PACIFIC
Commercial Advertiser.

Remarks of Rev. L. Hamilton at Oakland, California, on the Death of President Lincoln.

On Sunday, April 16, the Rev. L. Hamilton, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Oakland, Cal., one of the most eloquent divines, formerly residing at San José, addressed his congregation as follows:

"O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee: be Thou their arm every morning; our salvation also in the time of trouble."—Isaiah, xxxiii: 2.

Not as a text, but simply to strike the key-note to the remarks which I wish to offer on this occasion, I call your attention to this passage.

I had entertained another design with reference to this morning's service till a late hour last evening, when the fully-confirmed news came of an event that has struck all minds with a horror so deep and pervading that the thoughts refuse to leave it for any other subject. I could not hope to enlist your interest in any ordinary discussion proper to our Sabbath worship. Your thoughts would turn away to the all-absorbing theme, in spite of your efforts to arrest them and fix your attention elsewhere. And mine would be with yours. We cannot well choose another subject if we speak at all. I shall therefore only attempt to occupy your thoughts for a very brief time with such reflections as have been suggested to me that seemed appropriate to the mood we are in. My time and exhausted strength allow no more.

When the public mind is thus preoccupied with an event which is sending a strong wave of mingled indignation and regret, passion and grief, through the general heart, propriety does not require that Religion be silent. Her voice may properly be raised in the sanctuary, not to fan the flames of excitement, nor to sound the warcry of strife and hatred, but to teach the temper which God would have us maintain, and to point out the supports on which He would have us stay our fears and rest our confidence. It is the office of her minister to direct the course of these excited emotions and passions into the channel that will cause them to subserve the best ends, and pour oil on their too angry surgings, if they threaten to become destructive of good.

And the Christian will naturally ask as he looks at such an event as now fills our minds, "How would Jesus feel if He were standing among the excited multitude? How would He share in the popular sympathies? What words of counsel would He speak? What attitude would He assume and advise in others towards the perpetrators of a crime whose outrage no words can suitably express, and towards those who sympathize with the criminals and abet their deed? Oh, that we might know! But when we see how he actually bore Himself under outrages which have no parallel in history; when we hear his calm words, "I say unto you that ye resist not the evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also. Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," and when we hear in exemplification of His own teachings, that wonderful prayer from His lips in the midst of His agonies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," we feel that we can tell what His manner would be in the midst of our excitement. We seem to stand in the presence of a godlike calmness which steadies the tumult of our own emotions. We catch something of His sublime confidence that truth and right will be vindicated at last, and timely vengeance of those who oppose and outrage them will not tarry. It is good to drop His calming words into the seething caldron of our excitement at such a time as this. And as Christianity is often as much honored by its contrast with its opposite as by its positive achievements in good, its spirit and teachings should be made to shine forth on such an occasion in contrast with the spirit and maxims of human passions. The very feelings of our breasts and the very deeds they would prompt, act as a foil to bring out the superior excellence and beauty of the Gospel more resplendently, like diamonds in a setting of jet. Men are compelled to say in the result, "After all, these peaceful teachings of Christ are better than our passions, and find a speedier and surer remedy for outrage and wrong."

And then the eye that turns towards the throne above sees there the Infinite Ruler, high above all the agitations of human passions, calm in the majesty of His Omnipotence and eternal justice, holding the balance with a steady and impartial hand, that meets out to every subject of His boundless Empire the exact award of his demerit, suffering not one to escape His notice, never taken by surprise, never swayed by feelings that clamor for a vengeance which He is impotent to take, never hesitating upon the decisions which assign to each and all their due, never baffled in the execution of His decrees; never courting favor or trembling for consequences, but sitting upon His eternal throne in the sublime consciousness of His power to maintain it, of His right to rule, and His ability and purpose to rule in righteousness. The heart, I say, that holds communion with this Infinite Father and Judge of all the earth, feels something of His Divine calmness coming into it even in the wildest tumult of its own sense of outrage and injustice, and eases its own burthen by appealing its cause to the arbitrament of that unerring Judge. It no longer desires to

"Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge His justice, be the God of God."

It rather falls into the mood of prayer proper for an erring and dependent mortal, and asks Divine help for itself and for those who are the human instruments appointed to secure its rights. It finds new strength in the supplication of the Prophet, "O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee; be Thou their arm every morning; our salvation also in the time of trouble."

It is fitting that we should look towards the Throne of Heaven to-day with these words of prayer upon our lips. We need them to calm and reassure us. We are under a great sorrow. We are almost stunned and bewildered by the weight and suddenness of the stroke. It seems as if another world were around us than that in which we awoke yesterday morning. A great Nation is draped in mourning, as if it were one household whose light had departed. Funeral crape in all our homes, on our persons, places of business, temples of justice, and even on the altars of religion throughout the land—Heaven seeming to join the earth in the universal mourning. Countless flags, which but a few days ago were shaken out in joy at the head of a million staffs, now drooping sadly at half-mast. Every bell tolling its solemn dirge on our ears, funeral guns throbbing their deep woe in our hearts! What does it mean? Ah! the loved head of the Nation has been stricken low in death by the bullet of the assassin; the strong right arm of the Nation has been paralyzed by the dagger of the cut-throat—that arm never more to wield that mighty pen whose strokes were wont to move the hearts of nations. But one greater crime has stained the world since the dawn of creation—that which crucified the Savior of the world. A mightier grief never shook the heart of a whole people. Millions of strong men have bowed down and wept "as one that mourneth for his mother." We shall never see, as we have never seen, another day of such sadness.

But, recovering ourselves a little from the shock which we have felt, let us look again at this woful event and see if no good is to be hoped from it. Our first feeling is that it is an unmingled calamity. We can see no way to repair the loss suffered in it, no good end that it was needed to secure, or that it could possibly subserve. It seems a dark woe without one bright side or one relieving ray of light in it. But is it so indeed? As I look longer and more closely at it the shadow begi s to lift from its vast proportions. It seems less terribly dark—nay, shall I dare to say it here to-day, I begin to feel a deep, strong joy in the event. I seem to see in it the promise of a better day near at hand than I have ever before dared to hope. It was needed, it was essential. It is the grand completion of all victories—the consummating sacrifice, without which all before would have stopped short of true success. This sanctifies the whole; this will compel success.

Men die; principles live. Truth is immortal. But principle and truth live in this world only by conflict and sacrifice. Every great wrong must have its victim before it will quit the world. Every right, trampled for centuries, must have its martyr. It cannot be restored without. And the victim and martyr must be according to the greatness of the wrong to be overcome and the right to be restored. Not every one will do. To purify and save a sinful world, nothing less than the blood of the Son of God would suffice. To cleanse and reunite a corrupted and broken nation, the blood of her noblest son must be given. A million inferior lives are not enough. There comes a crisis in which one life outweighs them all. For our country that life has been given. The sacrifice is finished. We may now be saved. The assassin little knew what he was doing. He meant a foul deed; but the power of a righteous God will turn it into the heaviest blow against that abomination, for the sake of which it was committed, that has yet been struck. The dark iniquity of African slavery, the peerless crime of modern history, was not thoroughly purged from the heart of this Nation yesterday morning. To-day I believe it is. There was a lingering tenderness towards the evil, which portended infinite mischief and difficulty in the adjustment of affairs that were before us. It had the power, it had the will to do that mischief. To-day, I believe its power is gone. There is a feeling toward the iniquity all over the land that never existed before. The change is immense. It will do for me to say in this place what would have been counted indiscreet and reckless twenty-four hours ago.

I speak with freedom; you hear with more than approbation, words which, last Sabbath, would have been counted of doubtful influence for good by both of us. The day is past for such timidity. The lines are being sharply drawn. There is a new test of our position, of the side we will take in the great struggle, of where our sympathies are more decisive than has been felt. We shall court the favor or patronage of the abettors or apologists of slavery no longer. We shall court their hostility as more to be desired than their friendship. We shall ask to be relieved of their patronage. Without enmity to their persons let us hope, we shall, nevertheless, feel that there can be nothing in common between us without the sacrifice of integrity, self-respect and everything that a man ought to hold dear. And this feeling must have come before the iniquity could be done away; and the assassin has effected what four years of bloodshed could not.

You and I know that it is the hand of slavery which has plunged us into this deep sorrow—the same hand that has filled the whole land with tumult and clothed it in mourning for four years past. I believe that it was necessary that it did culminate and come to a head in this peerless crime, that we might be brought to feel the depths of its evil. We had seen it plotting treason and raising armies, and reddening miles square of the earth with human gore to destroy the most benign Government on which the sun ever shown. But this was not enough; it called this honorable warfare, and would have been honored by the world as such had it succeeded. We had seen it plotting in wholesale conspiracies for assassination that would interrupt the action of civil government, and give itself an advantage for carrying out nefarious schemes; but this was not enough. The attempt was soon forgotten in its failure, and perhaps credited with insincerity. All means that could be called fair or honorable, had to fail, and the dastardly expedient of cowardice—assassination, its native work, its native method—had to *succeed*, before we could be brought to feel what the pestilence was—how low the crawling thing could creep—and now, as never before, we do feel this; and now as never before does the Nation see and feel the design of Providence in this long, terrible war; now as never before is she resolved that her million of heroes shall not die in vain, now that the crowning martyrdom of all has been added. The work will be finished more thoroughly; the Union restored more firm and enduring for this terrible sacrifice.

This, under God, I believe to be the meani g of this most tragic and mournful event. The victim was needed. He was ready. The power of his death will be greater than the power of his life. Never was he doing so much for this Union that he loved, or for human rights and sacred freedom which he loved more, as now, lying cold and silent in his coffin. Let us not say that he died prematurely. Though we cannot see the man who can stand in his place; though we tremble at the thought that the helm of Government should be placed in an untried hand at this perilous crisis, let us trust that the favoring Providence who has so manifestly interposed in our behalf and carried us thus far towards the end of a glorious work, will carry us on and through to its completion. The spirit and wisdom of the departed will linger in the councils of our Government still. An awe will be upon them to lay asleep in great measure the passions which blind and perplex deliberation and turn action aside from the right way. We were never more likely to be ruled wisely and well. God will raise up the men needed. Our holy cause is His cause, and He is never at a loss for instruments to do His work. Let us be calm in this confidence.

Nor need we spend unavailing tears that our hero and immortal benefactor has been cut off in mid-career, and not permitted to finish his mighty task with his own hand. Let us not imagine that anything has been lost from his bright fame or from the unspeakable wealth the Nation now owns treasured in that fame by this apparantly untimely death. He has died without a spot or a shadow on his name. It is hallowed forever, and past all possibility of a stain. Had he lived longer, he might have committed some mistake. Perplexing questions were before him. To err is human; no mortal wisdom might have been able to have guided our councils with an unerring hand. He might have clouded that glory which death has fixed around his memory in a halo forever. Now it is eternally cloudless. The very faults and errors which his enemies charge upon him are such as will deepen the love without hindering the reverence for him cherished in the heart of this great people. A fairer reputation does not stand recorded in history. He was as faultless as Washington, and has been the chief instrument of effecting a vastly greater redemption than Washington. We believe that the name of Abraham Lincoln is written to day at the very head of the scroll of the world's immortal names, and it will be long before the earth has another to put above it. Oh, fortunate man! favorite of Heaven! to die thus embalmed in the tears and love of millions of hearts, leaving a memory that will be cherished forever, adding a new worth to liberty itself, and springing up through the oncoming centuries as the fountain of a purer patriotism and a nobler national virtue. Fortunate man, more favored of Heaven in death than in thy most favored life!

As a closing word, suffer me to exhort you to let the measureless power for good be already in this event; moderate and steady that tumult of passion which it has stirred in all of us. You are not required to be indifferent. When our Saviour forbids personal revenge, He does not prohibit all feelings of holy indignation at wrong doing. God has planted in every breast the spirit of justice, a copy of His own, which rises spontaneously and irresistibly at the sight of outraged right and innocence; and he must have more or less than the heart of a man who can contemplate the great crime before us in cold blood. But let us beware of transferring this righteous indignation to objects who are not responsible for the crime. That would be injustice. Let us be righteous in our anger. Let us hope that the South will rise in her nobleness, as a mass, and disown this foul deed, and thus make it the means of hastening a speedier peace and stronger reunion. I believe she will. But, if blinded by passion and hate, she will seize on this as the occasion to kindle anew the fires of war and bloodshed and fan the spirit of treason, then let us hope and pray that God will use this event to stir the strong heart of the Nation and prepare it to conquer a speedier peace.

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