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**Fiftieth Anniversary
Celebration
of the
Proclamation Emancipation
of Abraham Lincoln**



**Sunday, August Thirty-first
Nineteen Hundred Thirteen**

**At the Zion M. E. Church
Belmar, New Jersey**



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Programme



Presiding Clergymen

Rev. Dr. WYNN of Newark, N. J.

Rev. Dr. JOHNSON of Point Pleasant, N. J.

Rev. CHAS. E. WILSON, Pastor

Congregational Singing—

“My Country 'tis of Thee”

Song—

Mr. Mabie of New York

Prayer—

Dr. Johnson

Song—

Mr. Mabie

Proclamation Emancipation—

Read by Mr. Geo. Julian Houtain of Brooklyn

Congregational Singing—

“Nearer, my God, to Thee”

Address—

Mr. Geo. Wm. Swain of Brooklyn

Song—

Mr. Mabie

Congregational Singing—

“Star Spangled Banner”

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Address by Mr. Geo. Wm. Swain of Brooklyn, N. Y.

Doctor Wynn, Doctor Johnson, Pastor Wilson, members of the Zion M. E. Church of Belmar, and friends:—

I wish to thank you for giving, just prior to my address, the beautiful hymn that you have just sung with so much feeling. Hymnology has given the world a copious chest of jewels. Among them there is to be found not one more precious than "Nearer, My God, to Thee." I do not wonder that this inspiring hymn became the favorite of the beloved McKinley. Whilst you were singing it, two lines of deep meaning came to me. They are these:

"Whilst heaven's loudest anthems reach the valleys here
Its richest, sweetest melodies are for God's mountaineer."

God's mountaineer, you know, is he who loves God and climbs high spiritual mountains to draw nearer to Him. Let me assure you that there are heavenly harmonies for them who frequent spiritual elevations unknown to them who confine themselves to the valleys of life. I have had sweet moments under the inspiration of this great hymn, when my soul has climbed and climbed until it has reached the very apex of a spiritual "Matterhorn," so high and so close to the Kingdom of God that I could almost hear coming through the "Gates Ajar" strains of "Nearer, My God, to Thee." If this hymn can be sung so sweetly here, what must be the transcendent harmony of it as sung "over yonder." If you and I continue to love God and evince a desire to draw nearer to Him by a devoted life, we will not only hear that song as sung "over there," but we will join in the sweet refrain. May that be the happy eventuality of all of us. Before touching upon the exalted theme of the evening, "Abraham Lincoln and the Proclamation Emancipation," I would indulge myself in a few felicitations. These will enable me to acclimate myself somewhat to my very unique environment. Considering the large number of people in the house, augmented by probably one hundred peering in through the open windows and doors, unable to enter, and that my theme is one demanding the best of earthly eloquence, I have an environment not conducive to composure to a plain, practical, unprofessional man like myself.

First, I want to tell you that you are indebted to me for the great pleasure of hearing Captain Mabie sing tonight. It is not my custom to call attention to any merit that happens to be mine, and have done so in this instance only because I am expecting to give you a rather prosy address, and I concluded that if you knew that it was through my efforts that you had the great pleasure of hearing him you would be disposed to regard my shortcomings with greater toleration. I hardly know what words to use in speaking of the sweetness of his voice. Perhaps I can do no better than to say that a heavenly flute has come our way tonight. Next, I want to speak of the collection to be taken. The collection basket in this church is the sun around which all the planets revolve. It takes from one-half to three-quarters of an hour to take the collection, and it is a masterpiece in its line. You must all remain to see it. It will be a little expensive to you, but well worth the money. It is usually taken before the sermon. By my request, it is deferred tonight till after the address. With the collection taken first, I would begin about a quarter past nine, with the possibility of speaking to a

walking congregation soon after. There are a few things in life more of a delicacy to me than addressing an audience bolting for the door. If any must leave early do not fail to salute the basket as you pass out. Do not give it the horizontal, military salute. Give it the perpendicular, down and up pocket salute.

Some years ago the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, D.D., of Brooklyn, went South to preach the baccalaureate sermon for Mr. Vanderbilt's college. His large audience that Sunday morning was composed of the clergy, professors and students. It is needless to say that his address evinced the deepest learning and broadest scholarship. After dinner at the hotel the pastor of the largest church for colored people in the city called on the doctor. On seeing him he rushed forward, taking the doctor's hand in both of his. "Am dis de great Doctor Cadman?" "I am Dr. Cadman, surely, but I do not know anything about the great part of it." "Oh, dat's all right; we know all about dat part of it here in de South. I have come to ask you, doctor, to preach to my people tonight." The doctor replied "that it would be a great pleasure to him provided he could preach to the people's edification. My mind all day has been moving along in very heavy scholarly grooves, and it calls for more versatility probably than what I possess to preach just such a sermon as would be required; however, I will preach for you." At 7:30 that night there stepped into the pulpit of that church one of the greatest preachers the American pulpit has ever known, and it seemed as though every colored saint and sinner of the city was there to look him in the face. The doctor knew that there must be plenty of the "rousement" in his sermon, and he brought it with him. Do any of you know what the rousement is? Do you, Doctor Wynn? do you, Doctor Johnson? do you, Pastor Wilson? Oh, yes; you all know all about it.

Close to the pulpit sat an old "mammy." The doctor had been preaching but a few minutes when he heard her murmur, "Look out, I'll holler!" In a few minutes again he heard, "Look out, I'll holler!" The preacher kept on, the steam in the spiritual boiler increasing. She gave the preacher a third and fourth notice. She was a courteous old "mammy." Dr. Cadman had overwhelmed her with his pulpit presence, and she knew he was from a great church. She was not quite sure that the exultant notes of amen and hallelujah would please him and had become a part of the religious exercises of the North. She knew all about our guns. That they had a great deal of power and demonstration in them, but she was not so sure about our religion. So she thought that courtesy demanded that she should give the preacher notice. At the fourth threat the doctor stopped and exclaimed: "Well, mammy, I see you can hardly keep it back any longer, so you had better 'holler,' and if there are any others whose exultant note is under restraint, restrain it no longer." In a flash a bombardment set in that caused fear almost for the safety of the structure. I have told you this little story in order to assure you that I am not averse to the exultant note. If any of you have an amen in your soul tonight, out with it. I have no idea that I shall be powerful enough to shake one out of you, but if not, let me have it anyway. It will inspire me and keep you warmed up.

I was born of a genuine Methodist mother, and my infancy knew no other than the purest of Methodist milk, and not from the bottle, either. For the last twenty years I have been grazing in the fields of the long grass of Congregationalism, but I always enjoy getting back into the fields of Methodism, with its sweet clover. Over in Fifth avenue, New York, there was a very rich church property, worth a million. Cathedral windows of

great value. A great organ. Pews of solid walnut. Axminster carpet for the floor. A great organist. A polished preacher. Millionaire ushers for the aisles. A wonderful outfit for God from an earthly viewpoint. At one of its evening services a poor fellow found his way into one of the rear seats. He was seedy in appearance, and looked as though he was entirely familiar with the chills of life. I often think when I see a man in just that condition of Christ ready with His arms wide open to receive him who comes impelled by the force of earthly kicks. A little of Moody got into the sermon, and the poor fellow shouted "amen." One of the ushers admonished him at once and stated that they could not have shouting like that in the church. "Excuse me, sir, but I felt a deep religious joy coming into my soul, and I could not help myself." "Oh, you are looking for religion, are you? I'll tell you where you might find it. We have none of it around here." Following the directions he found his way to a little church further downtown. It was brilliantly lighted and abounding in exultation. Sure enough, it was a happy joyful Methodist church of the colored persuasion. There he got his religion, found his God and established his soul's peace.

I do not think that your pastor, the Rev. Charles E. Wilson, D. (interrupted by the pastor, no D. D.). Not a D. D.? Well, if this decoration has not been conferred upon your name honestly, I will not give it to you, for a man on a platform speaking to the theme of the virtues of Lincoln must above all things be honest. However, in a few moments I will confer upon your worthy name a decoration to which you are honestly entitled. Your pastor would not allow one of his millionaire ushers to tell a poor seedy fellow, exulting, that there was no religion for him in this church. Oh, no, he would not leave it to the usher at all, but take the poor fellow by the hand himself and assure him that he was in the right place, for he was in the "power house of Belmar." I do not know who gave this church that felicitous title. It is so well named that I think it must be the work of your pastor, for he seems to do all things so well. What an appropriate name that is for a live Christian church. In the electrical field you know the power house is where power is generated and transmitted to wires, and through them our trolleys are operated and homes illumined. A blessing to all. So the church should be a great power house where the love of God is infused into the hearts of its members, sending them out full of power to carry sunshine and blessing into every department of life. When this is fully done, you will hear less about the unchurched masses.

Now, Pastor Wilson, to return to the decoration promised your name a few moments ago. The D.D. we all know is a decoration given by a preacher's "Alma Mater" to him after having graduated and entered into the activities of the ministry. "Alma Mater" means, you know, loving mother, so a man calls his old college his "Alma Mater," or loving mother, because she brooded over him whilst he was emerging from his infancy of learning into a broader scholarship. I do not apprehend, Pastor Wilson, that your "Alma Mater" was one of sufficient prominence to send out a D. D. But if you cannot have a decoration from a loving mother, will you accept one from a loving father? I assume tonight the Ambassadorship of your Heavenly Father to confer upon your worthy name the decoration of F. D. S. The Rev. Charles E. Wilson, F. D. S. None of you know the meaning of this title. No college glossary gives it. Its meaning is faithful, devoted servant. Let no one belittle this degree because it comes not from a great school of learning. Were I in the Christian ministry I would rather have my neigh-

bor, my fellow townsman, who knows my true worth, decorate my name than any school of learning. Neighbors decorate only very worthy names.

We are here tonight, my friends, with deep love and grateful hearts to exult over and to celebrate that event in our National history second in importance only to the Declaration of Independence itself, the "Proclamation Emancipation" by Abraham Lincoln. This being the fiftieth anniversary of that great event, it is, therefore, the "Golden Wedding Celebration" of the union of the black man to the glorious principles of liberty and freedom. I say that we are here to rejoice, the white man as well as the black man, and that is just what I mean, for it was an emancipation in which the white man can rejoice as well as the black man. The black man rejoices because it meant to him the lowering of the bars that enabled his race to march forth into the fields of liberty and freedom, and culminated in his entry into a citizenship of the United States, an honor greater than which none exists except it be the honor of an entry into a citizenship of the Kingdom of God. It was an emancipation in which the white man of the South could rejoice, because it removed a venomous cancer from the vitals of its social fabric and body politic that was gnawing at its very existence. It was an Emancipation in which the white man North could rejoice, for it was the occasion of removing all fear that this great Union that he loved so much could ever be dissolved.

It was an Emancipation in which mankind the world over could rejoice, for in this emancipation civilization sped forward in leaps and bounds never before equaled. It was also an Emancipation for the "Stars and Stripes," for never could it be truly said that "Old Glory" floated over a land entirely free until the black man was free as well as the white man. To the black man it meant the most, and in him we perceive the greatest expression of rejoicing. My white friends are sometimes a little severe on you colored people. They speak of you as ranters, as being entirely too noisy, too emotional. Now I want to ask, my white friends (I see one hundred or more of them in the audience) to be more fair to the colored man. Mr. Lincoln never asked for generosity to the black man. He never became a beggar for him. He contended that man, black or white, had God-given rights, and these rights comprehended the privilege of growth and self-betterment, and that no man had the right by the use of power or prestige to obstruct the growth or development of any other man, no matter what his color might be or the low stage of his intellectual state. When you consider in what they rejoice do you really think that they over-exuberate? You will remember that this race has had only 50 years in which to exult.

For 1,500 years prior to its emancipation, in this and in other lands, the white man's foot had been upon the black man's neck, and let me tell you that 50 years of rejoicing (no matter how exultant) does not fully compensate for 1,500 years of bondage. Nay more: 1,500 years of such exultation will not give full compensation. Nay, more: 15,000 years of joy will not fill in the equation that has upon the other side all the tears, sorrows, moans, sighs, heartaches, suffering and despair of such an awful bondage as they have had. So, my colored friends, we white people are going to be more fair. We will let you go on with your tumultuous rejoicing without any further protest for at least 15,000 years. (Will that be long enough, Pastor Wilson?) At the end of that period, if you are still at it, the white people will appoint a committee to wait upon you colored people to ask you to quiet down a little, for some of them living within a few blocks of your churches are unable to get a wink of sleep before midnight on Sundays. I

hardly expect to be a member of that committee myself. Your pastor has conferred upon me a very distinguished honor in asking me to speak of the worth, the splendor, the genius, the magnanimity and the Christian statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln. Oh, how musical that name is to me; Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln. It seems to me when that name strikes my soul that the metal out of which it is made must be the same bell metal out of which the chimes of heaven are made, and if that name is a chime in the soul of a white man, it ought to start all the bells of Heaven ringing in the souls of you colored people, every bell.

I enter upon my task with alacrity, not because I feel that I have the gifts that the occasion demands, but because I can enter upon the work with the deepest of love for the man and veneration for his memory. You could have secured a hundred men, nearby, that could have brought to the theme greater power, more platform graces and more eloquence than I, but had you searched this coast from the Atlantic Highlands all the way to Atlantic City you could not have found a man who could have come with more love and enthusiasm. I speak of my work as a task, for a task it is. It is not easy, I assure you, to find words of sufficient power or to organize sentences of sufficient reach to fully portray the greatness of Abraham Lincoln and the wide-reaching meanings and blessings of his Proclamation Emancipation. Whilst I thus confess to the poverty of language in this connection, I am not deficient in a realization of its splendor and power. I cannot be unmindful of its charms and power so long as I have the sweet sonnets of Tennyson, Whittier, Longfellow and poor old Oliver Goldsmith coming to me in a framework of words of the purest gold. I cannot be unmindful of the wonder of language so long as I can be rocked in the rhythm of a Macaulay. I cannot be unmindful of the splendor of language so long as I have those wondrous dramas of Shakespeare wrapped up as they are in wordy robes of matchless splendor. I cannot be unmindful of the great power of language so long as I can open this blessed book and read the Epistles of Paul, unequaled as they are in their majesty of expression, and culminating as they do in those two immortal interrogatories, "Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?" Language is a wonderful ministrant of joy, is it not, when it can bring such thoughts as these to poor old humanity, so full of fear of the future, and so alarmed at the thought of death and the grave. Then there is a little more language. Perhaps some of you have heard it. I wonder if you have; now listen: Mamma, papa. Oh, yes; you have all heard that language. Oh! the transport that fills the little soul when looking, in its utter helplessness, up into the faces of its loving mother and tender father finds that it has mastered the language of mamma and papa. Many a man, "tempest tossed," having far more than his share of life's buffetings, wishes that for one fond hour he might be a babe again and looking up into the eyes of love cry out mamma, papa. I cannot be unmindful of the greatness of language so long as I can remember the "shot and shell" of Beecher's utterances hurled into the face of that howling, hating English mob that showed him its teeth from the moment he touched Britain's hostile shore, up to that moment within nine days when the nation fell prostrate at his feet, completely conquered by his matchless eloquence.

Within those few days Henry Ward Beecher shattered into a thousand bits the fetters that bound the whole stubborn English mind to the wrong side of the question that alienated the South from the North. In closing my

tribute to language I lift high the immortal sentences of the beloved martyr. Sentences now embellishing bronze and marble statues raised in his honor throughout our beloved land. Sentences chiseled in the undying memory of every good and loyal American:

"With malice toward none,
With charity for all."

Oh, beloved words, what tribute can we lay at thy feet?

"We cannot give of Heaven's store.
We give life's best and wish 'twere more."

Thou art a song from Heaven to earth. Each sentence is a rhapsody and each word a chime. But whilst God has placed so much within the reach of language, still He has reserved His realm ineffable. There are heights it cannot scale and depths it cannot fathom. Among these are the virtues of the life of Abraham Lincoln and the unceasing tide of the blessings flowing from his Proclamation Emancipation. I have heard it said that no address on Lincoln is complete that does not enlarge upon his astuteness as a lawyer. Let me say that I am not here with any pretension to making a complete address upon so great a life. How can I, in one and a half hours, treat fully a character so lustrous as to furnish material for many volumes in the hands of his biographers? I shall glance at his life as his greatness appeals to me from loftier levels. My sole reference to him as an advocate will not be as he stood before any earthly bar of justice, but as he stood before the great bar of Heaven and God, pleading for justice and freedom to this down-trodden race. Again I have heard it said that his deep sense of humor must be clearly brought out. Let me say that it is my intention to keep all humor out of my address tonight. If it gets in at all, it must sneak in the back door, for I have locked the front door. Unless I am very watchful it will get in, for I abound in humor, and my joke and my ha-ha are among my most important assets of life, but I am not in the spirit of humor tonight. I am in the spirit of veneration.

The nearest I will come to purposely introducing the humorous is to refer to an incident connected with Mr. Lincoln's famous address at the Cooper Union, New York. That address was delivered to thousands. It established his fame in the East and stood him with both feet squarely upon that road that led straight to the White House. I would not refer to the following bit of humor were it not for the fact that I can merge it into a great truth. Mr. Lincoln sat upon a low chair on the platform before being introduced. Being unusually tall his knees were midway up between his waist and chin. The reporter of the Herald next morning published that after he started to rise the audience thought he would never stop rising. The great truth, my friends, is that Abraham Lincoln has never stopped getting up in the love and esteem of the American people. All honor to his splendid mind, his patriotism and his manhood.

I shall never forget the dramatic way Mr. Lincoln made his way into my life. I was but a very small boy. Early on the morning of April 15, 1865, my father started down the pathway leading from our home to the garden gate to get the morning paper. I went toddling after him.

Mr. Lincoln had been assassinated on the evening of the 14th and expired on the morning of the 15th and the morning papers brought the sad, sad news. I halted half way down the walk. Over my father's shoulders I could see, as he held up the sheet, wide, deep lines running down each column. I knew not the meaning of those lines then, but, oh, how well I know their meaning now.

My father retraced his steps and on reaching me I saw great tears streaming down his benign face. On seeing his tears, mine burst forth. A child seeing the tears of a loving parent never waits for the reason of those tears before shedding its own. It is enough to know that mamma or papa are in tears to awaken theirs. I asked, "Papa what are you crying for?" "Oh, my little boy, they have killed President Lincoln!" Thus Lincoln came into my life up through a pathway of tears. Let us not hurry away, my friends, from this thought of tears. Let us tarry for a moment around the sacred fountain. Let us try to catch some of their deep meaning. Lincoln's life was cemented into mine by tears, and tears are heaven's cement. The prodigal returning to his father's house came up the pathway with his eyes blinded with tears. His re-establishment as a son in his father's house was cemented by the tears of the father and of the son. The greatest verse in this glorious New Testament is its shortest one. "Jesus wept." The tears of Jesus cemented Heaven to earth, and no power, not even the furies of hell, can loosen the cementation.

That was an awful morning in American life. Thirty million pairs of eyes opened that morning to discover that the greatest single pair of eyes of this nation had closed, and closed forever. The sun rose that morning with its usual redness. Undoubtedly it was the same old sun to the rocks and the rills, and the hills and the dales, but not to the American heart, for its illuminating power in its entirety was consumed in portraying the outline of its total eclipse. Twenty million tears began to flow that morning in the death of Abraham Lincoln, but thanks be to God that whilst twenty million tears began to flow in his death, they were but the echo of hundreds of millions of tears that ceased to flow by reason of the attainments of his life, for no longer was the face of the black man to be bedewed with tears, because on the morrow he would be torn, root and branch, from the arms of his little family and cabin home that he loved so much, and depart never to see them again. No longer were the tears of wife to flow, caused by the blow of separation. No longer were the tears of father, mother and sister to flow, because the son and brother was spending his last day at home. No longer were the tears of all to flow, because on the morrow that innocent and chaste daughter and sister would be sold body and soul into an enslavement debased beyond the power of description far from the old cabin home.

That was an awful morning. Across this continent from sea to sea and from the great lakes in the North to the Gulf Stream in the South, the wires were hot carrying the awful message of Lincoln's death. The deep eddies of the sea reached nearly the point of ebullition by the heat of the great cable carrying the message to distant lands. The whole telegraphic system of this world, that morning, became one universal lyre, with its wires all drawn tight, upon which was plucked by the invisible fingers of sorrow and despair, the dirge that sounded to the world the death of Abraham Lincoln.

It was with a broken heart that this nation followed his casket to the grave and committed his precious body to the dust; but that was not the end of Abraham Lincoln. That was the night of his mortality and the morning of his immortality. The historian then engrossed upon the pages of our national history the record of his deeds and virtues. When done he said "There is the whole grand story," and he laid down his pen. Yes, that was the whole story so far as man could tell it. But there are some epitaphs that only God can write and Lincoln's was one of them. God then took the pen and began writing the high meanings of his life upon the heart of every American patriot. God has been writing thus for fifty years, and will write

thus till the end of time. And when God writes He writes in a legible hand and writes with an indelible ink. And now my friends our beloved Lincoln is gone. God gave him to this nation. A great gift. He sent him here as His ambassador to do a great work. A wonderful achievement it was, for it comprehended the freedom from abject slavery of a race of five millions of souls. What that meant with all that it entailed to future generations gives your imagination a chance to spread its wings. How well he did that work is evinced by the fervor of our love for his name and the heartiness with which we have entered upon this celebration tonight, together with the many monuments erected all over our land to his honor. When the work was fully done God called His ambassador home to the central government, and just as truly as did Moses of old lead forth the children of Israel from their bondage into the "promised land" and thus immortalize his name upon the pages of this blessed Bible, so did Abraham Lincoln, the modern Moses, lead forth the children of Africa from their long subjugation into the land of freedom and opportunity, and thus immortalize his name upon the fair page of American fame.

Sufficient time has not elapsed to give this great American his full setting and final niche in the realm of fame. A longer perspective is required. A fifty-year glance back does not give it. In the architectural world, you know, the greater and loftier the structure the more extended must be the perspective in order to bring out its beauty and grace. One standing close to a great building gets none of its charms as he looks up. It is only as he lengthens his perspective that he is able to catch a sense of its beauty. A fifty-year glance back at the life of Abraham Lincoln is standing too close to the structure. A thousand years hence God will put the pen into the hand of one of sufficient genius to give this splendid man his full setting upon the pages of the world's history.

We come now to consider some of the interpretations of life and these will pave the way to an interpretation of the highest meanings of the "Proclamation Emancipation." Man the world over is deficient in his practical interpretations of the highest meanings of life and in his emulation of the examples of its best and most illustrious men. Consider first the interpretation given this grand old Bible. This book that has spired every city, town and hamlet of this world with those needles that point to a God and a heaven just as truly as the needle of the compass points to the pole. I see you have a splendid edition of it here upon the desk. As I look upon it with its golden edges without and diamond treasures within, there rushes upon me a pleasurable remembrance of my boyhood days. Then I saw just such a large handsome Bible on the center table of the front room of almost every home I entered. It seemed to be the recognized compass of every household. At almost every wedding festivity among the gifts could have been seen a copy, generally with the names of the happy pair engrossed in gold upon its cover, given by those who had been well guided by its wise counsel, to those who needed above all things else just such counsel. Where are those grand old Bibles today? I see them no more. It is no longer fashionable to have them prominent in the front room of the house. They are probably packed away in old trunks or consigned to dark closets. But whilst this book of God has disappeared from the front room, something has appeared in the back room that fills me with fear, as I contemplate its consequences. I refer to the alcoholic cup. A fearful exchange. May God speed the day when the beloved Bible will reappear in the front room of our homes and the venomous

cocktail disappear from the back room. When that day comes and our young mothers think more about the Bible and less about the inebriating cup, then will they transmit to their children better inheritances, both of body and of soul. I did not have this down for my address, but it flashed across me, and I had to out with it. This New Testament is a book of love and life. God's love for man, heavenly love not earthly. Do you know the difference between these loves? It is not a difference of degree and depth alone, it is a difference of kind. We love in exchange. You love me, I love you. You fan me, I fan you. We see a fellow man, an outcast, we withdraw from him. That is not God's kind of love. God's love is sunshine to the fallen and a "light in the window" for the outcast. It is a good thing for you and for me, my brother, that God was able to love us while we were yet sinners.

It was God's kind of love that filled the great heart of Abraham Lincoln and found expression in the devotion of the energies of his great life to the amelioration of the condition of the down-trodden African race. Gipsy Smith said in a sermon that he believed that many of God's secrets came to him under inspiration whilst sleeping in his tent with his ear so close down to Mother Earth that he could hear the Divine whisperings. There is something more than poetry to that. I believe that Lincoln's sweet relationship with the common people was due to the fact that he held his ear close down to its breathing and the beatings of its heart. Sometimes the question is asked, "Was Lincoln a Christian?" In answering that question in the affirmative I would not discuss his orthodoxy or present his reverential words as found in his inaugurals and other state papers. I would point to his great humanity. There is no barometer so accurate in determining the Christian character of any man than by the beatings of his heart in sympathy with the man low down, the fallen, the outcast and he who is down-trodden and oppressed. It was because Abraham Lincoln was so close to the common people that his famous Gettysburg address contained those immortal sentences, "A government of the people, for the people and by the people."

Aristocracy has given the world many men of importance. In our own country we have Washington as the chief illustration. Had Lincoln been an aristocrat his address upon that famous battlefield would have sparkled with mental glitter, but would not have been embellished with those undying sentences. Such words could not have come from an aristocrat. When Christ came to save the world He laid aside the aristocracy of heaven and assumed the democracy of the earth. Abraham Lincoln followed his Master by devoting his God-given gifts to the uplifting and blessing of the lowly. Therefore he was a Christian. A very great Christian.

What has been the interpretation by man of this book of love? Many sects have arisen and many religions been established, all ending in the drawing of the sword and the bloodiest wars of all times. Now I am going to say something to shock you churchmen. Dr. Wynn, Dr. Johnson and Pastor Wilson will each hold his breath at what I am to say. I know that I am within three miles of Ocean Grove and within fifty miles of Princeton Seminary, but I wish my voice was sufficiently trumpet-like to reach the halls of their religious thought when I say that there is absolutely no religion in the Bible at all. It is not a book of religion; it is a guide-post to direct men to God and heaven. This thought is the great blinding sun of the book, but men, instead of warming their souls in its genial rays, have looked to the

moon, the stars and the lesser planets for life and leading. No man that has taken the Bible as a road guide has ever failed to reach the kingdom of heaven.

The past one hundred years has been remarkable in advances made along the lines of scientific research. I have time tonight to dwell upon only two of them. They are those that have to do with the conserving and the destroying of men's lives. Never have we had such hospitals, surgeons, doctors, nurses, serums, anti-toxins and such knowledge of the laws of health and sanitation as today, and as a result the percentage of mortality is hardly more than one-third of what it was each year a century or two back. Whilst that is gloriously true, it is equally true that we have never had such dreadnoughts, such armament, such guns, such powder and such martial power in every way for the destruction of men's lives as today. What an awful interpretation of life and the great book of God's love that is. Consider for a moment the famous Krupp family of Germany in possession of a fortune that excites the envy of the world. All due to the genius of the original Krupp in inventing the most powerful of guns. Bertha Krupp dwells in a mansion furnished with the greatest of earth's treasures. Statuary and paintings by the great masters. Table laden with the choicest viands and most aged of wines. Is there a young man here tonight that would like to amass a great fortune? Oh, yes, you all would like to do that. Well, I am going to tell you how to do it. You are glad now that you came to church tonight, for you are listening to a practical man. The preachers you have heard lately have been telling you how to build mansions in the skies and how to garner celestial treasures, but now you are glad to listen to a man who proposes to tell you how to gather a fortune in earthly currency, for with that you can build a mansion here and furnish it with the greatest of earth's triumphs of art. You can buy automobiles and a lot of other luxuries that will ruin instead of blessing you. Now listen. You invent a gun far more effective in destroying men than any now known and the nations of the earth will throw their purses at your feet. This is a truth, and an awful truth. Now tell me, tell me, tell me what nation it is that throws its purse at the feet of one of God's missionaries. He who, instead of bringing widowhood, sorrow, heart-breakings and despair into the home, brings sunshine, joy and blessing. He has no mansion here, no statuary, no paintings. Aged wines are not for his table. He eats the plainest food, wears the coarsest apparel and sleeps on the hardest bed, and glad to get it sometimes. What an interpretation of the high meanings of life all this is. Let us now focus our thoughts on the interpretation given this book of love as it comes a little closer to our theme. We have the injunction to search the Scriptures, a mandate we should all obey. Never were the Scriptures more diligently searched than during the period of the American conflict. A very large number of the clergymen South and a fair sprinkling of them North were assiduous in their efforts to find within its teachings a Divine authority for the maintenance of slavery, as established in the South. They found it, too, by taking the shadow for the substance. When one searches the Scriptures they should look for just what God has put into them and not what man has installed. The Scriptures are God's great spiritual placer mine. A gold placer mine you know is one in which gold is found in pieces distributed through the gravel from the surface down to bedrock. Very little on the surface; just colors, to use a mining term. The mine becomes richer as you work toward bedrock. Its real wealth and largest nuggets are found there. Bedrock is usually far down, and to reach it one must dig and dig. This is

true of God's great placer, the Scriptures. By scratching its surface you get only a few colors. It is when you search and dig that you get its great nuggets of spiritual wealth.

So these men, these imbeciles, these time-servers, dug into the mine, not to get the real treasures that God had imbedded therein, but to get that with which it had been salted. They who found authority for slavery, as practiced in the South in God's placer, were working in a salted mine. The most prominent among the pulpit exceptions thus scandalizing God's word was that of the immortal Beecher, the great prophet of old Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. Plymouth pulpit was the ecclesiastical Fort Sumter of the North, and, in some important respects, bore a similarity to the Fort Sumter of Charleston Bay. The garrison of both was small and brave. The guns of both belched forth their fury against tremendous forces without. The noble little garrison of Seventy South kept "Old Glory" in the skies till ammunition and bodily sustenance were completely exhausted, and the "Star of the West," with supplies, driven back.

More fortunate was the Fort North, for never did it fall short of ammunition, for Henry Ward Beecher, its entire garrison, received his supplies from God direct, and when God re-enforces He keeps the harbor clear of blockades. The comparatively few men living who were familiar with the fury of that great pulpit in the troublous times of this nation can recall a quality of eloquence and majesty of oratory that takes the very loftiest place in the ranks of the greatest of human utterances. A visitor at that church can see the table upon which the little slave girl stood that morning when Mr. Beecher sold her from the pulpit for her owner to Plymouth Church. Her owner demanded eight hundred dollars. The baskets returned fifteen hundred dollars. The surplus was used in her education. Hanging on the wall of the lecture room can be seen the actual deed of the property of the little slave girl—"Pinky"—to Plymouth Church. Not long ago it was my privilege to occupy the seat in the church in which Mr. Lincoln sat that Sunday morning that he attended following his Saturday night New York address. Whilst Dr. Hillis was showering his eloquence upon my head, patriotism seemed to be piercing me upon every side. The very timber of the pew seemed eloquent. Having sat at the feet of Beecher for twenty years it is not at all surprising that I am able tonight to fire a few shot myself. Henry Ward Beecher was the great patriotic and spiritual comet of the century. A comet that showered seed upon the universe as it passed through its sky. Seed pregnant with life and patriotism. It is not surprising that President Lincoln conferred upon him the very distinguished honor of hoisting "Old Glory" upon the re-established Fort Sumter and appointed him the orator of the joyful day. Mr. Lincoln honored him further by stating that had it not been for his power and eloquence possibly there would have been no restoring of the flag to the famous fort.

Now, what interpretation is the colored race today giving to the "Proclamation Emancipation"? Is it accepting its blessings without feeling that it imposes solemn obligations? If it is, it is not worthy of the great document. One of the fundamental questions beneath the differences that existed between the statesmen North and South was whether or not the colored man was a real man or a chattel, a thing, a commodity. Those platform rebels called statesmen, led by John C. Calhoun and Colonel Hayne, claimed that he was not a man and was without a brain. They were very careful, however, to keep everything in the way of a book out of his hands and the school-house door closed to him. A lashing was the penalty for every slave found

with a book in his hand. Mr. Lincoln claimed that he was a man, that he had the right to the privilege of growth and betterment, a God-given right to all men. He claimed that this plant had the right to a place in the garden of mankind, where it could catch some of God's sunshine. Abraham Lincoln removed the plant, gave it the sunshine, and now, after fifty years, we have a complete fulfillment of his prophecy, that the plant would flower, for we find the colored man, whom they claimed had no brain, able to read everything on the face of God's earth printed in English, and a very considerable number of them able to "read their titles clear to mansions in the skies."

I have heard sermons, both eloquent and scholarly, from this very pulpit by the sons of the slaves for whom our great American became a martyr. It is the bounden duty of every colored man to devote his constant efforts to the construction of his manhood. That is the correct interpretation of the Proclamation Emancipation. It is the duty of every one of you to show that Lincoln was right and Calhoun wrong. Every time one of you colored men do an ignoble thing, an act in which your manhood is abased, to the extent of that one act you reach out to seize and to tear into shreds that immortal document signed by Abraham Lincoln with a pen dipped in the blood of nearly a million of men, the very flower of the country's youth North and South. Does not the emancipation impose solemn obligations upon you when it was bought at a price calling for the death of one brave soul for every seven of you?

Now I have a word to both white and black concerning the interpretation of the "Stars and Stripes." "Old Glory" not only stands for the greatest national liberty the world has ever known, but it stands also for the world's highest type of manhood. So great an emblem must be wholly interpreted, not partially. He who accepts its protection and freedom without regarding its demands for higher manhood is not worthy of it. The true attitude toward the flag is a willingness to die for it in time of war and live for it in time of peace. In either case manhood and patriotism are required. Inasmuch as we were not called upon to suffer the dangers and hardships of the battlefield in its defense it becomes our positive duty to live for it, and live for it nobly, now under the genial skies of peace. Let us, my brethren, put on both the whole armor of God and the whole armor of true loyal Americanism. And now, my friends, whilst I have but glanced at this great theme, I have taken as much time as I should, and I will hasten toward a close. I have not tried to be in any sense Mr. Lincoln's biographer. The details of his life are to be found in many books from able pens. I have not tried to add to your historical knowledge. That work belongs to the historian. It is not for me, in possession of this sacred desk this Sunday evening, to teach. It is my duty to inspire, to awaken. It is my duty to give you not what books can give, but that which only one loving heart can give another filled with patriotic and Christian zeal. It has been my purpose to woo you to a higher conception of your duty to the "Proclamation Emancipation." No, we do not come to a golden wedding celebration to learn something. We come because we know something and know a great deal. Were we all to attend the golden wedding celebration of some honored old couple here in Belmar we would not go to learn something about their fifty-year journey. Knowing all about that we would go to felicitate and bless them. You colored people are here tonight exulting because you know what a glorious emancipation the beloved Lincoln brought your race just fifty years ago, and we white people are here to join you in your happiness and to extend our warmest congratulations. The colored race owes everything to Lincoln for its freedom.

And the white race owes him much for teaching it the true loving Christian and helpful relationship that should exist in the name of God and humanity between a strong race and one down-trodden—a race having the voice to sing God's praise hushed by the foot of the oppressor.

In closing I would like to rivet into your memories the thoughts of the evening with a final picture. As we walk up the gallery to this picture we will stop to glance at a few others on the way. Pictures, you know, are powerful all through life in fastening down truths. I remember very vividly my first lesson of our country's fight for freedom. I was but a little boy at the time. In looking over a history I came to a picture of Washington crossing the Delaware. I asked my father who the soldiers were in the boat. He then gave me a simple story of Washington and our battle for freedom. That was the birth of my Americanism. At times, when I have stood upon the sands of the great ocean, whose surf breaks with so much majesty upon the shore of this beautiful township of Belmar, the most queenly of all the towns of the State of New Jersey, baptized by the waters of the great deep, there has come over me an overwhelming sense of God's greatness, as I surveyed the breadth and boundlessness of the sea. As I have turned away I have resolved that God's ocean must not be greater than God's child. So out of my life must go all narrowness, smallness, selfishness. I must allow God to paint the beauty of the great picture of the sea upon my soul, and thus reflect His greatness. The good ship then sails away and takes me to the great Gibraltar, and as I look spellbound upon the enormity of its rocks, I begin to gather thoughts of my God as a foundation. One more glance and there comes to me the sweet reflection of the Rock of Ages that cleaves for me. On my return I find myself in my garden. God's floral sanctuary. There I am blessed with the sweet influence of another of God's pictures, for there is the lily clad as only heaven's artists can robe, and there is the rose dispelling a fragrance that must be a current from Paradise. I ask whence came these pilgrims of beauty and fragrance? Not from the soil. Oh, yes; from the humble soil. Then comes the thought, shall my garden reflect more of God than my soul? Oh, no, no, no. I will open the poor soil of my sinful soul to the falling of heavenly showers and the warming of heaven's sunshine, and my soul shall become God's greater garden. My deeds then will be likened unto the beauty of the lily and my affections to the sweetness of the rose. Our gallery then presents a picture of Mount Calvary, and, oh, what a picture I behold there. The greatest picture that ever broke in upon the vision of man, the blessed Saviour upon the cross. There I behold the symbol of the emancipation of all emancipations. A greater emancipation even than the one around which our thoughts have hovered tonight. An emancipation that disenslaved a world instead of a race, that comprehended the joys of a heaven as well as an earth, that involved eternity as well as time. We have now reached the end of our gallery and are in the presence of our final picture. It carries us back fifty years to the life of our beloved Lincoln as it arched the sky of our American life, from its morning till its evening. How strong is its likeness to the great sun that comes over the eastern horizon each morn, pronounces a benediction upon the earth, climbs its meridian heights and marches triumphantly through its afternoon, emitting life, joy and blessings the whole journey through. Not only do I discern a similarity between these two great orbs as they passed over our sky in the shining hours of their activity, but I behold a similarity in the splendor of their setting, for my picture makes clear to me the heavenly couriers

running hither and thither, gathering up the celestial gold and mixing the eternal dyes with which to gild and paint the skies of Lincoln's setting sun; and just as the great orb of day having dipped below the horizon, its form lost to our vision, throws back over the parapet touches of its gold, so

Oh, Lincoln, thou art like the sunken sun,
Though hidden, thy glory gilds my horizon.

Amen.

The speaker used a single page
of lines of thought headings.

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