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FARQUHAR

Lincoln





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F23

THE CLAIMS OF GOD TO RECOGNITION
IN THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON THE DAY OF NATIONAL HUMILIATION
AND PRAYER,

IN THE

CHANCEFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
LOWER CHANCEFORD, YORK CO., PA.,

AND IN THE

PROSPECT METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
FAWN, YORK CO., PA.

BY

THE REV. JOHN FARQUHAR,
PASTOR OF THE FORMER CHURCH.

LANCASTER, PA.:

PEARSOL & GEIST, PRINTERS, DAILY EXPRESS OFFICE.
1865.

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LOWER CHANCEFORD, June 5, 1865.

REV. JOHN FARQUHAR—Dear Sir: In accordance with a resolution adopted unanimously by many citizens assembled on the evening of June 1st, 1865, the undersigned solicit for publication a copy of the discourse delivered by you in Chanceford Church, on the morning of that day.

Yours truly,

JOHN BAIR,
ROBERT SMITH,
JOSEPH MANIFOLD,
STEPHEN MCKINLEY,
SAMUEL M. PEDAN,
JOSEPH PEIRCE,
HARRY KEYSER,
WILLIAM G. ROSS,
JAS. B. AMOS,
JAMES S. FULTON.
JOHN SMITH.

REV. JOHN FARQUHAR—Dear Sir: In behalf of many citizens of Fawn and Hopewell, the undersigned beg leave to join in the above request, having heard the same discourse repeated in the afternoon of the day of National Humiliation, in Prospect Methodist Church.

Very truly yours,

DAVID WILSON,
SALEM MANIFOLD,
WILLIAM LIGGET,
WILLIAM WALLACE.

CHANCEFORD MANSE, LOWER CHANCEFORD.

GENTLEMEN: I submit the sermon with some slight alterations, which you may readily discover, but which do not materially affect it, to be disposed of as you solicit.

Yours respectfully,

JOHN FARQUHAR.

TO MESSRS, JOHN BAIR, ROBERT SMITH, JOSEPH MANIFOLD, DAVID WILSON, SALEM MANIFOLD, &c.



THE CLAIMS OF GOD TO RECOGNITION IN THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Be still, and know that I am God.—PSALM xlvi: 10.

The general belief of commentators is that this Psalm refers to the deliverance of Judah from the hand of Sennecharib the Assyrian, by the miraculous destruction of the army of that powerful and boastful heathen king. Though the exhortation of the text may have here a limited import, the limit arises not so much from its nature as the circumstances in which it is given. In its own character it is general. In either joyful or sorrowful events, prosperous or adverse circumstances, the voice of the Lord may be heard, ever saying, "Be still, and know that I am God." Both in joy and sorrow men are apt to forget their Maker, and as a consequence to give expression to their feelings without due reference to him whose overruling providence has ordered the events over which they rejoice or grieve. Thus exultation or depression, with their respective manifestations, may be sinful: and the very danger that they may become so, justifies the imperative counsel in the text. Be still—still your undue and Godless feelings—cease from them—leave them off so far as they ignore the hand of the Lord or render you forgetful of his wisdom, and unmindful of his providentially indicated purposes. The duty is, not to cease from either joy or grief, or their manifestations, but from those phases of either which shut out the sovereign ruler; and to learn the lessons of his Supreme Godhead—his uncontrolled direction of the affairs of men.

We have assembled this day under circumstances which render the consideration of the text peculiarly appropriate.

He who was the chief magistrate of our nation, was but a few weeks ago most foully murdered in the incumbency of his office; and his successor, in view of the fact that "our Country has become one great house of mourning, where the head of the family has been taken away; and believing that a special period should be assigned for again humbling ourselves before Almighty God, in order that the bereavement may be sanctified to the nation;" and "in order to mitigate that grief on earth which can only be assuaged by communion with the Father in Heaven," has appointed this day "to be observed wherever in the United States the flag of the country may be respected, as a day of humiliation and mourning," and has recommended his "fellow citizens to assemble in their respective places of worship, there to unite in solemn service to Almighty God, in memory of the good man who has been removed, so that all shall be occupied at the same time in contemplation of his virtues, and sorrow for his sudden and violent end."

I can think of no text, the consideration of which will come more fully up to the design of this recommendation, than the one I have chosen.

I. LET US LOOK AT THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH GIVE DIRECTION AND WEIGHT TO THE ADMONITION OF THE TEXT AS APPLIED TO US.

The general circumstances are the murder of the President of the United States, and the feelings thereby engendered. The murder of a chief magistrate of a nation has been no uncommon event in the history of the world, though heretofore unknown in our annals. Emperors, Kings and Chiefs have often fallen victims to private animosity, ambitious rivalry, vile treason, and mistaken patriotism. Sacred and profane history abound in instances. But, in all the list, I can think of only two which approach in their circumstances or atrocity that of Abraham Lincoln. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the people of the Netherlands—a protestant people—threw off the yoke of a persecuting papist, Philip of

Spain, and bravely fought for their liberty. Philip offered a reward for the life of their leader, William, Prince of Orange, called the Silent; and urged on by fanaticism and the hope of reward, a wretch named Balthazar Gerard murdered the Prince in the year A. D. 1584. The other instance is that of Henry IV., King of France. Henry had been King of Navarre, and head of the protestant faction in the civil wars of France. Though rightful heir to the French throne after Henry III., the Catholic League refused to recognize him on the death of that monarch. After much fighting he reconciled the opposing party by turning Roman Catholic. Though this step is a blot on his fair fame, he nevertheless soon won all hearts but those of the most fanatical, by the generosity and gentleness of his reign. After escaping many conspiracies and attempts to murder him, he fell at last, in the year A. D. 1609, by the hand of one Ravailiac, a blood-thirsty bigot, who, when the King's carriage was temporarily obstructed in a narrow street, mounted the wheel, and stabbed him in the heart with a knife, over the shoulder of one of his courtiers, and in the midst of six others. The assassin, thinking he had committed a commendable act, as he regarded the King as still a heretic in heart, made no attempt to escape, and seemed surprised that any one should detest his horrid crime. These two murders, although they came nearest in horror to that of our President, do not by any means fill up the measure of atrocity attained by it. And while to the names of Gerard and Ravailiac another will be added in the execrations of all history, that of J. Wilkes Booth will stand most conspicuous in the roll of infamy. But we look at the circumstances of this crime not to increase our hatred of the poor wretch who has already passed into the hands of Him to whom vengeance belongeth, but to prepare us the better for the lessons of the Lord. Let us look at some of the circumstances in detail, yet briefly.

First: *The murder we mourn is that of one occupying the most exalted earthly position—the Chief Magistrate of a*

nation. I need not before this audience attempt to prove that "the powers that be are ordained of God"—that lawful magistrates are "God's ministers," appointed for the promotion of good and the suppression of evil: you all know it. In all history the murder of the Chief of State has been looked upon as the vilest of crimes. Whether he be King or President, occupying his seat for life by hereditary descent and the silent acquiescence of the people, or only for a time and by their expressed choice, he is, while he rules, "*the Lord's anointed*;" he is in a certain sense the father of the nation, and his murder is *parricide*. David expressed the general horror of the crime when he said to the man that boasted of having slain Saul, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" and when he put him to death, saying, "thy blood be upon thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed."—2 Sam. i: 14-16. Men have often, in our own land especially, attempted to separate the office from the man. Whether they have ever been successful, and if so, whether to any beneficial purpose, may be questions. In this case no such effort can be successfully made. It was not simply Abraham Lincoln that was slain; it was the President of the United States. No pretense of private wrong was set up; it was his official position and acts that were obnoxious to the conspirators. This opposition was not the mere party disapproval that results from a legitimate difference of opinion, but traitorous sympathy with armed insurrection and treasonable effort to stab the Nation in a vital part, that a vile rebellion, in its desperate fortunes, might be revived, or else in its dying agonies, revenged. And yet no one can doubt that though no private wrong was avowed, there was the most intense personal ill-will and malice; and that the deadly purpose of avenging fancied public wrongs, derived fixedness and intensity by the transmutation of criminal political animosity into the most causeless private hatred. This deed was then both treason and murder, both in intent and fact.

It adds to the enormity of the crime that the victim was the Chief Magistrate of the Nation, by its free choice, selected by such an overwhelming majority as set at rest every question of fairness, and secured the ready acquiescence of the candid, patriotic and intelligent portion of his political opponents. If the slaying of a hereditary ruler, or the choice of an aristocracy, is looked upon as an atrocious crime, what shall we say of such an end of such a man as we mourn? Humanly speaking, our Nation is the hope of the world. She as far transcends in dignity and prospective usefulness the other nations of the earth, as do the mighty principles of civil and religious liberty embodied in her constitution and practice, the dogmas and customs of which other nationalities boast. This man then filled the most exalted position; not merely in the sense of being a ruler, and because ruling is that position, but in the higher and more exclusive sense of being the highest ruler of the first of nations. By so great then as was his exaltation, by so much the more deep, and black, and hellish, was his taking away; and by so much the more is our horror and indignation increased.

Second: *This murder is that of a man of exalted deeds.* Every effort by which he rose from his original obscurity to his final eminence was of this description. Some men attain high position by crawling: on the belly they squirm through sloughs and creep over rocks which honest men who prefer to walk erect as God made them, find difficult to overcome, or with their measure of talents impossible. 'Not so with Lincoln.' His public career from the lowest station to the highest, was singularly pure. It challenges investigation. To him as rightfully as to any man in all the land, was applied by his admiring countrymen the term, *honest*. But this exaltation of deed was seen not only in the steps by which he rose, but also in his noble advocacy of right, and his utterance of immortal principles, even when to advocate right and utter such principles were far from being sure means of rising. His was the nature that disregarding

present consequences to himself, ever trusted in the final triumph of justice, and bent all its energies to its success. These same traits accompanied him into the chair of state, and rendered his deeds there the most famous and widely honored of the age. Neither William of Orange nor Henry of Bourbon, skilful generals and wise statesmen as they were, equal him here. Intelligent Europe with almost one voice, at length concedes the glory of his acts; the majority of his countrymen welcome the tribute from the old world as a confirmation of their own estimate; nor will the rest of his fellow citizens be long in joining the general judgment and making it all but universal.

To our army and navy we can never be too grateful for their heroic deeds—their sufferings and their triumphs; but more than even to them are we indebted to the brain that toiled, and planned, to the constancy that bore us up and inspired us with courage and hope in the hour of disaster, to the moderation that respected the laws and the rights of the people in the midst of unparalleled provocation, faction and sedition, to the patience and skill that bore with and corrected mistakes in subordinates, and to the wisdom that divested victory of its most potent dangers. It was Lincoln more than any other man, who, under God, subdued the rebellion and saved his country. And this is not all; more than any other man he has purified and exalted his country. The example of so pure a magistrate will not be lost on future occupants of office, nor on the people when they select men to administer the laws. In one respect his purifying influence is most conspicuous; and the world will never let its memory die. To efface the foulest blot upon our nation—slavery; to wipe out which has cost more thought among good men, given rise to more diversity of sentiment, and been the cause of more heart-burnings, jealousies, enmities, than any other public question, his practical genius seized upon a plan of pre-eminent wisdom. While the main design was to break the back of the rebellion and pre-

vent the like from ever again cursing the nation, in its own nature it opened up a course from which when entered on there could be no receding. I know that many of us doubted at first, I know that many, though in diminished numbers, doubt now; I know that some honestly doubt the wisdom of the plan. But I know also that in the opinion of the vast majority of the enlightened and christian world, it is the greatest, the most glorious feature of his administration. And I am convinced that however we may differ now as to the policy of this scheme, judging its policy by immediate consequences; when sufficient time has elapsed to efface from our memories the differences to which it has given rise; and when the remoter steps which it necessitates, and the maturer plans for which it has prepared the way, rise up in their acknowledged wisdom; and when the ultimate results are seen in their beauty and glory;—that then we shall all acknowledge as exalted the deed of him, who, disregarding the fanaticism of pro-slavery conservatism on the one hand, and the fanaticism of ultra-abolitionism on the other, issued on the *first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three*, THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

I feel assured that we will yet all rejoice in the even now largely conceded honor, that our country has produced the most remarkable man of our times—that as Germany gave to the world, in LUTHER, the great man of the sixteenth, England, in CROMWELL, the great man of the seventeenth, the new-born America, in WASHINGTON, the great man of the eighteenth, so redemed and regenerated America has given, in LINCOLN, so far at least, the great man of the nineteenth century. That such a man as this should be cut off from his exalted career by a vile assassin; that he should, by such a mean and murderous act, be deprived of the rest and enjoyment so fairly won by his toil and faithfulness—“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Third: *This murder was that of a man of exalted*

worth. As was his course, so was his character—pure. That he was a sinner in the sight of God, as are all men, is true. That he was a sinner saved by grace—a christian, we have strong reasons for believing. But putting that question aside, as one which God only can settle, we look at his life—his acts and words—and find a clear testimony to the wonderful combinations of his character. A man is presented, light-hearted and cheerful, yet of deep and earnest thought and correct morals, patient, persevering, energetic, gentle, kind-hearted to a proverb, yielding in matters of expediency, yet firm as a rock in what he deemed the right, ever dependent on God and ever appealing to him for wisdom and aid. Those who were brought in contact with him in the administration of public affairs, can bear testimony to his remarkable quickness and clearness of apprehension, to the masculine grasp with which he seized and held important principles, and to the wisdom with which he weighed and sifted proposed plans before he adopted them. The world is compelled from his public documents to allow that he possessed a wonderful mastery of subject and an unusual faculty of making his opinions plain to the most ordinary intellect. With little rhetoric or fine writing in his productions, there was a lucidness of thought and clearness of expression for which you may search in vain the works of many-authors and orators of world-wide fame. But his chief praise were his exalted deeds and exalted moral worth. It is impossible not to see the soul of the man breathing through the closing paragraph of his last Inaugural address. The words will live as long as time. “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nations wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.” Words like these might win any heart but that of a traitor and assassin.

“ Oh, slow to smite and swift to spare,
 Gentle and merciful and just !
 Who in the fear of God didst bear
 The sword of power, a nation's trust !

“ In sorrow by thy bier we stand,
 Amid the awe that hushes all,
 And speak the anguish of a land
 That shook with horror at thy fall.

“ Thy task is done ; the bond are free !
 We bear thee to an honored grave,
 Whose proudest monument shall be
 The broken fetters of the slave.

“ Pure was thy life ; its bloody close
 Hath placed thee with the sons of light,
 Among the noble host of those
 Who perished in the cause of right.”

Bryant's Hymn.

Fourth: *The victim of this murder was a man held in exalted esteem and love.* When he first entered on the discharge of his high duties, he had but a slight personal hold on the affections of his countrymen. He very soon, however, began to gain the esteem and love of his political friends and the respect of many of his political opponents. This advance was the more valuable, because there were mingled with the opposition of many the most bitter and violent personal attacks. Ridicule and abuse the most unmeasured were heaped upon his head. And as at home so abroad. The organs of public opinion in Europe, especially in Great Britain and France, with a few honorable exceptions, were unsparing and outrageous in their attacks. Some of this continued to the end, but to the honor of humanity be it spoken, much was gradually softened down and much abandoned; so that at the time of his death no ruler was so generally respected throughout the civilized world; and never one in our own land more dearly loved, and never one loved by so many hearts. The testimonials of Foreign Governments, the resolutions of public bodies, and the editorials of foreign papers show the high honor in which he was held in other lands; and exhibit how his noble life had overcome the most bitter prejudices, and turned derision, scorn and ha-

tred, into esteem, admiration and love. No paper was more scurrilous than the *London, Punch* with both pen and pencil. Now listen to its candid confession of error and to its noble tribute to despised worth. After alluding to its own ridicule of his personal appearance and of the difficulties of his position, it proceeds :

“ Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurril jester, is there room for you ?

“ Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen—
To make me own this kind of prince’s peer,
This rail-splitter, a true born king of men.

“ My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion’s height he rose,
How his quaint wit made home truth seem more true,
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

“ How humble, yet how hopeful he could be ;
How in good fortune and in ill the same ;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

“ He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—
As one who knows where there’s a task to do,
Man’s honest will must heaven’s good grace command.

“ Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to do his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

“ So he went forth to battle on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty’s and Right’s,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude nature’s thwarting mights.

* * * * *

“ So he grew up a destined work to do,
And lived to do it : four long-suffering years’
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses changed to cheers,

“ The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood ;
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

“ A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest—

And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid at rest.

“The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought a swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

“The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high;
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

“A deed accurst! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.

“Vile hand that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;
And with the martyr's crown, crownest a life,
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.”

The man who could draw such a tribute from jealous enemies, and excite in them such emotions, was no common man. And yet this noble man, so exalted in his position, deeds and worth, and in the esteem and love of others, was slain by the hand of a miserable assassin, in the very presence of his wife, and in the confidence engendered by conscious rectitude and the overflowing kindness of his large, loving heart. No wonder that men were at first stunned! No wonder that then they were filled with grief and indignation, and doubt and dread! No wonder that in the thronged thoroughfares of the cities they united as one man to express their deep yet overflowing feelings by speeches, resolutions, sermons, prayers, and by many silent tokens of mourning! No wonder that in retired, rural districts, on that sad succeeding Sabbath—set apart by so many christians as the joyous anniversary of the resurrection of the world's Redeemer, as many for the first time, at the house of God, heard the terrible news, their hearts sank within them, and their pastors were almost unfitted for their pulpit ministrations.

But I now recite these circumstances simply because they justify the application of the text which I wish to make and give point to its lessons. “Be still and know that I am God.”

II. WHAT THEN ARE THE LESSONS CONVEYED IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES BY THE ADMONITION OF THE TEXT ?

First: *The admonition comes with terrible significancy to those who compassed the horrid deed, or who now approve it.* The hand that actually perpetrated the murder now lies rotting in the ground, and the soul that directed the act, knows, as none on earth can know, that the Lord is God. But he had many assistants—how many God alone knoweth. Let every conspirator, whether still at large, or now on trial for his life—every one who employed the assassin, or urged him to his crime—every subordinate in its accomplishment, be still and know that the Lord is God. Let them not think success a criterion of divine approbation! God for his wise purposes has allowed the foul deed, but only as he allows every other murder. Let them cease to rejoice; and tremble while they remember that God wrote on tables of stone amid the thunderings of Sinai, “Thou shalt do no murder,” and that he says, in the words of his servant, to *each of them*, “How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed?” Let them learn even though they may have yet escaped and may continue to escape the just punishment of man, not to gloat over their successful villainy; for in the end, God will not allow them to escape his righteous judgment. Let not even the most reckless of them rejoice that whatever becomes of them, their work is done. They have not even this miserable consolation. It is true that the highest and the best has fallen, but the rest of their intended victims have escaped with their lives—most of them without the slightest harm. Nor is it in this aspect alone that their failure is most complete. Their ultimate schemes, to which these murders were to be the means, have failed. Let them know that God’s providence has turned the death of their only victim to the more thorough destruction of the cause and friends in whose behalf they have so grievously sinned.

Let those whose teachings led to this wicked act, be still

and know that the Lord is God ; for to them he has a very important lesson. I do not allude to those who within the bounds of reason and propriety opposed the measures of the late president's administration, from an honest conviction that they were not the best for securing the integrity of the Union and the restoration of peace. Whether they were wise in their opposition or not, many of them look upon this deed with the most profound disgust and unfeigned sorrow. But there are others who have no right to shelter their miserable utterances behind an allowable party opposition—who from ignorance or malice, by pen or tongue, heaped the foulest abuse on the head that now lies low in the dust, called him usurper, despot, tyrant, blood-thirsty wretch, even branded him as one destitute of the common attributes of civilized humanity ; and who coupled with their abuse predictions of his murder, and proclaimed such a fate as his desert. Such teachings, working on weakly-balanced and ill-trained minds, produced a wide-spread demoralization as to the proper respect due to lawful authority, fostered if it did not generate a partiality for the cause of rebellion, familiarized men with the idea of ridding the country by one bold stroke, of the man they were taught to consider its worst enemy, nourished the idea of murder, and by a logic irresistible to fanatical minds, convinced them that such murder was the highest service to their country and to God. A letter of the murderer, given to the public after the assassination, shows how thoroughly he was imbued with the spirit of such instructions ; and the miserably prostituted use of a noble motto, "*sic semper tyrannis*," revealed to what perverted motives his crime could be traced. Let those then who directly or indirectly made use of such counsels, consciously and with a desire to produce a state of public feeling from which the crime might perchance spring, "be still and know that the Lord is God." Let them cease alike their secret rejoicings and their hypocritical wailings, and know that God will hold *them, even them*, guilty of this martyr's blood unless they repent and

bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And let those who without such hellish motive joined in this fearful educational course, but who—their eyes being opened by the appalling consequences—now shudder at the horrible results, also learn to be still. Let them cease from the vituperation of those they oppose. Let them know that the Lord is a God who demands even in the conduct of partisan politics the absence of malice and slander, and hatred, which is itself murder; and the application of the principles of his holy religion. Happy will it be for our county if the people of every party read this lesson; and over the tomb of a slandered, abused and murdered public servant, learn to practice the respect for law and lawful rulers enjoined in the Bible, and to apply to others the moderation, candor and common honesty, with which they would themselves be judged and treated.

There is yet another class guilty of this murder, to whom the Lord says, "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" I mean those, who, too cowardly themselves to execute, and too insignificant and ignorant to give shape to public opinion, yet regard the deed with unfeigned approbation, and rejoice over it with all the joy of their contemptible and evil nature. Strange that in a Christian land any such could be found! Candor compels us to say there are not a few. From many parts of the country—from some, not far off—we hear of public and private demonstrations of applause. The Lord says to such, "cease your evil jubilee, and know that I am God; learn that however you may be looked upon by men, I will hold you guilty even as the wretch whose personal act you approve; cease from this your sin and repent of this your iniquity before you are involved in its terrible punishment—cease to boast, for though I have, for my wise purposes, permitted this event, I will resent and avenge it on the guilty; yea, I will make it the deadliest foe of the interests you most fondly cherish.

Second: *The text comes with an arousing call to those who are indifferent to the deed.* There are many men who

cannot approve it—for it is murder—but whose disapproval seems to be more of the intellect than of the heart—whose indignation is not excited, nor their horror, nor their grief—who regard it with only speculative or selfish questions as to its influence on their own or public affairs; or who not even interested in these considerations, turn from it as coolly as from any case of ordinary crime, the record of which, in their papers, they may read perhaps, but hardly regard—and who pursue the even tenor of their way as if God were not shaking the heavens, and upheaving the foundations, to arrest the attention of men and teach them wisdom. To all such the Lord says, “be still, cease from your cold and heartless speculations, or your absorbing occupations, and know that I am God—that I have permitted one of the great and exalted of the earth, on whose life, in the estimation of men, hung the fate of millions, to fall by the hand of folly and wickedness; leave off your guilty indifference, and learn the lessons I would teach by this event.” Let such, besides learning *that there are lessons to learn*, read the lessons themselves—both those to which our minds have been already directed, and those to which attention is now invited.

Third: *To those who regret, deplore and detest the deed, the Lord says, “Be still, and know that I am God.* These are the mass of the people. To all such—to the nation—are these lessons given :

1. *Cease your vindictiveness toward the miserable wretches who are guilty, and know that I am the God to whom vengeance belongeth.* The desire to have justice executed on the vile causes of this our sorrow, is both natural and right. But there ought to mingle with this desire no feelings of vindictiveness. Hatred of the crime is demanded, but hatred of the criminal the laws of God expressly forbid. When men first hear of such a hideous deed their indignation demands to *see* the murderers slain; yes, even to *slay* them, without trial, red-handed in their guilt. In view of all such feelings the Lord says, “*Be still, and know that I am God;”*

by the civil magistrate, who "beareth not the sword in vain," I will in due course of law vindicate its outraged majesty, "for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil"—Rom. 13: 4. Or if it please me by more direct providential visitation to express my displeasure, let no murmur escape your lips but know that I am still a God who judgeth. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Or if it please me that no human or direct providential judgment overtake many of these criminals, and that they ever remain unknown to men as participants, cease from every rebellious thought and know that I am a God of whom neither the omniscience nor omnipotence will allow the impenitent guilty to escape his final and eternal sentence.

2. *The Lord by this event bids the nation cease from weak and perverted views of the awful baseness and punishment of treason.* Public sentiment—after all, the great controller of official action—was fast degenerating into a state alike dishonoring to the great establisher of civil government, and dangerous, if not to the re-establishment, at least to the continuance of the law's supremacy. Universal mercy to rebels was the increasing cry. From a short-sighted view of a fancied advantage in policy, we were in danger of forgetting that treason is the highest crime against society. We were in danger of even offering a premium on skill, perseverance, and cruelty in its prosecution, by exercising a false and pernicious magnanimity toward those who had been its very head and front. It needed some shock to make the people stop and think whereunto they were tending, and to impress on them as they had never before had impressed on them even by its countless atrocities, the unrelenting, unscrupulous, fiendish character of this rebellion. How much Mr. Lincoln was influenced by the rising cry among some of his friends I cannot say; nor can I say at what point he would have restrained his overflowing pity, and when presented with the practical question, yielded to his sterner sense of right and justice. There is reason to fear that, had he drawn the sword to pun-

ish, circumscribing even narrow circles as would have been the case in its sweep, this mawkish sentimentalism would have joined its clamor to the howl of defeated enmity, and wrought unspeakable embarrassment and mischief. The report of his death-shot should rouse the nation from this morbid condition, lead the people to examine the fundamental principles of government and law, and discriminate as to where mercy is in place, and where, inflexible justice. And I think I can see how the well known gentleness and compassion of the martyr, have been over-ruled—shall we not say, were ordained? not only to render his murder itself more detestable in the sight of men, but to impart to his successor a more determined purpose to make the treason that inspired it odious in the eyes of the world, by the well deserved punishment of the leading traitors, and to secure to him in so doing the useful support of a healthy and invigorated public sentiment.

3. Let us further “be still”—*cease from our trust in man and from the exaltation of but an instrument in the hand of the Lord, into the agent absolutely indispensable to the accomplishment of his work.* God is jealous of his honor, which he will not give to a creature. Gradually there had been growing in the country a conviction that of all men living the late President was the man chosen of God, and best fitted by experience and character to accomplish the great work of restoring to the nation the blessings of Union and peace. Circumstances had caused strong doubts—doubts, I think now, seen to be unwarranted—of the hands into which in case of his decease, the reins of power would fall. These had at home and abroad added intensity to the wish and fervor to the prayer that Lincoln’s life might be spared to the nation and to the world. Looking at the respective characters of Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, men would have supposed that the latter was better fitted to carry on the war than to close the contest and pacify the country; and that the former was better suited to the work upon which he was

about to enter than the task he had so successfully accomplished. But God sees not as we see: his thoughts are not as our thoughts. In his providence he gave Lincoln to a work which he accomplished well, but took him from one which many thought would have filled up the measure of his glory; while he placed the power of peace in the hands judged by many best fitted for war—nay more, in the hands of the very man we doubted. Who will say that God is wrong? Who will even dare to regret the change? The assassins were permitted to work their will on the one, and frustrated in their desire to destroy the other. God gave to the one his work which he did, to the other he has given a work yet to do. The one did his allotted work well; have we a right to say the other will fail? In one sense Lincoln was necessary to the work of the future; but it was his *death* that was necessary, not his *life*. In the fall of the one and the rise of the other, God rebukes—not our love of the lost—but our almost idolatrous dependence on a mere agent—a creature of his hands—a potsherd of the earth. “Be still, and know that I am God.”

4. *A fourth lesson is to cease from despairing of the nation and of the advancement and final triumph of liberal principles.* When the news of the death of this murder reached Europe, the organs of aristocracy predicted the wildest anarchy as the result. The fabric which had withstood the shocks of a four years' hard war, weakened by the contest, would, now that its head was slain, surely exhibit to all the world its inherent instability, in a mighty and inevitable fall. And even we—at least many of us—who ought to have known better, in that dark hour questioned with one another, “What are we coming to?” Some seemed to fear that the very foundations of social order were destroyed, and that every man's hand might soon be against his brother, and that rebellion in its secret ramifications, and by a new St. Bartholomew's massacre of the most eminent leaders of the nation, might even yet triumph. And not a few began to ques-

tion whether the wide-spread inculcation and acceptance of such principles as had led to this barbarous result, did not indicate a state of society unfit for free institutions and requiring to be governed by the strong hand of despotic power. I cannot think that this is the lesson. When God says, "be still and know that I am God," he reproves such doubts. He tells us to cease our gloomy and evil prognostications. He tells our jealous and envious foreign neighbors to cease their ill-concealed pleasure at a national ruin, the wish for which is father to the thought. He bids men rise above the low and narrow views that first present themselves, and take in the whole range of his revealed designs for the elevation of the race, and for filling the world with nations enjoying the highest good—nations free—civilly, socially, spiritually free. He bids them look back to the unexampled career of prosperity and advancement hitherto vouchsafed to this nation, and asks if these have been bestowed in vain; and in view of them and of her glorious adherence to her noble principles in the time of sore trial—in view of the very trial itself, if she be not destined to continue the first of nations, to exert a wider influence, to exhibit a more ennobling example, until her principles and perhaps her polity adopted by every people, shall fill the earth? "Be still, and know that I am God."

5. *A fifth lesson is to cease from overwhelming sorrow and vain regret.* Nowhere in the Bible are we taught that it is wrong to mourn for departed friends or because of public and private calamities. But the whole spirit of God's word is against carrying our grief to the point of repining at the decree of the Almighty. In this dispensation men have no right to sorrow as those who have no hope. Even were we unable to see any specific good resulting from this blow, the thought that he who permitted it is God, holy, wise, good and merciful, should still our wailings when they approach the verge of complaint, into the humble and sanctified sorrow of those who acknowledge the perfection of him who applies the rod. This lesson is suited to those who most keenly feel

the affliction—the bereaved wife and children of the dead. And it is applicable to us in our sympathy with them. While we sorrow for them, let us sorrow as those who can and who do at the same time, commend them to the Lord that they may know him as the God who is the widow's husband and the orphan's father.

6. *A sixth lesson is so to know God as to humble ourselves under his mighty hand.* As a nation we needed this chastisement for our sins. Many sins have for a long time characterised a large portion of the people—profanity, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, pride, boasting, covetousness, indifference to, yea positive approval of the foul sins of slavery and rebellion, and a general recklessness to the claims of God in the support of public men and measures. To all this we must add not only the failure to repent, but even an increase of these iniquities under the very chastisements of God. Corruption and peculation, and heartless speculation on the very calamities of the land, have alarmingly prevailed—one sin but recently made itself sadly prominent—an almost delirious and Godless rejoicing over the “crowning mercies” for which we should have been profoundly and religiously thankful. That there was thankfulness, and great and hearty rejoicing before God for our victories, that was right, it would be sinful to deny: but in too many instances God was forgotten, and in far too many, instead of thanksgiving, were unseemly revelry and beastly drunkenness. To a land in so large a measure guilty in these respects, the Lord says in this dispensation, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

7. Last of all—for we have no time to carry our lessons further—*God teaches us in this event the personal lesson of preparing for our own death.* Let us cease to confine all our attention to the lessons already presented. Let us learn that God is the Lord, in whom *we* live and move and have our being; that *our* times are in his hand; that *we* will be called to pass through the gates of death at some time and in some way now to us unknown. And let us farther know that the

Lord is the God in whose hands are our eternal interests, and that he will by no means clear guilty sinners such as we, but through faith in his son. Let us know him also as a God calling, urging us to prepare for death, judgment and eternity; and let us heed him; for we know neither the day nor the hour when the son of man cometh. Let us then "seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near." Of all the lessons taught by this providence, so prolific of lessons, may not this be the one least heeded! "BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD."

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