thought:

“There is a crime unto death. It ought not to be lightly dealt with. Let no man ask that it may be forgiven; but, when the ministers of God who bear not the sword in vain have fulfilled their office, and the criminal has received the stern sentence, let us remember, were it only for the honor and the love which we bear to our dead, the generous and humane spirit that was so large a part of his noble manhood. I confess that I have not thought that they mourn for him wisely, who, renouncing his spirit before his poor outraged clay was cold, propose to be bitter and revengeful in fact, though not of course in name, as he was not. Friends,—*Christian* friends,—followers of him whose first disciples were as loving as they were just, let us not forget the many sad warnings of man’s history, the cheats which his deceitful heart has put upon him; let us not forget that what is begun in righteousness and love is often ended, and not well, in unrighteousness and wrath. We shall have lost our noble leader indeed, if we lose his spirit, the wise and considerate mind, the excellent judgment, the tender, humane heart, that were in him; if, with all the wrongs, cruel wrongs, foul wrongs, that we have suffered as a nation, we forget that we are a Christian nation, and proceed to demand, and that, too, in the name of our gentle sufferer, measures of severity which he would never have sanctioned; so taking advantage of his dying, to thwart one of the high aims of his living. You know that I have spoken in but one voice from the beginning of this war, pleading for its rightfulness in the sight of the highest Christianity; and so you will not misunderstand my warning, lest, misled by passion, and not following, as we suppose, our man of peace, we inaugurate a reign of terror and blood. God grant that our martyr may be our deliverer; that he who was raised up in the most manifest providence of the Lord to be our counsellor and guide in our years of sore trial, may still rule and bless the people from the hiding-place of spiritual power; and, if we have had occasion to distrust him who is now called to the highest seat, may our fears be changed into hopes, and the desire of the nation be accomplished!*

—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 241-242).

* The preacher desires that the paragraphs above may not be interpreted as recommending lenity to the authors of privy conspiracy and rebellion; and he is glad to add that the circumstances, well known to the country, which led so many to distrust our present national Chief Magistrate, have been explained, by those who speak with authority, to his entire satisfaction.

The appeals to self-control were calm and sensible. For the most part they were based on the highest motives; but the ministers were sensible enough not to make these the only grounds for a plea for calmness. Dr. John E. Todd of Boston said:

“There is another feeling which naturally succeeds the emotions of horror and grief; it is *rage*. I would not say a word to inflame the passions and exasperation which are already filling the public mind. I would rather say that which may soothe excited feelings. It is a time for every man to lay upon himself a strong control. It is easy at such a time to be ungenerous and unjust. Let us discountenance all violence and passion, and seek the punishment of evil-doers only through the legally constituted channels. Let us not be violent even in our defence of the fallen. Let us remember that there is one thing more sacred than even friendship, and that is liberty. The contemptible creatures who profess to rejoice in the work of an assassin are not worth spending rage upon; there is nobler game afoot. Let us not waste too much passion upon the perpetrators of this dastardly crime;—not that they are not deserving of indignant condemnation, and condign punishment; they *must* receive it. But their importance is not commensurate with the mischief which they have done. To lavish indignation upon them is to misuse and waste it.

“Let us not jump hastily to the conclusion that the perpetrators of this vile deed were in the employ or the counsels of the enemy. For one, I do not believe that the Southern leaders are too honorable to stoop to such a deed; I do not believe that they are too shrewd to see that it would injure rather than serve them. But let us not come to conclusions without proof. We can wait for the light of evidence.”—(*Boston Sermons*, pp. 83-84).

A fine example of the spirit of magnanimity displayed in some of these sermons is found in that by Rev. Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, of New York, in a sermon from 2 Kings vi:21, in which Elisha refused permission to smite the captured Syrians but announced that bread and water be set before them, and that they be sent back to their homes:

“The intelligent leaders in this rebellion deserve no pity from any human being. Let them go. Some other land must be their home. Their own attained relations and results will be punishment and sorrow enough in time to come. Their property is justly forfeited to the nation which they have attempted to destroy, and to the oppressed, over whom they have tyrannized and triumphed. If the just utterance of law condemns them personally to suffer as traitors,

let no life be taken in the spirit of vengeance. Let the world see one instance of a Government that is great enough to ask no revenge, and self-confident and self-sustaining enough to need no retributive violence to maintain the majesty of its authority. Let the Lord's own example be to the utmost extent of personal relations, our rule and purpose, determined in the spirit of union and patience and kindness, to edify and restore, in the widest possible application of the spirit, consistent with the nations safety and the honor of the laws,—the multitudes who have been swept down the current of rebellion, by the dominant influence and example of those whom they have been taught to regard as their leaders in the path of public duty.

“There may be great difficulties in the details of the resuscitation of our afflicted land. But there can be none which such a spirit and purpose as were displayed in President Lincoln would not soon overcome and remove. And upon nothing will memory more delight to dwell than upon that high forgiving temper which lifts up a fallen foe, restores a wandering brother, and repays the cruelty of hatred by an overwhelming benignity and love. Little was he known in character and tendency by those who met his first administration with violent threats, and reproachful libels. And little has the real spirit of this Northern people been known by the great body of the South, who really know but little upon any subject, but as their accredited superiors have been accustomed to teach them. They have heard from their highest rebel officers nothing but terms of low and ribaldrous reproach and scorn applied to us. They have called us hyenas, and satisfied their hatred by the freedom of unlimited abuse. But in reality people have not been ready to meet the first offer of conciliation with the most cordial response of kindness. Let that spirit now prevail. Open the arms of fraternal concord. Spread through all the land the priceless blessings of liberty and education to all the people. Give the full rights of respected and acknowledged citizenship to all. Blot out, cover up the last remnant of that slavery which has been parent and the child of every species of oppression—the one line of division between the grave that holds the monument and the memory of our beloved President a mingled grove of the pine-tree and the palm, the orange and the apple, to flourish in immortal union, and to rival each other only in the beauty of their growth, the abundance of their fruit, and the perennial verdure of their living foliage, that God may be glorified in all and by all for ever.”—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 83-84).

Fairly typical of the appeal to religious conviction and to confi-

dence in the stability of government is the closing paragraph in the sermon of Rev. James P. Eells, D. D.:

"My countrymen, let us rise to-day to a more distinct conviction that this nation is under the direction of God. Thousands of martyrs have been sacrificed at its altar; and at last, when we thought no more would be demanded, we have been obliged to yield the most illustrious of them all. In this fresh baptism of blood, let us consecrate it to Jehovah, and hold ourselves in readiness for any demands such consecration may make of us. Let us feel that for this brief life we can make no worthier or more valuable contribution to our race, than our resolute, sincere devotion to the interests of right, liberty, and religion. Nay, there can be no more worthy or valuable treasure laid up for the life eternal! The life eternal! how near to its confines do we every moment stand! God grant that all of us may be prepared, through his grace, when the summons shall come to us, to leave forever our stations and work on earth, for the service and the bliss of heaven!"—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 232).

Rev. Josiah P. Thompson of Broadway Tabernacle was one of the men who cited the Gettysburg address as proof of Lincoln's greatness. That address, he said, possessed "a grand simplicity worthy of Demosthenes."

Dr. Thompson declared that the leaders in the rebellion deserved capital punishment; but he did not favor inflicting that penalty upon them:

"There may be a justice more terrible than the scaffold, or there may be a living infamy worse than death.

"If now we strip all who have knowingly, freely, and persistently upheld this rebellion, of their property and their citizenship, they will become beggared and infamous outcasts; fleeing the country, not as hunted exiles courting sympathy abroad and creating sympathy at home, but like Cain, with the brand upon their forehead, and with a punishment greater than they can bear. They will not dare to return to the South, for their wealth being gone, and their social and political power broken, they would find none so poor to do them reverence; nor would they risk their lives among the common people, whom they have deceived and ruined."—(*Our Martyred President*, p. 212).

A number of noted men other than ministers delivered addresses on appointed days subsequent to Sunday, April 16. Few if any senators, members of Congress or judges delivered addresses on the first Sunday. But a "Great funeral oration," as it was not unjustly

called, was delivered by a woman, on that day next following the Saturday on which Lincoln died. Toward the close of Saturday, as the preface states, Miss Emma Hardinge received an invitation to speak in Cooper Union at 3 o'clock on the following afternoon. Three thousand people are said to have been present. Miss Hardinge did not write the address, but it was stenographically reported—phonographically, they called it in that day. The address, if coldly criticized, must be adjudged as something less than the "great oration" which was described at the time; but it is one of the best of the addresses delivered on that day, and it is said to have evoked applause—a tribute paid to but two other of the Lincoln funeral addresses that of Rev. M. P. Gaddis of Cincinnati, and the address of Miss Hardinge.

Were these sermons eloquent? Do they display great oratorical ability? That is too much to claim or expect. These ministers were not for the most part great men; they were just ordinary ministers of Christ, with their regular round of parish duties, suddenly confronted with an unexpected demand and they met it with no thought that we should now be subjecting their sermons to homiletic analysis. It is enough to claim for them that they were honest, earnest and courageous; that they met the people on the level of their common grief and lifted them to a higher plane of thinking and emotion, giving them a measure of confidence and new hope. The sermon that sends a man home the better is a good sermon. In very few of these sermons is there any attempt at oratory, and what appears as oratory is chastened with a praiseworthy self-restraint. Yet a good many of these sermons are truly eloquent. They are distinctly better examples of true oratory than we could reasonably have expected. Here and there are sermons in which occur powerful passages.

Theodore L. Cuyler and Henry Ward Beecher were not in their own pulpits in Brooklyn on the day following Lincoln's death. They were at Fort Sumter, raising the flag over that fortress on the anniversary of its having been hauled down. Returning on the steamer "Oceanus" they heard as they embarked that Lincoln was dead. Cuyler delivered an address on board the steamer of which address there is a report in a volume issued in commemoration of the re-occupation of the fort. Also, before embarking, he had spoken to the colored children at Charleston. On Sunday, April 23, Cuyler and Beecher were both in their own pulpits in Brooklyn, and Cuyler said:

"And now that great, child-like, generous heart has ceased to throb. Those deep, melancholy eyes—deep wells of sorrow as they

always looked to me—are dimmed forever. Those gaunt ungainly limbs with which he strode along his patient way under the burthen, are laid to rest. The hand that broke four million of fetters is lifeless clay! Lincoln in his coffin has put a world in tears. Never was a man so mourned; never before did all Christendom stand mourners around one single bier. That pistol-shot at Washington echoes round the world in the universal wail of humanity. God pity our noble friends abroad when they hear the tidings! Kossuth will weep as he wept for the lost crown of Maria Theresa. John Bright's heart will bleed as it bled but yesterday over the grave of Cobden. Garibaldi will clasp that little grandson to his bosom with a tenderer love, that the child bears the name of 'Abraham Lincoln.' Our missionaries in Syria and China and the Pacific Isles will drop warm tears on the pages of those Bibles that they are rendering into heathen tongues. Here at home I see the sorrow in every eye; the air is heavy with the grief; 'there is not a house in which there is not one dead.'

"Intense as is our grief, who shall fathom the sorrow of those to whom he brought the boon of freedom, when they shall learn of the death of their liberator? What wails shall mingle with the voices of the sea along Carolina's shore! Miriam's timbrel in a moment drowned in Rachel's cry of anguish!

"Last Saturday morning I addressed one thousand freedmen's children in the doomed city of Charleston. When I said to them, 'May I invite for you your father Lincoln to come to Charleston and see the little folks he has made free?' a thousand black hands flew up with a shout. Alas! at that moment a silent corpse lay in the East Room at Washington. On reaching Fortress Monroe,—under the first stunning blow of the awful tidings, I went aside to a group of poor negro women who were gathered about a huckster's table, which was hung with a few coarse strips of black muslin. 'Well, friends, the good man is gone.' 'Yes, sah,' spake out a gray-haired Aunt Chloe—'yes, sah! Linkun's dead! They killed our best friend. But God be libin yet. Dey can't kill Him. I'se sure of dat!' How instinctively the childish faith of those long-suffering hearts reached up to the Almighty arm! In that poor freedwoman's broken ejaculation, 'Linkun dead—but God still libin,' I find the only solace for your heart and mine."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 169-171).

On the same Sunday morning, April 23, Beecher was in his own pulpit. The intervening week had shown the stability of American

institutions. Even Wall Street had stood like a rock; the death of Lincoln did not affect the nation's credit. Beecher had returned from the south, weighed down with sorrow, but he had risen to a majestic sense of confidence in God and in America. As he neared the close of his sermon, his congregation that had been in tears burst out four times in applause:

"This was not, then, the avenging hand of one goaded by tyranny. It was not a despot turned on by his victim. It was the venomous hatred of liberty wielded by an avowed advocate of slavery. And, though there may have been cases of murder in which there were shades of palliation, yet this murder was without provocation, without temptation, without reason, sprung from the fury of a heart cankered to all that was just and good, and corrupted by all that was wicked and foul.

"The blow has signally failed. The cause is not stricken, it is strengthened. This nation is dissolved—but in tears only. It stands four-square, more solid, to-day, than any pyramid in Egypt. This people are neither wasted, nor daunted, nor disordered. Men hate slavery and love liberty with stronger hate and love to-day than ever before. The Government is not weakened, it is made stronger. How naturally and easily were the ranks closed! Another stepped forward, in the hour that the one fell, to take his place and his mantle; and I avow my belief that he will be found a man true to every instinct of liberty; true to the whole trust that is reposed in him; vigilant of the Constitution; careful of the laws; wise for liberty, in that he himself, through his life, has known what it was to suffer from the stings of slavery, and to prize liberty from bitter personal experiences. [Applause].

"Where could the head of government in any monarchy be smitten down by the hand of an assassin, and the funds not quiver nor fall one-half of one per cent? After a long period of national disturbance, after four years of drastic war, after tremendous drafts on the resources of the country, in the height and top of our burdens, the heart of this people is such that now, when the head of government is stricken down, the public funds do not waver, but stand as the granite ribs in our mountains.

"Republican institutions have been vindicated in this experience as they never were before; and the whole history of the last four years, rounded up by this cruel stroke, seems, in the providence of God, to have been clothed, now, with an illustration, with a sympathy, with an aptness, and with a significance, such as we never could have

expected nor imagined. God, I think, has said, by the voice of this event, to all nations of the earth, 'Republican liberty, based upon true Christianity, is firm as the foundation of the globe.' [Applause].

"Even he who now sleeps has, by this event, been clothed with new influence. Dead, he speaks to men who now willingly hear what before they refused to listen to. Now his simple and weighty words will be gathered like those of Washington, and your children, and your children's children, shall be taught to ponder the simplicity and deep wisdom of utterances which, in their time, passed, in party heat, as idle words. Men will receive a new impulse of patriotism for his sake, and will guard with zeal the whole country which he loved so well. I swear you on the altar of his memory, to be more faithful to the country for which he has perished. [Applause]. They will, as they follow his hearse, swear a new hatred to that slavery against which he warred, and which, in vanquishing him, has made him a martyr and a conqueror. I swear you, by the memory of this martyr, to hate slavery with an unappeasable hatred. [Applause]. They will admire and imitate the firmness of this man, his inflexible conscience for the right; and yet his gentleness, as tender as a woman's, his moderation of spirit, which, not all the heat of party could inflame, nor all the jars and disturbances of this country shake out of its place. I swear you to an emulation of his justice, his moderation, and his mercy."—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 44-46).

It was characteristic of Beecher thus to rise from deep sorrow to almost jubilant confidence, and to carry his congregation with him. It was equally characteristic that, having done this, he should turn, and in the very next paragraph move them to tears as he described the inarticulate grief of the freedmen, and then move on with a full tide of oratorical power to his peroration, one of the most eloquent ever heard in the American pulpit:

"You I can comfort, but how can I speak to that twilight million to whom his name was as the name of an angel of God? There will be wailing in places which no minister shall be able to reach. When, in hovel and in cot, in wood and in wilderness, in the field throughout the South, the dusky children, who looked upon him as that Moses whom God sent before them to lead them out of the land of bondage, learn that he has fallen, who shall comfort them? O, thou Shepherd of Israel, that didst comfort thy people of old, to thy care we commit the helpless, the long-wronged, and grieved.

"And now the martyr is moving in triumphal march, mightier than when alive. The nation rises up at every stage of his coming.

Cities and states are his pall-bearers, and the cannon beats the hours with solemn progression. Dead, *dead*, DEAD, he yet speaketh! Is Washington dead? Is Hampden dead? Is David dead? Is any man that ever was fit to live dead? Disenthralled of flesh, and risen in the unobstructed sphere where passion never comes, he begins his illimitable work. His life now is grafted upon the infinite, and will be fruitful as no earthly life can be. Pass on, thou that hast overcome! Your sorrows, oh people, are his peace! Your bells, and bands, and muffled drums, sound triumph in his ear. Wail and weep here; God makes it echo joy and triumph there. Pass on!

"Four years ago, oh, Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man, and from among the people. We return him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine any more, but the nation's; not ours, but the world's. Give him place, oh, ye prairies! In the midst of this great continent his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to that shrine to kindle anew their zeal and patriotism. Ye winds that move over the mighty places of the West, chant his requiem! Ye people, behold a martyr whose blood, as so many articulate words, pleads for fidelity, for law, for liberty!"—(*Our Martyred President*, pp. 47-48).

This essay was prepared in the spring of 1923, and the substance of it was used as an address on the anniversary of Lincoln's death. It was then enlarged and prepared for this publication, and scheduled for appearance, as it does appear, in the autumn of the same year. As thus published, it has a timeliness which was not anticipated when the essay was prepared. The death of President Harding, August 3, 1923, and the transcontinental journey from San Francisco to Washington and back to his old home in Marion, and the services held in his memory in thousands of cities and villages, has many suggestions by way of comparison and contrast. But that would call for a separate article. The death of Harding occurred in mid-summer, when many ministers were upon their vacations; but the services were notable, and showed again the ability of the American pulpit to interpret in terms of religious faith and comfort a great national sorrow.