1865

A Sermon in Commemoration of the Death of Abraham Lincoln

Charles Carroll Everett
A SERMON

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE DEATH OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

Preached In the Independent Congregational Church of

BANGOR,

ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1865,

BY

CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT,
Pastor of the Society.

BANGOR:
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1865.
Easter Sunday,
April 16, 1865.

Dear Sir:
The very appropriate and admirable sermon delivered by you this morning on the death of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the United States, deserves, as we think, a wider circulation and a more permanent form. Will you favor us with the manuscript that we may cause it to be published.

Yours Truly

SAMUEL H. DALE,
FRANKLIN MUZZY,
G. K. JEWETT,
CHARLES STETSON,
H. E. PRENTISS,
F. M. SABINE,
ISAIAH STETSON.

Rev. C. C. EVERETT,

Third Street, April 18th, 1865.

Gentlemen:
I am very glad that the sermon, referred to in your note of the sixteenth instant, seemed to you to express, in any degree, the common feeling at this time of national bereavement; and I herewith enclose the manuscript as you request.

Yours very truly,
C. C. EVERETT.

Hon. SAMUEL H. DALE,
Hon. FRANKLIN MUZZY,
G. K. JEWETT, Esq.,
Hon. CHARLES STETSON,
H. E. PRENTISS, Esq.,
F. M. SABINE, Esq.,
Hon. ISAIAH STETSON.
SERMON.

E CRIED, MY FATHER!
2 Kings, 2: 12.

Calendar of the church to the church rejoicing, on that very day our and the crowning victory, while the earth, aris­
ning with the new shine, purified and as we beh­
looked backward to I and forward to our own the new birth way we looked, all seem-
But between these two days of festival came the sad day on which the church commemorates the death of its head. Every heart was so jubilant, that I shrank from calling you togeth­er upon that sad commemoration. I felt, that to most it would seem out of place, though I knew that there were some, who would find in such a service relief for hearts swollen and heavy with sad
SERMON.

And Elisha saw it and he cried, My Father! My Father! * * *

2 Kings, 2: 12.

Last Sunday, which in the Calendar of the church was Palm Sunday, we came up to the church rejoicing, with palms in our hands; while on that very day our generals won for us the great and the crowning victory. To-day, on this Easter Sunday, while the earth, arising from the death of winter, was thrilling with the new life of the spring, while our hearts looked backward to the promise that was in Christ, and forward to our own immortality, we were to have celebrated the new birth of our nation springing into life, purified and as we believed immortal. Which ever way we looked, all seemed full of life and promise. But between these two days of festival, came the sad day on which the church commemorates the death of its head. Every heart was so jubilant, that I shrank from calling you together upon that sad commemoration. I felt, that to most it would seem out of place, though I knew that there were some, who would find in such a service relief for hearts swollen and heavy with sad
memories, memories they hardly dared, it may be, to think of, in the glare of the common exultation. Little did I dream, little did any of us dream, that on that day, we were not merely to commemorate, but to pass through, a scene which more than any other that could have occurred in our nation, or in the world, would bring us near to the sadness, the unutterable sorrow associated with that day. Little did we think that amid our Palm Sundays and our Easters, the Good Friday would be the only day that should be in harmony with our sad hearts; that we should gather on this Easter morning and find not life but death; not the risen glory but the tomb, with no angel's hand to roll away for us the stone.

I have said, that more than any other possible event, the assassination of our President brought us near to the fact, which the day on which he fell commemorated. If, when Charles the First of England was led on Good Friday to his execution, his followers could, without reproach, compare at every step the death of their king with that of their Savior; if they could remark, how he was led forth to the soldiers to be mocked and buffeted by them; if they could remark how he, weighed down by the weariness of sorrow, sank upon the ground, during the sad march; how he died full of forgiveness to his enemies; and thus in all these and other particulars recall the events in Jerusalem and on Calvary; well may we—when the embod-
iment of practical christianity in this 19th century is smitten down by the hand of the assassin, when the pure, the true, the beloved, the Father of his people, the Liberator of the Slave, falls a victim to whatever is worst in oppression and in anarchy alike—well may we associate it with what is most sorrowful and most divine in our religious history, with the fall of him who cried: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto me." We remember now, what we read with a smile before, how the poor freed negroes of Richmond greeted him by the name of "Jesus," him their savior and their deliverer. To them he did represent, so far as any outward form could do it, the power of Christ, to break the chain and set the captive free. To the oppressor and the traitor he also represented whatever is best in Christianity; practically he stood to them for Christ. The crown of his sovereignty they wove for him of thorns, and these four years he has worn it simply, gently, and without complaint. The last words of his that have come to us were of mercy and of forgiveness. Then came that final blow, which was to make him a martyr to the cause and to the country that he loved. And now he is gone. Our Father is dead. He has fallen by the hand of the assassin. He has fallen, because he was so great, and so good, and so incorruptible. He has fallen and we feel ourselves orphans. We know not to whom to look, save to God. Our bereaved spirits
draw close to him for strength and consolation, trusting that he who has watched over us so long will not leave us now. But yet how empty will now the grandest triumphs seem. The thought of his honest, well earned gladness brought to us one of the purest joys of victory. His quaint and quiet words seemed first to express worthily the nation’s rejoicing. Without him jubilee will be like mourning. The assassin chose well the object of his stroke. With one blow he pierced every loyal heart.

And yet though our Father is gone, it is not for him or for his fate that we mourn. His life could hardly have been more fortunate. His death could hardly have been at a more glorious moment. The most prominent and striking part of his work was done. The most harassing part of it remained. He had lived to see himself Leader, by might as well as by right, of the whole country. He had lived to be welcomed into the Capital of the Enemy as a deliverer. He had lived to receive the thanksgiving of the millions of slaves that he had set free. He had lived to see the Rebellion end where it began, to see the dishonored flag lifted again over the battered walls of Sumter, amid a nation’s jubilee. He had lived to know himself enshrined in the love of every loyal heart, to find himself trusted by the people that he loved, a second time, with the power of the State. He seemed as near, as dear, as tenderly beloved, as it was possible for a man to be in the heart
of his nation. We did not know that it was possible for him to be dearer to us than he was. We know it now. His glory and the love we bore him needed only martyrdom to make them sacred. When Cæsar, the tyrant, fell, the people, who before had hated him, began almost to love him and to follow his murderers with thoughts of vengeance. What idolizing love shall the death awaken of him whom we thought we loved as much as possible before. Henry the Fourth of France was assassinated, and ever after the people of France spoke of him tenderly as the good King Henry. William the Silent, the founder and the Father of the Dutch Republic, whose history and character have all along seemed to have a strange and beautiful resemblance to that of Mr. Lincoln, the same integrity, the same modesty, the same quietness, the same immovable purpose, the same devotion of his people and the same success in defending them, fell, like him, from the shot of an assassin, fell, crying "God pity my poor people," and his glory became almost an apotheosis. Lincoln needed only this, to stand among the martyrs as well as among the deliverers of his race. Such a blow as this consigns to everlasting infamy the hand from which it comes, but to a new, a transfigured and an eternal glory, him who falls beneath it.

And while we cannot regret this fate so far as his outer history is concerned, neither can we, least of all on this Easter Sunday, regret it for himself. Ours is
the death, not his. Already has he entered on his reward. The voice of earthly jubilee has been changed for the greetings and the joy of Heaven. Already the pure, the incorruptible, the humble souls of all times, have welcomed him; already has Washington greeted him as brother; and Christ welcomed him with the "well done good and faithful servant," which is the crown of his reward.—Not for thee, incorruptible patriot and humble Christian, not for thee, our Father, honored and beloved, do we lament. Thy name is safe with history, thy name is enshrined in a nation's memory; thy soul is safe with God. Not thee do we mourn, but for our country and ourselves.—We had leaned so long upon that true heart and that trusty arm, we had looked so long for counsel to those wise lips, that now we hardly know where to turn for strength and guidance. There have been times in the history of the war when everything seemed dark and hopeless. The nation had lost its faith in its generals, and faith in its counsellors, but through all this darkness and doubt, there was one light that burned with pure and steady ray. There was one heart on which we rested with absolute security. The nation from first to last has never lost its faith in Abraham Lincoln. Detraction has never dared to sully the purity of his character or to impeach the simplicity of his motives; and in spite of strife and difference the great mass of the nation has never lost its faith in his wisdom and shrewdness,
any more than in his honesty and uprightness. Had he been only honest, honesty in such a time, united with good common sense, is worth everything. But he was not only honest. History, I believe, will recognize his greatness. His character had a completeness such as few can boast. Others may be as gentle, as complaisant, but will they be as firm? They may wear as soft a glove, but will there be the mailed hand beneath it? Others may be as firm, they may smite with as heavy a stroke, but will the mailed hand be gloved? Others may be as shrewd, but will they be as sincere? Others may be as pure hearted, but will they be as wise? His character in its simple and complete oneness is like the seamless robe that Jesus wore. When Christ was slain, that seamless robe was torn in pieces and divided among his murderers. Who among the friends of our martyred President will be found to wear that seamless robe of graceful and harmonious virtues, in which all were present, but in which each was so interwoven with the other, that you could draw no separating line; so that you hardly knew, whether you should call his firmness mildness or his mildness firmness; whether his earnestness was sport, or his sport was earnestness; whether his simplicity was wisdom or his wisdom was simplicity. We only know that his firmness was always mild, and his mildness was always firm; that his sport was always earnest and his simplicity was always wise. But now we must learn to fol-
low another voice; now we must learn to trust in another's wisdom. Yet while we mourn our loss, we will rejoice and thank God, that we did strengthen and cheer him by our confidence, that he knew that the heart of the people was with him.

But while we mourn thus for our nation's Chief so untimely fallen, we remember—thank God, not without hope—another victim, whose fate at any other moment would have absorbed our sympathy and interest. William H. Seward, we praise in the heartiest language possible to-day, when we say, that he was worthy to be the Secretary of State in an administration of which Abraham Lincoln was the chief. With less openness of speech, less homely simplicity, he yet blended in a large degree qualities like his. He has guided our foreign relations in this difficult period with firm and careful hand. He has saved our honor and preserved peace; and it needed not the sharing of the assassin's stroke, to make the name of Seward associated with that of Lincoln, in the memory of these dark yet glorious years.

But though the hand of the murderer thus struck down our most trusted and most beloved, though thus he reached the heart of every one of us, yet there is that which will suffer yet more terribly from the blow, and that is the Confederacy in whose name he struck, and the deadly system which was its foundation and its life. Lincoln was at the stroke translated into heavenly and earthly glory. Our country was by it
roused into new, stern life; but the Southern confederacy and Southern Slavery were by it thrust into a pit of infamy, a depth beneath all other deeps, which we did not believe to be possible. I know there was not any confederate government to authorize the act. I do not believe that it would have been authorized if there had been such a government. I do not believe that the mass of the rebels would have assented to it, or will applaud it. I believe that it will bring many a misguided traitor to his senses. Yet the Southern Confederacy cannot escape the ignominy of it; and Southern Slavery was its inspiring cause. I do not mean that the blow was struck for the sake of slavery, but that it was one of the results of this system. Slavery is brutal and brutalizing. It was that which struck down Sumner, taking him as he was stooping and unaware. It was that which stirred the passion of the South into this terrible war. It was that which has starved and tortured our brave boys in the Southern prisons. It was that which massacred our colored soldiers in cold blood; that which stood by the bedside of the sick and helpless Seward, striking him in the name of Southern chivalry. It was that which fired the deadly shot at our beloved President, shouting "Sic semper tyrannis." "Sic semper tyrannis!" Did the murderer mean not only the obvious import of the words, but did he also mean to strike in the name of Virginia, whose motto he used for his assassin cry?
Did he wish that henceforth the once honored State, once known as the mother of States and of Presidents, should become branded, not merely as the destroyer of States, but, as the slayer of Presidents? I believe that Virginia herself, sunken as she is, would reject and repel the ignominy. But yet this act and this cry let us more deeply into the heart and nature of the foe with which we have been dealing.

I told you last week that the Confederacy had lasted long enough to show its principles for what they were. I was mistaken. One thing more remained.—The shot and the dagger of the assassin had not yet been used. These were still a power in reserve. Their "Death to tyrants" had not yet been shown to mean the murder of the kindest hearted, gentlest and most loving soul that ever bore the name of ruler.

I will not charge the confederacy with this act, though it will, not wholly wrongfully, bear the shame of it. I do charge it upon the brutalizing system of Slavery upon which the confederacy was built. As I have told you time and again, a system that ceases to recognize man as man, introduces the possibility of endless barbarism. It nurtures a brutal self-will which knows no law but the law of force, no humanity but that of caste and party, no principle but that of self-interest. It was Slavery that slew Lincoln. He, challenged by it to deadly strife, had smitten it to the earth. He had placed his foot upon the monster's head. It
stung him with the concentrated poison of the madness of its death struggle. It stung him to death, but he died a victor.

Perhaps all this was needed to rouse the loyal spirit of the North to destroy and root out and annihilate every fragment and every trace of this vile injustice; to sweep from the statute book, to sweep from all chance of actual existence, every trace of inequality between man and man. Itself roused us to this struggle. It forced us to smite it to the earth; and now, while we might have been growing too lax and easy, with this most terrible wound, it stung us into the madness of a righteous wrath and a stern inflexible purpose.

For though it has slain Abraham Lincoln, he, beloved and honored above all others, yet was neither the nation, nor the principle, and least of all was he God. He was but a man, an instrument. Less than almost any other did his child-like spirit seek personal ends in the war; and less than almost any other was he governed by the excitement of personal feeling. Thank God, the war, as carried on under his guidance, was pure and honorable. We may throw open our record to the world; you may search the record of the world and you will never find a war so free from inhumanity. It was not Lincoln fighting for power, and to punish his enemies. It was the country, it was the principle, it was God using him as the instrument. The instrument is broken but the power remains. The rebels
have lost more in Lincoln than we have lost. He was their wisest friend. I fancy that President Johnson will not be more lenient than the man that they have slain. Johnson, the stern, uncompromising, true-hearted patriot, Southerner though he is; and because he is a Southerner, fired with a spirit that no Northern man can wholly share, Johnson with the whole bereaved, indignant, maddened Union to back him, will make short, sharp work with what remains of the rebellion and its root.

Spite of all, it is still Easter morning. Still the glad promise of immortality rings through the world; of immortality for the soul, of immortality for whatever is right in principle or true in thought, immortality for justice and for liberty.

Spite of all God reigns. Did you choose President Lincoln? Did you know what he was when you called him from his comparative obscurity? You took him because you did not know. You, not dreaming of the volcanic fires that were rolling and rumbling under your feet, were playing the old game. You wanted an available candidate, good but not too good. But God knew what was coming. Where you thought you had a good politician, he gave you a statesman. Where you thought you had an available candidate, he gave you a second Washington. And can you believe that a nation founded by Washington, which, almost a century after its birth, saw, at its time of need, a pure, wise
and incorruptible patriot at its head; a man who shall stand in coming time by the side of its founder, in equal honor, can you believe that such a nation, will not be cared for, if it be true to itself, cared for till the end?

But while we begin thus a new era in the war, while we follow the assassins of our chiefs and the stirrers up of treason, with the stern punishment that is their due; while we tear up, root and branch, every fragment of that accursed crime against humanity which has brought upon us this terrible retribution; let us not forget the spirit and the counsels of him we mourn. Let not our zealous love for our Father destroy his work. When we read the sacred words of prophecy; "He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, he shall bring forth judgment unto truth," are we not reminded of him? Do not the words recall the quaint wisdom of his last public speech in which he bade us not crush the egg that might be hatched?—In the fire of our patriotism, of our righteous indignation, of our stern justice, let us not forget the parting caution of our President. Let us be careful, that we do not crush a single germ, that may spring up into life, and into healthful, beautiful strength.
"Calmly, calmly lay him down
He hath fought a noble fight;
He hath battled for the right;
He hath won the fadeless crown.

Memories all too bright for tears,
Crowd around us from the past;
He was faithful to the last,—
Faithful through long, toilsome years.

All that makes for human good,
Freedom, Righteousness and truth,
These, the objects of his youth,
Unto age he still pursued.

Kind and gentle was his soul,
Yet it had a glorious might;
Clouded minds it filled with light,
Wounded spirits it made whole—

Huts where poor men sat distressed,
Homes where death had darkly passed,
Beds where suffering breathed its last,
These he sought, and soothed and blessed.

Hoping, trusting, lay him down!
Many in the realms above
Look for him with eyes of love,
Wreathing his immortal crown."
REMARKS MADE IN CONNECTION WITH THE SERVICES HELD IN THE INDEPENDENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BANGOR, ON THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN, APRIL 19TH, 1865, BY CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT, PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY.

One of the most striking circumstances, connected with the mourning of the last few days, is the perfect adaptation by which expressions of sorrow and of praise, uttered on the most diverse occasions, and in relation to characters the most unlike, seem as if they had been uttered to express our mourning, and to describe our loss. We open the pages of Shakespeare, and find passages full of his purest genius, that seem the fittest words that could be spoken in praise of our departed President. In turning over the leaves of a hymn-book, I met the dirge which I have just read. Had I told you that it was written to be used on this occasion, you would have thought that it was most true, and most beautifully appropriate. Even when we open the Bible, we find everywhere words that seem full of our sorrow, words that utter the virtues and the perfect character of him for whom we mourn. Last Sunday I read you of him who would not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax, and the words brought not only the general character, but the last counsels of Lincoln to our mind. And just now, when I was reading to you the words of Jesus, those dear Beatitudes seemed only blessing after blessing heaped upon his name.

_Blessed are the poor in spirit._ Was not he poor in spirit? From the beginning to the end of his career,
you will look in vain for any trace of pride or self exaltation. In the freshness of his power, in the first flush of victory, you find only a self forgetting humility. The haughty Southerner would call it meanness of soul. But Christ called it blessed. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Even here, he tasted something of the peace of that kingdom whose instrument he was; and now our faith can follow his spirit, as it enters upon the fullness of its joy.

*Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.* Who mourned like him, for our country's sorrow? Who shed such bitter tears over her sons fallen in battle? Who felt with such keen agony the woe of each repulse? And he was comforted. Who could feel the joy of victory, like him who had known the full terror of the strife? Who could enjoy the rest, like him who had borne the burden? This comfort came to him upon the earth. But now he has tasted that consolation that almost drives out the very memory of sorrow. He has felt the touch of the hand that wipes away all tears from the eyes of the blessed.

*Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.*—We used to wonder, when we read in the Bible that Moses the leader and the deliverer of his people, who conquered for them their enemies, while he restrained their own rebellious wills, was the meekest of men. We understand the mystery now. We have seen the meekest of men sustain a nation by his strength, and conquer its enemies by his persistent will. Not only the kingdom of Heaven was his reward. The earth also was his inheritance.

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after
righteousness. How did he hunger and thirst after righteousness? When, almost a stranger to us, he was coming to our help in the hour of our need, how did we hang on every word of his, and watch the smallest action. We thought that he would come with ready purpose, with plans matured and hand ready to execute. He came seeking after the right. His friends gathered around him as he left his distant home. He only asked their prayers. Eager crowds surrounded him at every pause in his long journey. He said only, that he should try and find what was right to do. He should seek after the best course and follow it. We almost feared that he had no mind or purpose of his own. We did not know that these words expressed the hunger and the thirst of his spirit. And he was filled, and we all shared his fullness.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. He was merciful. Not the madness of defeat or the intoxication of victory could kindle in him the spirit of revenge. His mercy tempered and softened all our hearts.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. These words most of all seem to picture the spirit of our President, which, free from all stain of self-will or self-seeking, left a free passage for the light of God to pass into it, and through it. He saw God. He saw which way his hand was pointing; and that way he walked, leading the nation after him. He saw God; but who shall picture to his thought the vision that dawned upon his sight, as his spirit left the darkness that we call the light of earth, and entered upon that higher life, to see as it was seen and to know as itself was known.
Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. He was a Peacemaker; not merely as the cannon is a peacemaker. Through all the struggle, he has known how to unite the hearts of loyal men, making them see where they could agree and forget their points of difference. He was commencing the same work with the returning rebels.

Here begin the blessings which come at the cost of stern duties and cruel suffering. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you. He tasted also this bitter cup. Men reviled him and persecuted him and spake all manner of evil against him falsely for the sake of Christ. The names Tyrant, and Despot, and whatever is worst and harshest in human utterance, were linked in the mad speech of men with his pure name. And at last he fell by the assassin's stroke. He fell, as so many a prophet had fallen before him, and shared the death and the crown of martyrdom.

It is this fullness of character, to which the most diverse praise fits gracefully as if it were designed for it, which makes our sorrow to-day so deep, entering into the very heart and center of our lives. To-day the nation laments more than its President. It stands in the garments of mourning, in silence and in tears, by the open grave of its Father. To-day the nation is still. From the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, from Maine far down as the flag floats, there is silence. The cities are still. The streets are still. There is no sound but the
slow boom of the cannon, the measured toll of the bell, and the sad voices of the chanted dirge. These forms do not express the nation's grief. When the poor stricken soul, whose dearest friend is gone, wraps about it the black garments of mourning, do they express its sorrow? Such a thought would seem mockery to it. They only screen it from the world. They shut out its garish light, and separate the mourner from its glad life, and trifling gayety. So these formalities, which accompany the nation's mourning, do not utter it. They only effect that nothing shall come between it and its sorrow.

Lincoln was indeed the leader and the deliverer of the people. He seemed to be lent to us simply for this work. We hardly knew him before. He left us when the chief peril was over. It is like the stories that we read, the legends of the elder times, in which at the darkest hour of conflict, a Divinity descends and turns the tide of battle; but so soon as the perilous moment is passed departs again, waiting for no gratitude and claiming not his portion of the triumph. So he came to us, unknown before, like a revelation of strength and trusty firmness; and so he left us, just when the first shout of victory told that the strife was over. Thus did he save us. Yet he was only a simple hearted, a true hearted, a tender hearted man. This is why we loved him so, and why we so mourn for him to-day. He was so near to us, that he entered into our hearts. It would be strange to one who did not know the circumstances of the case, to hear how often the word "Father," has fallen from trembling lips these few last days. "I feel," says one, and another, and another, "as if I had lost my Father", or, "as I did when my Father
died." Such is the common feeling and the common word.

As, in expressing the bereavement of our own hearts we use the word "Father," so in speaking of the nation's loss we use the name of Washington. We do this not because Washington was ours; the world claims him now; but because through history, we can find no hero at once so pure, so unselfish, and so triumphant as he. And when we place our Lincoln by the side of our Washington, let no one think that we take anything from the honor of the founder of the Republic. Rather do we multiply his honor. The great imperfection, that has sullied the fame of many of the greatest law-givers and heroes that have lived, is, that at their death their work died with them. The laws of Solon failed because there was no Solon to enforce them. The empire of Charlemagne crumbled at his death for the lack of another Charlemagne. The glory of Florence departed with her Lorenzo. Thus a certain failure marred their happiest performance. It is the greatest glory of our Washington, that almost a century after he had founded the nation, there arose in the hour of its need a man to stand where he stood, and do the work he would have done. This shows the perfection of the work of Washington. It shows how well he chose the foundation, how well he reared the solid wall of that nation, which was to stand as the monument of his memory.

In like manner, let no one think to honor the name of Lincoln by going from his grave with hearts full of discouragement, feeling that with him we have lost everything. Lincoln also, like a wise master builder, made his work so strong that it will stand, though he
remains no longer to uphold it. Look at the Generals whom he called about him, at Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas and the rest of those brave leaders; is there one of them who would seize the moment of the nation's bewilderment of sorrow to grasp at unlawful power? Is there one of them who would relax for a moment his activity and his zeal, because the eye of his great captain rested on him no longer. Rather would they become if possible more true and more devoted. The same may be said of the statesmen that formed his cabinet. Though a veil of politic reserve wisely concealed from us the individual attitude of these toward the government of which they formed a part, yet we know that they were one with its great head. And of him who is to take the place of Lincoln, those who know him best, speak with most confidence of praise. Those who know him best speak most slightly of the cloud that for a moment rested on his fair renown. President Johnson has had just the education to fit him for the work that now awaits him. He has been brought into personal contact with the loyal South, and the disloyal South. He has done on a small scale what he must now do on a large—for Tennessee what he must do for the country. And as he has left that State with a loyal government chosen by loyal votes, so doubtless will he leave the United States organized on a basis of loyalty and liberty.

But why need we speak of individuals. This has not been a war of any man or of any men. The rebels called it "Lincoln's War"; how little did they understand the nature of the struggle. It was not even a war of States or Sections. It was a war of princi-
ples, of epochs, of civilizations. One of the most profound critics of the world has remarked that all the great epics sing not a war of nations but of civilizations. Such is the grand epic which has been wrought into our history.

"Is this 1865?" asked Booth, when on the afternoon preceding his terrible act he was preparing to date a letter, relating doubtless to the foul deed that he was plotting. "Is this 1865?"—No! might have been the answer of one who had the power to look into his heart and see the deadly purpose that lay coiling there. No: for you and for the cause you serve it is not 1865, the heart of the 19th century. For you it is whatever moment is blackest in the past. For you it is the darkest hour in the 13th century. For you it is the most cruel period of Rome's imperial power, when the violence of sedition, and the sword and poison of the assassin were the supreme rulers of the State. Nay, for you and for the cause you serve, Christ has not come. We must seek your place where the years, broadening backwards, lead us down into unknown depths of barbarism and of brutal passion.

The gulf that separated the North and the South was no State line. It was a gulf of centuries and of civilizations. I do not say this boastfully. It was the might of these opposing principles that separated us. It was not our act, but theirs. That absolute liberty for all which is to be the life and the law of the future, which has used us as its instrument, might say to us, as Christ said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." We did not mean this when we began. We said, "Accursed be he who shall lay his
hand upon the peculiar institutions of the South."—
This we said, as Balaam spoke, before he had ascended
the hill of prophecy, and had been filled and rapt
by the inspiring might of God. The South did not
mean to use the weapons of barbarism, torture and
starvation and assassination. They meant to give the
world an example of chivalrous warfare. But the
powers that each had served imperfectly before, seized
them and inspired them, and fought through them the
terrible strife.

I heard a little girl, surprised that the robin was
singing its old song, exclaim, "I thought that the birds
would sing sad, now that Abraham Lincoln is dead!"
But, no, the birds sing as of old. The spring flowers
will open their delicate buds as sweetly as if he were
here to welcome them. Nature is unchanged. Prin-
ciple is unchanged, Providence is unchanged.

Let us, then, not dishonor the memory of Lincoln
by cowardly thoughts of despair. We will leave our
hearts in his grave. We will give our confidence,
though we cannot yet give the same love, to those that
come after him. Nay, we will gather here a fresh con-

fidence. We will strengthen our hearts by a fresh
purpose of devotion to his cause and ours. And,
though as we go away, our eyes are dim with tears,
these shall not blind us to the promise of the future.—
Rather shall its brightness, shining through our tears,
make them radiant with its glory.