

OUR MARTYR PRESIDENT,
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

VOICES FROM THE PULPIT
OF
NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN.

ORATION
BY
HON. GEO. BANCROFT.

ORATION
AT THE
BURIAL,
BY
BISHOP SIMPSON.

TIBBALS & WHITING, NEW YORK.

C1865

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by

TIBBALS & WHITING,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District
of New York.



ALVORD, PRINTER.

Stereotyped by SMITH & McDOUGAL, 82 & 84 Beekman Street.

SERMON XIX.

REV. WILLIAM ADAMS, D. D.

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

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 But the circumstances in which we are assembled are so appalling that all ordinary topics are for the moment entirely superseded.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

dismay. William the First, Prince of Orange, the founder of Dutch freedom, was shot, when fifty-two years old, in his own house by a young man, hired for the purpose by a Jesuit priest, with the promise of eternal salvation. The universal lamentation of Holland on that occasion is one of the great pictures of history.

Henry the Fourth, of France, who, with all his faults and vascessations, was the best of all the French kings, in his fifty-seventh year, was stabbed in the streets of Paris when on his way to consummate alliances in favor of the Protestant interest against Spain and Austria. But these incidents furnish no parallel to the abrupt and terrible calamity which we deplore. Forty-eight hours ago we were in the highest exultation. Everything justified national joy. This Easter would have been celebrated as never before, amid spring blossoms and flowers, and doxologies, and anthems, and high throbbing hearts. The air was fanned with jubilant flags as the winter had passed and the time for the singing of birds was nigh. We were looking for the speedy termination of the war and the return of peace, when the plough would skip along the mellow furrow, commerce flap her long-folded wings, and the land would laugh with industry, plenty, and prosperity. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we are brought down into the deepest affliction. A single night has wrought the greatest of changes. It was "a night long to be remembered." We have not yet rallied from the shock sufficiently to command thought or language. Our children and our children's children will speak of it, and read of it, as one of profound horror. The Chief Magistrate of the nation has fallen by the hand of an assassin. To lend all possible aggravations to the tragic event, an accomplice, simultaneously, with more than brutal, fiendish violence, invaded the chamber of the

Secretary of State, where domestic love was tenderly watching him, disabled and shattered by an accident, and endeavored to butcher him in his bed!

It is, indeed, a time for lamentation and mourning. It is not to be wondered at that strong men among us, as they met each other yesterday, grasped hands in silence and sobbed. So to feel and act was manly. All political partialities, all differences of opinion in regard to modes and measures, are merged, ocean-deep, in the astonishment and grief which this event has produced. We cannot believe that throughout all the loyal States there was a single man or woman who heard of this tragedy without a shudder of horror. Consider the circumstances. Assassination even of a private citizen is frightful. To assault a man when unsuspecting, unarmed, defenceless, whatever motive may have prompted the crime, is cowardly and dastardly. But this was the head of the nation—the lawful, chosen President of the United States. This was a blow aimed at the very heart of the country. It was a blow which was intended to exterminate you and your children. It reminds us of the frenzied passion of Nero, who wished, on one occasion, that all Rome had but one neck, that he might sever it at one stroke.

Consider the personal character of the man thus immolated. He was not a hard, rough-shod, truculent, stern, cruel man or magistrate. He bore no resemblance to Marat, gorged with blood, assassinated by Charlotte Corday. He was the mildest and most inoffensive of men. Called by Providence to solemn and painful duty, he was always inclined to leniency. He was most tender-hearted, as gentle, by nature, as a woman. I do not recall a word of his which was intended to insult, goad, taunt, or exasperate any man; not one act which looked like unnecessary severity, bearing any resemblance to

cruelty. Many acts of kindness and generosity are reported of him; for he was benignant, honest, and thoroughly conscientious. Such were the qualities which met in our President. God is making us to feel, and many are astonished to discover it, how much of real tenderness is implied in that epithet. The Indian tribes in our territories call the President of the United States their "GREAT FATHER." It is a beautiful designation. Twice, during my professional life, have I officiated when death smote the President of the country, and distinctly do I recall, when Harrison and Taylor died, the depth of true and gentle affection which was developed out of that relation between the people and their chosen President. In times of political asperity, of free debate, of earnest discussion, this is forgotten. God intends that we should not forget it always. It is right and proper that we should feel it and express it now. The head is smitten and the whole body shudders. The father of the country is slain, and a whole nation are the mourners. There are many whom the world could easily spare. Some in conspicuous places, of whom to be rid would be a vast relief. There are others who are so related to good and great causes that their fall convulses the civilized world. Such was our President at the hour of his death. There is mourning to-day away on the shores of the Pacific. Something more than a profound sensation will be produced on the other continent. I know of more than one praying circle in the heart of Switzerland and Germany, where intercessions for a long time have been offered for the President of the United States. The event will be felt, for various reasons, throughout all Christendom. One thing is certain. They who plotted his death, and all who in any way sympathize with them may know it — *his* immortality is sure beyond all tarnish or eclipse.

His name will live forevermore. By this very event he is secure of his place in the hearts of his countrymen, enshrined and honored, whatever becomes of the name of every other President since that illustrious man, who was the first and greatest of all. When faithfulness is crowned with martyrdom, there is no waning to renown, and oblivion never can reach his pure and exalted fame.

“ Follow now as ye list ! The first mourner to-day
 Is the nation whose father is taken away.
 Wife, children and neighbor may moan at his knell ;
 He was lover and friend of his country as well.
 For the stars on our banner grown suddenly dim,
 Let us weep, in our darkness, but weep not for him :
 Not for him, who departing leaves millions in tears,
 Not for him who has died full of honors and years !
 Not for him who ascended Fame’s ladder so high ;
 From the round at the top he has stepped to the sky !”

The *wantonness* of this atrocious act is another feature of the event. What does it accomplish ? What could they who instigated and perpetrated the deed expect to gain by it ? It cannot help the rebellion. It is certain to consummate its overthrow. It cannot arrest or embarrass the lawful government of the country. That will stand. The Constitution provides for this very exigency, and when the bursts of tumultuous and vehement emotions which this calamity has occasioned have subsided into gentler reflection, men everywhere will admire the sublime ease and smoothness with which the lawful successor of the murdered President was inaugurated into office, government not intermitted, nor even in the imagination of a single citizen imperilled for a moment. Never did our government stand so firm, so strong, as at this very hour, notwithstanding the tremendous blow by which it has been struck. Millions of people, to-day, amid their

mourning and prayers at the altars of religion, have sworn, in their hearts, before Him who sitteth on the throne, that in dependence on Him this government shall be preserved and upheld forever.

The origin of this deplorable deed is no secret. It was not a sudden burst of passion. It was a cool, deliberate, long-intended plot. It is a part and a most fitting climax of a most atrocious attempt on the life of the country. When it was announced that there was a conspiracy to assassinate Mr. Lincoln as the President elect before his inauguration, it was hooted at by many as a most ludicrous imagination. The event has proved that these fears were not groundless. It shows the intensity of that hate which has been cherished by the leaders of the rebellion, just as the crucifixion of our Lord was no sudden act of frenzy, but the culmination of a long, deep and bitter hatred. Believing that this rebellion was conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, a distinction should be made between those who instigated it and the multitudes who have been involved in it—some innocently, against their emphatic protests, and others, in vast numbers, through misjudgment and falsities. It was a part of the policy of the original conspirators to fabricate and circulate falsehoods in regard to the intentions of the government, by which multitudes were misled and inflamed. No opportunity was given for the correction of these falsities before the torch was actually applied and the fire was raging. Editors of those newspapers, through which this mischief was propagated, have a tremendous load upon their consciences when arraigned before an enlightened public sentiment, and at the bar of God. It would be a sin against all truth and honor not to make the distinctions and exceptions to which allusion has been made. Multitudes of men and women dragged into this rebellion—

good Christian people—will shudder at this enormous crime, even as we do. But no such kindly judgment will exempt the leaders of this vast and wicked sedition. They knew that this rebellion was without good and adequate cause, and therefore, before God and man, unjustifiable. It had no origin or necessity but passionate will and pride, on the part of men foiled by the solemn march of the census in the purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery. When you have given credit for all the humanity and piety of those who, by the circumstances of their birth and education, were complicated with a system of slavery which they did not originate; after making all the qualifications and exceptions which charity and justice require, the truth will come forth now like the sound of many waters, that slavery is barbarism; that its effects on character must be bad; that those who constantly inhale its mephitic gases must be insensibly poisoned thereby; that cruelty to prisoners to the point of starvation, the attempt to burn cities, and throw from the track by night rail-cars freighted with women and children, are a legitimate part of its progeny; and if anything was wanting to complete the measure of detestation which belongs to this great crime of rebellion against a government which never was otherwise than lenient and benignant, it was just this wanton, unprovoked, and horrible assassination of the President. It would seem that all Christian nations must turn now with ineffable loathing and disgust from a rebellion which, inspired and fostered in the interest of slavery, could prompt to such an enormity of crime.

Palsied be my tongue before it utters one syllable in the spirit of revenge. We are the disciples of that Saviour, who, upon the cross, prayed for his own enemies. While I have not a word to utter in the way of exciting vindictiveness, but many in the way of interdicting and

denouncing it, much have we all to learn in regard to the tremendous necessities of justice and the solemnities of constitutional law. There has been growing up, for the last twenty years, throughout this country, the offspring of a certain kind of humanitarianism, called religion, supplanting the old sturdy theology of the Bible,—loose notions concerning the processes of justice, in the form of opposition to capital punishment. At this hour, in one of the jails of Massachusetts, is a man who, some two years ago, murdered a defenceless clerk in a bank at Malden,—as unprovoked and horrible an instance of crime as ever was perpetrated. He was arraigned, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. But that sentence has never been executed. Certain men, known as philanthropists, of a notorious class, have declared against the cruelty and barbarism of capital punishment. The Governor of Massachusetts—all honor to his vigor and promptness in upholding the arm of the national magistracy throughout the war—not concealing his personal and theological notions in regard to the extreme penalty of the law, has persistently refused to sign the warrant for execution, and so the culprit is likely to escape the gallows. There is too much of this mawkish sentimentalism abroad; this milky, rose-water religion, which, beginning with a denial of future punishment, and arguing for universal salvation against the explicit assertion of the Scriptures, which declare that God will turn the wicked into hell, if they repent not, would dispense with all the severities of justice, and resolve all government, human and Divine, into an aromatic essence.

One such act as that which now convulses the country was perhaps needful to correct all these meretricious notions. There is a tender mercy which is cruelty. If any one has ever staggered and been confounded as to the meaning of

the imprecatory psalms, he has the interpretation now in his own bosom. He hits the truth by an intuition. With not a particle of vindictiveness, not one thought or feeling foreign to the spirit of Christ, who does not wish that the perpetrators of this crime may be brought to condign punishment? What David, a man after God's own heart, felt and wrote in regard to Doeg and Ahithophel, we feel, and ought to feel, in regard to all who aim their blows against the life of society. What would become of us, if we are to tolerate crime, and be lenient towards atrocious offenders? If passion is to usurp supremacy, and men are to murder governments and murder citizens at their will, and be unmolested and unpunished, the sooner we find an asylum for ourselves beyond the reach of such barbaric philanthropy, the better for ourselves. The eyes of the world are upon us now to see whether by liberty we mean license and lawlessness,—whether democracy is synonymous with a mob. Let us so conduct ourselves as to create the impression that no people revere laws—I mean *laws* distinctively so called, with penalties and armed magistracy to execute them—more cordially than the citizens of these United States, thus proving ourselves the friends of humanity and true liberty.

In regard to the honored person himself who has fallen, he has completed his task. Who has made more out of life than he? Till thirty years of age he was addicted to manual labor. A model of republican simplicity, he was raised, by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, to the highest office in the land. He asked the prayers of the country when entering upon that office. He shrank from extreme measures at the beginning, but when duty demanded he announced, in his first proclamation, his purpose, in the name of the American nation, to raise the country's flag where it belonged on all the forts which had

We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this, but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge his wisdom and our own errors therein. Meanwhile, we must work earnestly in the best light he gives, trusting that so working still induces to the great end he ordains. Surely he intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make and no mortal could stay.

Your people, the Friends, have had, and are having, very great trials in principles and faith; opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma some have chosen one horn and some the other. For those appealing to me, on conscientious grounds, I have done, and shall do, the best I could and can in my own conscience and my oath to the law. That you believe this I doubt not, and, believing it, I shall still receive for our country and myself your earnest prayers to our Father in heaven.

(Signed)

Your sincere friend,

A. LINCOLN.

Most appropriate are these words to the event of his own death. We find the consolation we need in the belief of an over-ruling Providence, who directs all things, great and small, with reference to his own ultimate purposes:—

Peace—be still!

In this night of sorrow bow,
O! my heart contend not thou,
What befalls thee is God's will:

Peace—be still!

Peace—be still!

All thy mourning words are vain—
God will make the riddle plain—
Wait his word and hear his will:

Peace—be still!

Hold thee still!

Though the Father scourge thee sore,
Cling thee to him all the more,
Let him mercy's work fulfill:

Hold thee still!

Hold thee still!
 Though the Good Physician's knife
 Seem to touch thy very life;
 Death alone he means to kill:
 Hold thee still!

Lord, my God,
 Give me grace, that I may be
 Thy true child, and silently
 Own thy sceptre and thy rod,
 Lord, my God!

Shepherd mine,
 From thy fulness give me still
 Faith to do and bear thy will,
 Till the morning light shall shine,
 Shepherd mine.

This is the substance of our counsel to-day. Be still, and know that this is God! When opportunity for reflection shall come, I may address you with more specific instruction. Amid the tumultuous emotions of this morning my compendious advice is, be calm, be prayerful, be firm in your faith in God. Pray for your country, and pray especially for him who is thus suddenly called to be the President of the Republic. Let us bury the dead with all honor and grief, and turn to the living with sympathy, with confidence, and with hope. Presidents die, the country lives. Agents disappear, but the kingdom of God advances.

How worthless, how transient is every thing here on earth, save as it is related to that kingdom of our Lord which never shall be moved. Death, how mysterious! To-day, a man so great, so powerful in command of armies and navies—to-morrow, nothing but ashes! He that would be immortal, in the true sense, must identify himself with that kingdom of Christ which gives to time all its importance, and to eternity all its glory.