
Our Second Martyr.

OUR SECOND MARTYR.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

THE THIRTY-FOURTH ST. REFORMED CHURCH,

NEW YORK CITY,

Sabbath Evening, Sept. 25th, 1881.

BY

REV. CARLOS MARTYN,

*Pastor of the Church, and Chaplain of the 71st Regiment,
N. G. S. N. Y.*

New York :

P. F. MCBREEN, PRINTER, 16 BEEKMAN ST.

1881.

E 685
1887

26615





OUR SECOND MARTYR.

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"—2 Samuel, iii., 38.

The long suspense is over. The silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken, the pitcher is broken at the fountain, the wheel is broken at the cistern. The dust returns to the earth as it was: and the spirit returns unto God who gave it.

Fifty millions of people catch their breath and sigh and mourn, feeling the loss of the great chief as a personal bereavement. Fifty millions? Two continents walk as mourners in that funeral train. The *London Times*, reviewing the demonstrations declares: "Such a spectacle has never been presented as the mourning with which the whole civilized world is honoring the late President

of the United States. Emperors and kings, senates and ministries, are in spirit his pall-bearers ; but their peoples, from the highest to the lowest, claim to be equally visible and audible as sorrowing assistants." These streets clothed in the "trap-pings and the suits of woe," the newspapers stereotyped in black, the voices, like "the sound of many waters," uttered from pulpit and court, from hearth and shop, from sidewalk and counting-room, from prairie and savannah, telegraph and cable electric with condolence, all Europe echoing the sorrow of all America, peer and peasant uniting in one expression of love and sympathy, our beautiful flag at half-mast in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, as in our own cities, nations and peoples drawn together as never before : why, it is an unheard-of thing, this universal outcry of interest and grief !

Death did not produce, it has only intensified this feeling. You remember those weary weeks, that nervous strain, the alternations of hope and fear, the eager lips that asked every where as the first question, what the last word was from him in whose massive breast the heart of Christendom throbbed.

Well, well, he deserved it all ! Was ever sufferer more patient, more cheerful, sweeter, braver ?

What wonder that the world was melted into admiration. Such a career, inspiring as the white plume of Navarre, and beyond all, such a sick-bed, might well stir all men and women to a sense of personal kinship, and now, alas, of individual loss.

It has been admirably said by Mr. Froude—a questionable historian, but the most brilliant pamphleteer since Daniel De Foe—that “in every department of human life there is always one type of man which is the best, living and working a radiant way to heaven in the very middle of us.” This type he holds it to be our duty to find,—to see what makes individuals of this type the best ; and to raise up their excellence into an acknowledged standard, of which they themselves shall be the living witnesses. Just as Catholicism has its saints,—models in whose mold those whom it controls are run and shaped, so politics, science, art, literature, should have their orders of nobility laid out in the name of God, of whom we should say : Look at these men ; bless God for them ; and follow them.

He adds : “Place before a boy the figure of a noble man ; let the circumstances in which he has earned his claim to be called noble be such as the boy sees around himself ; let him see this hero rising above surrounding temptations, and follow-

ing life virtuously and victoriously forward, and you will kindle his heart as nothing else will kindle it."

James A. Garfield supplies us with such a type. In the words which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Antony in "Julius Cæsar":

"The elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, THIS WAS A MAN."

His intellectual gifts and moral worth were recognized on every side. His public career was the pride of both parties: American in the best sense. As citizen, as soldier, as Congressman, as Chief-Magistrate, he was tried and not found wanting. Although he held his last high office only about six months—spending three of the six in the battle with death—his methods and the spirit of his administration gained him the respect and confidence of the whole nation. One of the youngest of our Presidents, he had a larger personal acquaintance than any of them, except, perhaps, Gen. Grant.

Hume's description of the Saxon Alfred may be repeated almost without the suspicion of exaggerating his merits: "He knew how to conciliate the most enterprising spirit with the coolest

moderation ; the most obstinate perseverance with the easiest flexibility ; the most severe justice with the greatest lenity ; the greatest rigor in command with the greatest affability of deportment ; the highest capacity and inclination for science with the most shining talents for action. His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration, excepting only that the former, being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him all bodily accomplishments—vigor of limbs, dignity of shape and air, and a pleasing, engaging and open countenance.

And yet how inadequately we knew him until the assassin's bullet disclosed his grandeur. Then the plodding work-boy, the struggling student, the patient scholar, the gallant soldier, the statesman weighted with public cares, ever as he wrought at some great purpose, hampered by poverty—emerged into the hero of his age. Suffering, innocently brought on him, crowned him. He was long enough, sweet-souled enough, forgiving enough, heroic enough in dying to win such a place in the affections of the human race, as

it has rarely been permitted any human being to gain. And he has left behind him the memory of his grand Christian manhood as an enduring monument.

Was ever man more singularly happy and fortunate in his home life? I know of nothing finer than those scenes on which we have looked through that sick-room door. The wife and mother, tearless with grief, full of feeling, yet with too much Christian courage to vent her feelings in useless lamentations, ministering like an angel beside her husband, yet neglecting no other claims, ever present, always felt, the soul of the house; calm when all others were convulsed, hopeful when even the physicians despaired, lifting herself unconsciously, by heroic purpose and Christian grace, to be the typical matron of the age, and giving her sex a new title to love and veneration; poor little Mollie, her father's pet; the young man over his books at college; the two boys away in the Ohio home; the dear old mother, bowed beneath eighty years, waiting for "her boy, James," who should never come back to her longing arms: God bless them all! With the good English Queen, in her touching message to Mrs. Garfield, we

commend them to "the husband of the widow and the father of the fatherless."

It is a mighty consolation to know that our second martyr was prepared to die. He had remembered his Creator in the days of his youth. Once, when a student at Amherst, he was out with a party of his chums on the sides of old Greylock—that superb mountain at whose feet the college nestles. With the rest, he was full of fun and frolic. Suddenly, looking to the west, he saw that the sun was about to set. "Boys," cried he, "I have been taught by my mother always to read a chapter in the Bible at this hour. Excuse me for a little." He withdrew, and, throwing himself upon the ground, he took out a pocket Testament, and was soon lost to the world. Such an act, in such company, reveals the hero.

For twenty years no life was busier and more hurried than his. Yet he always made time each day to build a solitude around his heart in which to commune with God. Who doubts that this habit developed the manhood we admire? Certain it is that his piety, modest and unobtrusive, but thorough and genuine, enabled him to live clearly and to die gloriously. "I have faced death before," said he soon after

he was shot, remembering the ghastly scenes of the civil war, in which he had been a prominent actor—"and I am not afraid of him!"

Friends, if we would not fear death, let us do as he did. Let us regard our relations to God as paramount. Let us bestir ourselves to make our peace with God through His dear Son. We are as likely as he to be cut down suddenly. Disease, accident, violence, any one of ten thousand mishaps may stretch us on a death bed. How unhappy, if we have made no preparation for the dread hereafter! How terrible to plunge unready into death! The pain and daze of a fatal sickness afford a poor opportunity for preparation. I hear a voice sounding from his coffin. It says, to you, and me, and all of us: "Be wise to-day. 'Tis madness to defer!"

Let no one in this hour of depression lose faith in prayer. At the first thought some may be tempted to feel that there is little efficacy in it. Christ said: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Such assurances abound.

Well, not two of us, but millions, believers on both continents, wrestled with God for the life of this man. Multitudes prayed as never before.

with tears and agony. Nevertheless he is dead. Through all the untold anguish of his sufferings, terrible as the rack of the Spanish Inquisition, he seemed to be saying:

“I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says I must not stay.
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.”

Brethren, we are not to conclude that God has not heard and answered our prayers for our dead chief, because he has not done precisely what we craved. He *has* heard. He *has* answered.

Reflect a moment. Why did we ask God to prolong President Garfield's life? Was it not because we believed his life would prove a blessing to his age and nation? because we esteemed him able to do a great work for God and for men? Now, if God saw that He could accomplish more in the death of that dear man than in his life, would not the *spirit* of our prayers be answered?

Consider the result. Through our common affliction, the North and the South lock hands to-day over his bier in a truer brotherhood than we have known since Washington of Virginia and Greene of New England cantered side by side over the battlefields of the Revolution. The

country exhibits its self-poise and strength, by imitating in the midst of profound feeling, the patience and faith of the President's family, and endures the crisis without either political or industrial disturbance. The face of Liberty is veiled, but her heart beats strong and calm and true as ever. The voice of party rancor loses its venom. In that presence, there are no Democrats and no Republicans. The attention of fifty millions of people is directed to the causes which might be expected to produce such ghastly fruit.

All this is so plain that a European critic emphasized it, remarking: "America has gained the credit and profit which great nations win by breeding men worthy to live and die in their service. She has gained golden opinions from civilized mankind, who have watched with admiration, even with envy, the intense, invaluable spirit of nationality which has made the whole Republic suspend its quarrels and stand with one thought, hope, prayer, united in brotherly love, first around the sick-bed, and now around the coffin, of him who represented each and all. The bullet of the assassin has slain the President. It will also kill, let us hope, the political abuses that made Guiteau possible."

Add to all this the amazing display of love and sympathy from abroad. As electricity and steam have annihilated time and space, making Europe and America next door neighbors, so this common sorrow has overrun national boundaries, and unified the human race. The English Court goes into mourning; an unprecedented honor when paid to one neither a relative of the royal family nor a sovereign. The Queen telegraphs her condolences again and again and yet again to Mrs. Garfield, showing, as the American Minister, Mr. Lowell, said at the great meeting at Exeter Hall, in London, on the 24th of September, "how true a woman's heart beats under the royal purple," and stirring all Americans to shout, "God bless Victoria!" and to sing, "God Save the Queen!" Parish bells toll throughout the Kingdom. The grief in Great Britain is unparalleled since the death of the Prince Consort. The two great English speaking nations are drawn together in closest fraternity.

Witness France, Germany, Italy, Spain, taking bereaved America in their arms as we lift our martyr into ours. Ah! costly as is the sacrifice, the compensation is sweet. Can you not hear those mute lips say: "And will my

death purchase all this? Gladly would I die daily to buy for my America one item in such a catalogue of blessings!"

I remember the private agony. I bear in mind the untimely cutting off of life in its prime, in the midst of grieving friends, surrounded by honors hardly tasted, on the threshold of what bade fair to be the halcyon administration of modern times. Nevertheless, I am certain that grand public uses are filled to the brim by his death as they could not have been by his life.

And who knows what he may have escaped? Now, his fame at the zenith, he moves from life into history. He lays down the burdens of his great position. He escapes its perils and its pursuing cares. And dying, like Samson in the temple of Dagon, he avenges himself and his country by pulling down the two pillars of American and European indignation upon the Philistines of abuse and corruption. Does not God hear and answer prayer? Has he not heard and answered it in this case? Surely, we may sing of our martyr as Milton did over the dead body of his friend *Lycidas*:

“ Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt
Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.”

If the dead President had a voice to-day, he would urge us all to be true Americans. With him patriotism was at once a principle and a passion. Himself the best fruit of our institutions, he prized them at their full value. He lived, he died for America. One of his latest utterances was this: “ The people, the people my trust.”

We cannot look to fill the great place in the public eye he occupied. But we can emulate the patriotism which was his inspiration. This grand, free country of ours—we can love and serve it. We can do our whole duty towards it. We can be jealous of its honor. We can contribute something out of the storehouse of our thought and time to the promotion of its best interests.

There is need that we bestir ourselves. For we can see in the flash of that pistol, and behind the wretch who pulled the trigger, whole regiments of conspirators, troops of unscrupulous aims, squadrons of mercenary and mendacious ambitions, and armies of villainous agencies—

all fully bent on possessing and perverting the government of a free people to the upbuilding of their own individual and corporate greeds. And we can see good men drawing themselves away, or sitting apart, in hopeless ignorance of what to do, or in disgust at their helplessness, dismayed by the prevalence of selfishness and corruption.

There is a class among us who stand aloof from politics--wealthy men, literary men, commercial men; the very class that has most at stake. Like the effeminate nobles of ancient Rome, they sit high up in the political coliseum and criticise the ungraceful struggles of the gladiators, and shrug their shoulders at the harsh cries in the arena. "In the theatre of man's life," says Lord Bacon, "God and His angels should be the only lookers-on."

Our place is *in* the conflict. It has been said that "sin is not taken out of man as Eve was out of Adam, by putting him to sleep." Neither are political abuses gotten rid of by shutting our eyes to them. Rough work must be done, and it is as much your business and mine to do it as it is anybody's.

You remember the striking simile of Fisher Ames: "A monarchy is a man-of-war--stanch,

iron-ribbed, and resistless when under full sail ; yet a single hidden rock sends her to the bottom. Our Republic is a raft, hard to steer, and your feet always wet, but nothing can sink her." Don't be afraid, friends, to stand in the water of democracy. Better catch cold than be a slave. Woe betide the nation whose sons are so given over to money-getting and pleasure-seeking, so cankered and selfish, that Mammon, with his muck-rake, and Harlequin, with cap and bells, have become the symbols of daily thought and life.

I have nothing to say concerning the choice we should make of parties and men. But *some* conscientious choice we are under bonds to make. Shame on the citizen who values his citizenship so lightly that he can refuse to drop a ballot. Shame on the recreant American, who, inheriting royal prerogatives, abdicates his sovereignty and un-kings himself. Children of the men of 1776 ! Fellow-citizens, with the martyr President ! as often as election day returns, bear it in mind that we need no pistol, no dynamite, because, as Whittier sings, we have

“ ————— a weapon firmer set,
 And better than the bayonet;
 A weapon that comes down as still
 As snow-flakes fall upon the sod,
 Yet executes a freeman’s will,
 As lightning does the will of God.”

“ *Le Roi est mort: Vive le Roi!* ” “The King is dead—long live the King!” President Garfield is gone. President Arthur succeeds him. The new President needs, if mortal man ever did, the kindly judgment and good will of the people. The circumstances under which he assumes the Government are full of pain and difficulty. His carriage through these dreadful weeks has been admirable—reticent, dignified, and sympathetic. Instead of watching for faults—instead of searching the record of the past for blemishes—instead of prophesying a book of lamentations for the future—let us give him our hopes and prayers. Chastened by this awful calamity, our hearts should flow out warmly to him who stands in the gap made by death.

Those who know President Arthur best, trust and honor him most. We are all acquainted with his generous nature and great ability. We are bound to believe that he will discharge his sacred trust in a way that shall knit to him the loyal

allegiance of these mourning hearts. As he enters the shadowed White House, may the sunshine of public confidence kindle the gloom before his feet. And may God enable him to be—as his inaugural address indicates that he means to be—the President, not of a faction, nor even of a party, but of the American people.

For ourselves, dear friends, let us learn from all this not to envy the great. Do not court place and power. We are most of us, I fear, prone to undervalue our present situation, and to imagine that happiness is to be found in some different, and especially some more exalted station.

Ah, happiness must be looked for, not in the world without, but here *within*, in the heart, in “a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.” Least of all should we expect to find happiness in an exalted station. Shall not experience teach us wisdom? Almost without exception the great of earth have been the unfortunate of earth. History is the record of their sorrows. The thunder-robed old prophets lived and died under the frown of their age. The Apostles were all martyred, save one. The Cæsars were struck from the throne by assassination, in red succession. Marie Antoinette was guillotined. Napoleon died at St. Helena. In our day,

the Czars, Kaisers and Bismarcks are targets for conspirators. And even gentle and righteous rulers like Lincoln and Garfield are martyred.

Ages ago, a woman of Shunem had put Elisha, the prophet, under great obligation by her hospitality. One day he sent Gehazi, his servant, to acknowledge the kindness, and to ask her, "Wouldst thou be spoken for to the King, or to the Captain of the Host?" Mark the reply: "And she answered, 'I dwell among mine own people.' " Her spirit, which could set bounds to her desires and enjoy her present condition without envy or repining,—would to God it might descend upon us all!

De Foe never wrote a wiser page than that in the opening chapter of "Robinson Crusoe," in which he paints the father as counseling his boy, mad with ambition, to abide in the state wherein he was born—the middle station. "He bade me observe," says Crusoe, "that the calamities of life were shared among the upper and lower part of mankind; but that the middle station had the fewest disasters, and was not exposed to so many vicissitudes; that peace and plenty were the handmaids of the condition betwixt the extremes; that temperance, moderation, quietness, health, society, all agreeable diversions, and all desirable pleas-

ures, were blessings attending the middle station in life ; that this way men and women went silently and smoothly through the world, and comfortably out of it ; not embarrassed with the labors of the hands or of the head ; not sold to a life of slavery for daily bread, nor harrassed with perplexing circumstances, which rob the soul of peace and the body of rest ; not enraged with the passion of envy, or the secret burning lust of ambition for great things ; but in easy circumstances sliding gently through the world, and sensibly tasting the sweets of living without the bitter."

Yes, friends, they that will climb high put themselves in the way to fall far. If God calls us by supreme abilities, or by the public choice, into a high station, so be it. Inclination must yield. But, surely, recent events counsel us never to push and elbow our way to the upper seat.

Some there are who seem ordained of God to minister as high priests before the altar of the nation. Without envying such, let us hear them and honor them. Not long at best may we hope to detain our high and holy ones on earth. Ours, especially, appears to be a fatal epoch. The great historic actors in the crisis of the nation are fast leaving us. Already, the death

list is long and startling. Chase and Seward, Stanton and Greeley, Stevens and Garrison, Hale and Wilson, Hooker and Burnside—so the shadowy procession of the illustrious dead moves on, with Lincoln in the van.

Last, but not least, our martyred Garfield closes his radiant career, and leaves to a grateful country and to an applauding world, the splendid legacy of his example and character.

“Take him up tenderly,
Lift him with care.”

Bear him to the grave amid the proud tears of the Republic whose typical child he was. And as we bend lovingly over his coffin to look our last upon his face, let us murmur:

“Sleep in peace with kindred ashes
Of the noble and the true ;
Hands that never failed their country,—
Hearts that baseness never knew.”







